

Our Contributors.

THE CANADIAN PRESBYTERIAN COUNCIL.

BY KNOXONIAN.

We may well imagine that a Canadian Pan Presbyterian Council will soon be called to discuss the whereabouts of our lost tribes and to devise some measures for their early restoration. We cannot give a *verbatim* report of the proceedings before the meeting is held, but something like the following will very likely take place.

The Hon. John Knox Cameronian took the chair and delivered a brief address. He was pained to learn from Dr Torrance's report that though there are only 755,179 Presbyterians in the Dominion, 2,000,000 or more than one fourth of the number, are missing. The statistics of the Church account for only 525,236. The question was, where are the 230,000, and what is being done to provide them with the means of grace? To him it was a matter of surprise that the General Assembly passed over this vital question in silence while they discussed other and much less important matters at length. Presbyteries were meeting every day, but he did not observe that any of them took any notice of the fact that nearly a quarter of a million of Presbyterian people are not included in our statistical returns. To a business man accustomed to deal with figures it seemed utterly incomprehensible that the Church should pass over this matter in silence. No Church can prosper or even continue to exist for any length of time if one fourth of its numbers are unknown and uncared for. If the Church Courts would not take the matter up he thought this Council should discuss it and start an agitation that would end in the application of some practical remedy.

Dr. Use-and-Won't said he did not attach the least importance to statistics. They were a modern invention and innovation. David was severely punished for numbering the people, and if they were not careful they would be punished too. The apostles gathered no statistics. The fathers published no returns. Away with these reports and bluebooks and figures. He would have none of them.

Dr. Dry-as-Dust said that for his part he had no time to consider questions affecting the people. He was preparing a work on the difference between the supra-lapsarian and the infra-lapsarian theories, and he could not come down to paltry questions of statistics. It might be well to refer the matter to a committee or something of that kind, but theologians should not be expected to concern themselves about mere people.

The Rev. Mr. Fightem thought the mission of the Church was to contend against Popery. The Pope was anti-Christ, and there are too many Catholics in the country. What signifies a few hundred thousand Presbyterians compared with fighting against Popery. It was all very well to preach the Gospel to people as occasion might offer, but he did not believe in spending time looking after Presbyterians while there were so many Catholics in the country.

The Rev. Ishmael Smatterer differed from his friend who had just taken his seat. The mission of the Church was to contend against modern science. A preacher who did not tell his people about Darwin and Huxley and men of that kind at least once a day failed in his duty. It might happen that a few hundred thousand baptized Presbyterians might be without the means of grace, but what was that compared with combatting the scientists?

The Rev. Diotrophes Highstier, M.A., Ph. D., said that the question was beneath the dignity of an educated ministry. He was a University man and had studied theology in Princeton, Edinburgh and Germany, and he was not going to degrade himself by going about the back streets looking for lapsed Presbyterians. If the people did not come to hear him let them stay away.

A youthful delegate whose name we did not learn said the right thing was to hold evangelistic meetings. The two hundred thousand might come to the meetings and they would have a good crowd. Hunting people up on the back streets was a tedious kind of work. In fact it was slow and monotonous, and the newspapers never said anything about it. He greatly preferred a crowd where he could get on the platform and have a chance to speak. He had seen it stated that there were groups of Presbyterian people in some of the rural regions that had no preaching. He did not care to visit such places. The travelling was hard and the board none of the best. When attending meetings he always liked to ride on the cars and board if possible in rich men's houses. His plan was to hold meetings and if the people did not come let them stay.

The Rev. Aggressive Chalmers then addressed the Council. He said that he never had been ashamed of being a Presbyterian, but he came nearer blushing for his Church to day than he had ever done before. He desired to discuss this most important question in an impersonal way, but he could not help referring to some things that had been said. He differed from those brethren who contended that the chief mission of the Church is to fight Roman Catholics and scientists. The chief mission of the Church is to preach the gospel, but the gospel cannot be preached to men unless they come and hear it. If they would not come, the first duty of the Church was to try and bring them. Had they never read the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin? Who was it that said to go out into the highways and compel men

to come in? His illustrious namesake thought that "excavating" among the lapsed masses in Scottish cities was good enough work for him, but too many ministers unworthy to tie the shoes of a Chalmers or a Guthrie thought it beneath their alleged dignity to ask careless men to come to the house of God. If any of them were above doing a minister's work they should be above taking a minister's salary. It had been said that the mission of the Church was to contend against Roman Catholics and scientists. It would be better for them to imitate some of the zeal of the Roman Catholics. You never hear of them missing a quarter of a million of their people. He had often thought it would be a happy thing if they could prove that the devil is a Roman Catholic, because that was the only way they could induce some so-called Protestants to fight against him. That young man who spoke last thought it would be a good thing to hold meetings. If meetings could remedy the evil there are plenty of them now. The people who attend no Church rarely attend religious meetings of any kind. Evangelistic meetings are generally filled up with church-going people who think their whole duty is done when they go to a meeting of some kind. The lapsed men are not there. To induce such men to hear the gospel you must go to them and deal with them personally. What the Church needs is aggressiveness against the world, not against fellow-labourers. To be progressive you must be aggressive. Did you ever think of how little a minister does who merely keeps good Presbyterians in Church. There is no power in language to describe how little zeal or ability of any kind it takes to keep solid Presbyterian people in Church at least once every Sabbath. Ministers sometimes get credit for making congregations grow in suburbs that are increasing in population by thousands every year. The minister could scarcely keep the Presbyterian part of the influx out, if he and his elders stood at the Church doors armed with pitchforks. The test of efficiency is to bring people in who don't care to come in. The ability and zeal of elders are tested by the efforts they make to reach lapsed and careless men Brethren, if the lost tribes will not come to Church let the Church go out and try to compel them to come in.

THE JERUSALEM MISSION—RETROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTIVE.

This article I intend as a friendly conversation with our kind supporters and co-workers dispersed in different lands, but mainly in the United States and Canada. By summarizing, so far as that is feasible, the labours of the first two years of this mission's existence, taking stock of its present position, and looking forward to its prospective future, we desire to take them into our confidence, in order to elicit their valuable counsels and advice and enlist their sympathies and prayers more deeply and permanently.

ROME.

I was labouring in Rome and Italy from January, 1884, to end of 1887 in connection with my parent society, "The British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Jews," a society composed of Christians of all denominations—an embodiment of the principles of my beloved Evangelical Alliance, the Society which first called me to the mission field in 1848, the year in which I became a member of the Evangelical Alliance, and under whose auspices I laboured in North Africa, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, since that memorable date, excepting three years—1855-58—planting the Church of Scotland's missions at Salonica and Smyrna, and ten years—1870-80—with the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland in evangelistic work among Roman Catholics in Spain and Jews and Spaniards in Algeria; when the Committee of the British Society was moved by some of its friends to contemplate the establishment of a mission in Jerusalem.

ROME OR JERUSALEM.

The question came to me, would I exchange the incomparable attractions, advantages innumerable and pleasurable life in Rome and Italy for captive Jerusalem, trodden down by the unspeakable, corrupt Turk? What Hebrew missionary's heart, however benumbed of patriotism, could say "No"? Of course I would go, and go cheerfully too. The project appeared in print, and I myself wrote a paper, "The Queen's Jubilee and a Mission to Jerusalem," which was published in the *Jewish Herald* of June, 1887, arguing "that there are certain localities in which all Christians feel a deep interest, of which they cannot divest themselves, and that Jerusalem was pre-eminently such a spot. It is sacred ground, common to all the Christian world."

PROTEST.

Thereupon the Episcopal London Society for Jews issued a protest in its *Jewish Intelligence* of July following "against that Society opening a mission to the Jews in Jerusalem, and claiming a species of monopoly over the Holy City."

JAFFA.

I was therefore directed to tarry awhile at Jaffa "as a focus from which I could send Gospel beams all round, and very specially into the Holy City of Jerusalem itself." In other words, Jaffa was to be a stepping-stone to Jerusalem so soon as the Committee could summon courage to disregard that presumptuous protest. I laboured in Jaffa, the Lord giving me large access to the Jews from November, 1887, to July, 1890.

WANTED IN JERUSALEM.

All during that time numbers of ministers of all evangelical Churches and Christian laymen, on passing through Jaffa, as well as several workers in Jerusalem, on visiting it, kept urging me to come up to the Holy City, pleading that I was greatly wanted in Jerusalem, for there was no one here (nor is there any one now) that could discuss with the rabbis and learned Jews, so numerous here, in their beloved sacred tongue Hebrew and at all familiar with Talmudic literature, or any that could preach or converse freely with the Sephardim—Spanish Jews—in their domestic vernacular—Judeo-Spanish—and emphasizing the fact that these Spanish Jews were the oldest Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem, numbering between 15,000 and 20,000, or nearly half the Hebrew population of the Holy City, and that they are the most learned and religious, the most civil, the most accessible to the Gospel messenger, and less bigotted and bitter toward Christianity than the Ashkenazim—the Russian and Polish Jews. Others, again, pleaded hard that there was no place where non-Episcopalians could worship God in the more scriptural and spiritual form they prefer and are accustomed to, and, consequently, no place where their ministers could hold forth the Word of Life and testify for the Lord Jesus in the city where He accomplished the glorious work of our redemption.

FIRST VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

In August, 1889, we visited the Holy City for the first time, and during a fortnight I investigated the state of mission work, and found that those deficiencies were only too glaringly true; and, as regards the Spanish Jews, it is even worse now, for then there was at least one lay helper who could talk in Judeo-Spanish. Again several Hebrew Christian brethren pressed me to come up, declaring that I was wanted in Jerusalem.

SCARCITY OF HOUSES.

I enquired and searched for suitable premises, but could not find any to let. At my request several persons, among them a respectable Jew and the U.S.A. Vice-Consul, kindly undertook to be on the lookout for any house that might do.

THE SOCIETY'S FINANCES.

Shortly after I heard that the British Society had got into a serious financial deficit, and it became evident that, so far from occupying Jerusalem, they might rather relinquish the Jaffa station in the belief that the Presbyterian Church in Canada wanted my services for a mission to the Jews in Jerusalem.

CANADA.

From the spring of 1886 I had been trying to second the earnest efforts of the lamented Justice Torrance, of Montreal, and others in the columns of the *Presbyterian Review*, of Toronto, in order to arouse and foster an interest in the spiritual welfare of the Jews, and to induce the Canadian Church to co-operate with the British Society. But we Presbyterians are slow coaches even in missionary enterprises; and it is only now that Canada is moving practically in the matter.

THE CRISIS.

On May 17-22 Mrs. Ben-Oliel and self came to Jerusalem in search of a house, but could find none suitable in location or dimensions. On July 16 the U.S.A. Vice-Consul wrote telling me that one was unexpectedly to let, just the kind of house I wanted, and urging me to come at once, not to lose the chance of securing it, so many would be after it. Within a couple of hours we were on the road, travelled all night, arriving at early dawn; saw the house, discussed terms with landlord, secured it, and by mid-day we started on the way back to Jaffa to complete packing up, already far advanced, and come to the Holy City. It was a solemn question the Lord called upon us to decide. Were we, because the Society had got into financial straits for some cause or other, perhaps more causes than one, may be among them the very disappointment of its friends and supporters that it had not had the courage to disregard the protest and come up—were we also to disobey the Lord's call? I had heard that the Canadian Assembly had put off deciding on any immediate action, though my name had been published in connection with their project. Had we not the Lord's gracious, untrailing promises to rely upon and trust in?

REMOVAL TO JERUSALEM.

And so the night of August 5-6 brought us to the Holy City, trusting wholly on the Lord, who called us to labour for Him in His Holy Hill of Zion, and we have had abundant reasons to bless and praise God for giving us grace to obey His call and come.

THE LATE REV. DR. MILLER.

We had taken counsel with our friends, and our dear deeply-lamented friend, the Rev. A. DeWelles Miller, D.D., of Charlotte, North Carolina, U.S.A., was foremost in strongly encouraging us to follow the Lord's leading, and he gave us devoted, liberal help up to the time when the Lord called him higher, to rest from his consecrated, earnest labour of a generation's length in time, and be for ever with the Lord. "The memory of the just is for a blessing," and his love and prayerful interest in God's ancient people cannot fail to inspire many hearts to walk in his footsteps. He was, in fact, under God, the founder of this mission.

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO PROMISE.

And God has raised up, and is raising up, many devoted helpers and supporters to this work of faith and trust.