

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

ALGOMA DISTRICT.

REPORT OF REV. J. AYRAITH TO THE PRESBYTERY OF BRUCE.

The district of Algoma is an immense region of from six to seven hundred miles along the north shore of Lake Huron and Lake Superior, comprehending the islands, which are numerous, and some of them very large. I arrived at Sault Ste. Marie on the 11th July, and under the guiding of our excellent missionary, Rev. Mr. McLeod, visited and preached in some of the neighboring townships, where there are vast tracts of good land into which settlers are entering in large numbers. The village is also growing, and as the metropolis of such a great and fertile country cannot fail to be a town of importance. There are in it four churches—Episcopal, Canada Methodist, Roman Catholic, and our own, which is a neat frame with a tower. It will seat about 250 persons. The cost of the building is \$2,373, on which there is a debt too much for a congregation so small; but we believe they will courageously remove the burden if we could assist them in some degree. They have now a good prospect. Though not numerous, they are fully organized, with an active and earnest minister over them. Having spent a week among the people at the Sault, we visited

ST. JOSEPH'S ISLAND,

at the head of Lake Huron. It is fertile, though in some places rocky. Immigrants are pouring into it, and most of the land is already taken up. It will be capable of sustaining a large population, being about twenty-five miles long by from seven to ten wide. There is a large proportion of the settlers Presbyterian. The most influential men are favorable to our Church, and are all anxious to have a missionary amongst them as soon as possible. The enthusiastic reception which they gave me, and the manner in which they came from every quarter to hear the gospel, demonstrates that St. Joseph's Island is a very inviting field for any earnest missionary. We have a number of active, good men on the ground, who would be of great service in helping a minister. They told me that within two years the mission would likely be self-sustaining. The principal stations at present are Richards' Wharf, where a considerable gathering met to hear the Word; Hilton, where we had a crowded school-house; Sailor's Encampment, in which we had a small congregation mixed with Roman Catholics; Kaskawan, and Bigger Settlement. Till the date of my arrival no minister or missionary resided on the island. I believe there is one on it now, but his continuance is unlikely. We ought to sympathize deeply with our brethren in those parts where they are, for a time, deprived of the means of grace, and are striving to lay the foundations of our Church. They are anxious to establish Sabbath schools, and might be greatly helped by those congregations which could spare a parcel of books from their Sabbath school library. If any are sent to my care I shall forward them free of charge. They would be a boon to many youths who have long Sabbaths without meetings.

After preaching a number of times to attentive audiences, and visiting a large number of families throughout the island, I passed by Cockburn Island, which I learn is rich and productive, just opened for settlement, and is likely to become an important place, where the standard of the gospel should be raised early. On arriving at

THE GREAT MANITOULIN ISLAND,

we were warmly received by our excellent missionary, Rev. H. McKay. At Gore Bay there is the nucleus of a considerable village, around which is a rich country, partly opened up and rapidly improving. A new Presbyterian church is erected, in which we preached to a good congregation on the Sabbath. On the same day I preached again on the shore of Ice Lake, and in the evening to a goodly company in a school-house at Kagowang. At Manitowaning also is a new church about the same size as the one at Gore Bay. Each of them will accommodate about 250 people. Mr. Builder, our devoted young missionary, has done good service in this field, and I am sure he will have many from thence as a crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord. I preached a number of times in and around the growing village, and found some of the excellent of the earth there—a little leaven which we trust may leaven the whole lump. I regret that my time did not

allow me to visit the southern part of the island; but I have before me a full report from our missionary, Mr. Angus McKay, whose labors are abundant and whose praise is in all the churches in that locality. He preaches at six stations, far apart, and visits one hundred and seventy-two families. The work is toilsome, but the reward is sure. The word of God never returns void. The labors of these three indefatigable missionaries are telling. They are laying the foundations of a Manitoulin Presbytery, for such I believe it will be. The island is nearly ninety miles long, and though interspersed with rocks and lakes, there is a great extent of good soil.

Since I returned, several communications have been received relative to this vast mission field. Rev. Mr. McKay has dispensed sealing ordinances in most of the stations, and has added largely to the membership. Barrie Island—about the size of a township—is calling for the gospel, so are many other localities hitherto unknown. There is a loud call for a gospel minister at the Bruce Mines, opposite St. Joseph Island. Though I was prevented from fully exploring that region, I learned that the country is filling up so fast that the stores in the village are doing as much business as they did when the mines were all in operation. A letter before me states that already twenty-six Presbyterian families are asking for the ordinances of grace, and the number is daily increasing. The importance of these new and extensive fields cannot be over-estimated. It is much to be feared that they have been comparatively unknown and partly overlooked. Yet the future destiny of that country depends, under God, upon the gospel power brought to bear upon it while in its infancy. A little effort now will be better than ten times as much a few years hence.

It is very desirable that the stations on Manitoulin should not be left unsupplied during the winter when the students return to college, and that some help should be extended to Sault Ste. Marie and Manitowaning in the building of their churches and removing their debt. The Presbytery of Bruce has already done something for the church at Gore Bay.

OBITUARY.

The Rev. James P. Baikie, late minister of Port Stanley, whose death was announced in these columns a few weeks ago, was born at Chippawa, near Niagara Falls, on the 7th of August, 1840. He died at St. Thomas on Tuesday evening, the 30th of July, 1878, aged 38 years. His parents were from the Islands of Orkney, and emigrated to Canada in 1835. His father for many years held the position of lighthouse-keeper, first at Port Rowan, and afterwards at Port Maitland, at the mouth of the Grand River. His mother was a sister of the late Captain Sutherland, of the steamer "Magnet," who was well known on Lake Ontario, and who lost his life at the time of the Desjardins Bridge accident. During his early years James received a careful religious training at home; and in his case the scripture was verified, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." From a child he knew the scriptures, and his mind was early impressed with the truth. But his actual conversion does not appear to have taken place till he was about sixteen years of age. He then very decidedly gave himself to the Lord. The family was then residing at Port Rowan, where there was no Presbyterian church. So strongly, however, did the sense of duty press upon his mind, that, hearing that the communion was to be held in the Silver Hill congregation, some fourteen miles distant, he induced his mother to accompany him thither, that he might there confess the Lord Jesus. After a very searching examination by the late Mr. Thomson, of Erin, who was at the time officiating, he was received into communion with the Church and sat down at the Lord's table. From the time of his conversion he made it a rule to spend at least three hours every day in devotional exercises and the study of the scriptures, one hour in the morning, one hour after dinner, and one hour after tea. This rule he strictly observed all through life, except when occasional circumstances made it impossible to do so. In these hours of private devotion he took great delight, and manifestly derived from them great profit. During his last illness he expressed regret that on account of his great bodily weakness he was no longer able to observe those seasons of fellowship with his Heavenly Father.

After some years spent in teaching school and in studying at the Weston Grammar School, he entered

Knox College in the fall of 1863, where he prosecuted his studies with much diligence, and where by his amiability and Christian deportment he speedily won the warmest esteem both of his professors and fellow-students. One of his class-mates, now a minister of the Church, writing of him, says, "I really believe it to have been the general feeling among the students that there was not a more devoted young man in college in our day." He completed his curriculum in 1868, and during the summer of that year he labored as a missionary in Lansdowne. He subsequently labored, either as a missionary or probationer, at Silver Hill, Bentinck, Bristol, and one or two other places. He prosecuted his work in these fields with great assiduity and earnestness. From some of them he had the offer of calls. But he felt it necessary to take rest for a time, and accordingly in the summer of 1869 he visited Britain for the benefit of his health. He returned much recruited, and, soon after, received a call from the associated congregations of Ancaster and Barton. This he accepted, and he was ordained and inducted as pastor over these congregations on November 2nd, 1870. On account of his health failing again, however, he was compelled to resign the charge in the spring of 1872. In the same year he removed with his father's family to the town of St. Thomas. Gradually his health improved, and he was able to resume his loved and chosen work. In the fall of 1875 he received and accepted a call to Port Stanley, where he labored with much fidelity and success until again laid aside by sickness. On the 6th of July, 1876, he was suddenly prostrated by a severe hemorrhage of the right lung. From this, however, he recovered so far as to be able to resume his pastoral work, and even to appear repeatedly in the pulpit and preach the gospel to his people. On these occasions it was remarked that he spoke with unusual earnestness and was listened to with marked attention.

"He preached as if he ne'er might preach again,
And as a dying man to dying men."

In May, next year, he had a second attack of the bleeding at the lungs. As soon as he could he then resigned his charge, in the hope that by taking entire rest he might regain his health. But the Master willed it otherwise. The hemorrhage returned with severity, and though at times he appeared to be rallying under the very excellent nursing and skilful medical attendance which he received, yet the disease could not be wholly removed.

His last illness confined him to his bed for nineteen weeks. During that time he suffered much from pain and weakness, but bore it all with true Christian resignation. Once or twice he said, "I would like to live to preach the gospel; but," he added, "I am perfectly resigned to what my Heavenly Father sees best." Owing to the nature of his disease he was not allowed to speak much, except in low whispers. He was able, however, to bear distinct and repeated testimony to the preciousness and all-sufficiency of Christ; and all through his illness his soul seemed to be filled with a calm and holy peace which was discernable even upon his countenance, and which remained unclouded to the last. As the end drew near he sought to comfort his sorrowing relations, telling them not to sorrow as those who have no hope. To his mother he said, "When you think of me after I am gone, think of me as your glorified son." About an hour before breathing his last, he asked those around his bed to sing the hymn, "There'll be no sorrow there," which they did. Shortly afterwards, on a little food and drink being brought to him, he slowly drew together his wasted hands, already cold with death, and having clasped them, he raised his dying eyes to heaven and silently implored his Father's blessing. He then tasted the food, after which a brief prayer was offered at his bedside. That being over, he closed his eyes, and with out a sigh or struggle fell peacefully asleep in Jesus. Thus passed away to his rest and reward another of the workers from the Lord's vineyard. His memory will be long and fondly cherished by those who knew him. As a son and brother he was remarkably dutiful and affectionate. As a Christian he was humble and conscientious, living near to God. As a minister he was studious, earnest, and faithful. For him to live was Christ and to die was gain. His funeral was attended by many ministerial brethren and other friends from a distance, as well as by members of the Port Stanley congregation and others. His mortal remains were laid in the cemetery at St. Thomas, beside those of his father, to await the resurrection of the just, but "he being dead yet speaketh."