

METHODIST RECORDER.

VOL. 1.

VICTORIA, B. C. AUGUST, 1899.

No. 2.

Rev. J. C. Speer.

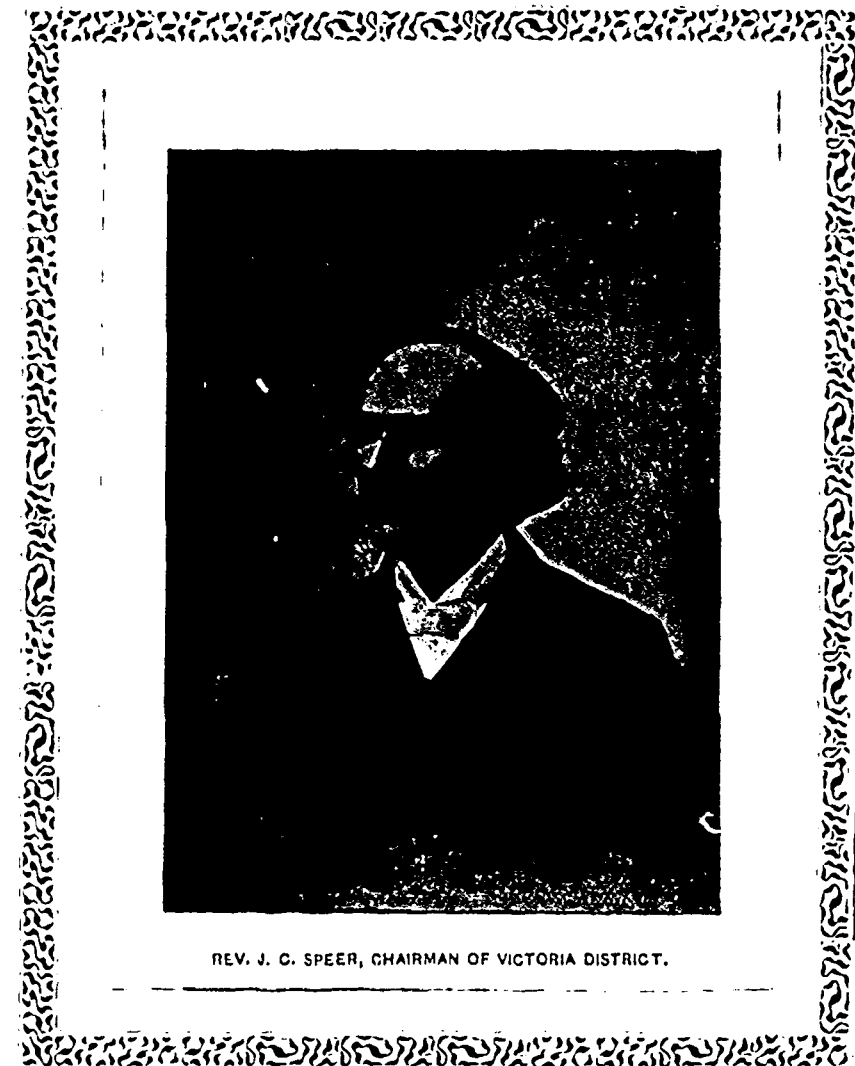
The heritage of an illustrious ancestry belongs to but few, and to fewer still an ancestry distinguished for their strict adherence to principles, which in the days long gone by, could only bring up on them persecution and distress.

The forefathers of Rev. J. C. Speer were Spanish Protestants, who resisted the Jesuitic purpose to blot out freedom of thought and action in religious matters, and thus drew upon themselves the fires of the Inquisition.

Fleeing from Spain, they sought refuge in Scotland, where the same sturdy opposition to the principle of coercion was manifested in the resistance given to "bloody Claverhouse."

Once more they chose exile, and found a home in County Tyrone, Ireland, and thus was blended in the one character the fire and impetuosity of the Spanish race; the strength, firmness and loyalty of the Scotch, the poetry, vivacity and love of humor, which marks the Irish, and with all, the love of righteousness and freedom, which are the distinctive features of Protestantism. Mr. Thos. Speer, the father of the subject of the present sketch, came to Canada in 1830, and settled in the township Dummer, Peterborough County, where he cleared a large farm, on which he built a store, and for twenty-five years kept the Post Office. The home of the Speer family was the home of the Methodist preachers. That generous hospitality, which marked the early settler, was always accorded to every visitor to the homestead. Here in the year 1854, in the old historic county of Peterborough, which has been called the county of preachers, Rev. J. C. Speer was born.

At the age of 20, under the faithful preaching of Rev. Nathaniel S. Burwash, in the village of Tara, he was brought to the feet of the loving Christ, and gave God his heart. The two years following were spent at school, at the end of which, having passed his examinations, he entered the Methodist ministry, and was stationed on Manitoulin Island, a wilderness mission, 50 miles long and 30 miles wide, with 15 preaching places. This hard and difficult field tended to develop that self reliance and sturdy independence which are to-day characteristic of the man and preacher. Among the log cabins and settlers, he labored faithfully, and had abundant cause for rejoicing in the salvation of souls. A term at Utterson, in Muskoka, and another at Hanover, in the county of Grey followed, and then he was appointed to attend Wesleyan Theological College, Montreal. Two years were spent under the tutelage of those master minds, Rev. Dr. Douglas and Sir Wm



REV. J. C. SPEER, CHAIRMAN OF VICTORIA DISTRICT.

Dawson, and few who have had like privilege but have felt the inspiration to grand and noble purposes and actions. Honors attended his work, and he won the aldermen's prize for oratory in his last year.

At the close of his college term he was, in the year 1885, married to Miss Harriet Robinson, youngest daughter of Mr Samuel Robinson, Burgoyne, Bruce county, who has proved to be the worthy wife of a worthy husband, and together they went to Little Current, Manitoulin, where the congregation was wrestling with a large church debt, incident to the building of a large stone church. Since that time it has been his lot, though not his choice, to be associated with charges so embarrassed, and in every case, his wise direction and financial skill have proved of great assistance. A term at Campbell's Cross and another at Mono Road, marked by grandly glorious revival seasons, followed by three years at Richmond Hill, Yonge Street Toronto, and he was invited to the Broadway Tabernacle, one

of the largest churches, and, at the time of his leaving, one of the largest congregations in the city of Toronto. At the close of a very successful term in this church, he was invited to the Metropolitan church, Victoria. His work here has always been marked by that zeal and energy which always means success. Faithful in the discharge of every duty, unflinching in denunciation of all vice and immorality, he has made himself a "terror to evil doers." He has now entered the third year of his ministry to the Metropolitan congregation, and, we regret to say, has been forced to decline the cordial invitation extended to him for a fourth year owing to the continued ill health of Mrs. Speer. He is at present the Chairman of the Victoria District and President of the British Columbia branch of the Dominion Alliance, and one of the associate editors of the Recorder. As a pulpit lecturer and orator he has secured well deserved popularity, and is highly esteemed by all, and particularly by those who know him best.