

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

HOME MISSION NOTES.—III.

FOR SEPTEMBER, DECEMBER.

BARRE PRESBYTERY—SAULT STE. MARIE—BRUCE MINES—COLLINGWOOD AND NOTTAWA.

After the lecture at Huntsville on Monday evening we started at eleven p.m. in order to reach Barre on Tuesday, where the Presbytery was holding its regular quarterly meeting. A ride of six hours, over a very rough road with dangerous bridges, brought us to Braveridge at five a.m. thence by boat to Gravenhurst at seven, and Barre at eleven.

The church edifice in Barre, like that of its neighbour in Collingwood, is not much to boast of as a building. In the centre of such a large population, and where during the summer months especially there are so many visitors, there should be something more worthy of Presbyterianism. Mr. Leiper is doing noble work in the church and town, and is greatly beloved by his people. It is matter of thankfulness that such an important point has been so well supplied, and with so short a vacancy intervening after Mr. Fraser's settlement in St. Thomas.

Although at a time when many of the ministers are absent, there was a goodly number present at the meeting of Presbytery. No Presbytery in our Church gives better evidence of the good results of Home Mission work than the Presbytery of Barre. In addition to the older members, such as Dr. Fraser of Bondhead, Mr. Gray of Orillia, and Mr. Rodgers of Collingwood, who have for many years borne the heat and burden of the day, there are a large number of young ministers who give promise of noble work in this extensive field. The business of the Presbytery I need hardly say is conducted by the clerk, Mr. Moodie, in an admirable manner, and augurs well for the spread of our Presbyterianism in the north.

An opportunity was kindly afforded us of addressing the Presbytery on the subject of Home Missions, with special reference to the Parry Sound and Muskoka districts, which are under the care of the Presbytery. Various committees were appointed to visit different fields, and urge the necessity of liberality on the part of the stations, in order that the Home Mission Committee may to some extent be relieved of its present burdens. The Presbytery is fully alive to the importance of pushing our cause in the many new fields opening up on every hand, but a large increase of men and means will be needed to enable us to overtake important points during the coming winter.

That same evening we left in the "City of Winnipeg" for Sault Ste. Marie, which we reached on Thursday at noon. There we met our missionary, Rev. Mr. McLeod, and Mr. P. Brown, who for many years has taken a deep interest in the welfare of the little congregation. Our Church for the past six years has, with very slight intermissions, supplied ordinances at this point and other two stations at a short distance from the Sault. In proportion to the efforts made and the money spent, our progress has not been at all satisfactory, whatever the future may realize. The membership of the Church at the Sault is small, and the burden of erecting a church, which was recently opened, pressed heavy upon them. Mr. McLeod, since his settlement in May, has largely increased the attendance, and his services seem to be highly appreciated. It is to be hoped that friends here, who have the interests of Presbyterianism at heart, will endeavour to meet their obligations to the Home Mission Committee better than they have done in the past. However unwilling the Committee may be to discontinue the stations at Sault Ste. Marie and Korah, it is not to be expected that the entire burden of supporting ordinances can be borne by the central fund for any longer term. This has been very much the case for the last four years. While we write thus, we have good hopes that under Mr. McLeod the congregation will become consolidated, and their appreciation of his labours proved by enlarged liberality.

Returning from the Sault we stopped at Bruce Mines, but found little or no encouragement to undertake a mission at this point. The mining operations are for a time at least entirely suspended, and the place left desolate and deserted.

As Mr. Straith of Paisley had recently visited other portions of the Manitoulin Islands, such as St. Joseph and Manitowaning, we did not stop at these points.

From his report sent us we extract the following. "Two new churches will be ready for opening at the end of September. The people deserve to be encouraged as they are exerting themselves to lay a foundation for future accessions. They have plenty of land but little money or the means of making it, till they remove the *old* and obtain a new one. By-and-by, I think, they will be able and willing to support themselves and perhaps help others beyond. The missionaries on the Manitoulin Islands are most earnest and laborious in their work. They are beloved by all of every denomination. St. Joseph's Island is being settled very rapidly. By far the most influential and the greatest number of any one denomination are Presbyterian. There has been no resident missionary on the Island as yet belonging to our Church, and the people are anxious to have one as soon as possible. I virtually promised them one. They will board him and raise a little money for him the first year, and hope in two or three years to raise the entire amount for his support. If a suitable missionary cannot be found, a lay catechist would be of service in the meantime.

These extracts are amply sufficient to show the loud calls that are heard everywhere throughout the land for the missionaries of our Church. "The fields are white unto the harvest, but the labourers are few," and the means to support the few far from ample.

Returning to Collingwood late on Saturday afternoon, we occupied Mr. Rodger's pulpit next forenoon, and in the afternoon in company with Mr. Leiper of Barre visited the Sabbath school at Nottawa, of which Mr. Melville is superintendent. This is another station under the care of the Barre Presbytery, and needs continuous supply winter and summer if it is to prosper. The village is largely Presbyterian, and the people willing to do their utmost for the support of the means of grace.

I trust that the ministers and office bearers of our Church in presenting to their respective congregations the claims of the various schemes, will not overlook the pressing necessities of such fields as have been briefly referred to in these notes. The large mission fields in the Ottawa Presbytery, in the Kingston and Brockville Presbyteries, and the ever widening extent of territory in Manitoba, are of equal importance. Whatever aid we may receive occasionally from Britain we are grateful for, but the great Home Mission work of the Presbyterian Church in Canada must be carried on by the Church in Canada. As a Church we are abundantly able to do so, if our hundred thousand members but give in proportion to their ability and as the cause demands.

BLASPHEMY UNDER THE LAST VIALS.

BY R. D. MACKAY.

During the time intervening between the later Old Testament Prophets and the Apostles, the leading events, from without, bearing on the Church and great interests of God on earth, were doings of the Empires which had the supreme dominion over Judea, then the chief seat of the Church—the empires of the Medes and Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans. These, the Holy Scriptures, with remarkable exactness, foretold by Daniel in the great image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and the vision of the four great beasts. After the time of the Apostles, the leading events were, the terrible persecutions of heathen Rome, while the Church remained in purity, and was fast extending itself through the bounds of the immense Roman Empire; the fearful judgments which wasted that very guilty empire by the irruption of the barbarous nations; the dreadful advance of the brutal Mohammedan power through the eastern Roman Empire, after the Church there had become so lamentably corrupt; the woeful departure of the Church in the western Roman Empire from original purity, until it had become one of the most formidable enemies to God and His Son, His truth and true people, that the world has ever seen,—and continued so, as its Mohammedan scourge did, in its peculiar course, for many hundred years; and the events of righteous judgment, by which both had their power, piece by piece, taken from them, as warning of the near approach of their final end. All these also the Holy Scriptures by John, in the Book of the Revelation, foretold. For the object of that Book is, to "shew unto" the servants of Jesus Christ "things which must shortly come to pass." These "things," or the leading events bearing on the Church and interests of God on earth, after John's

time, are successively described in the symbolical words of the seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials. For the reason that the Book of the Revelation is an account of the things which were to come to pass, chiefly in the Church, until the coming of the Lord, together with the words of Daniel as to the Roman Empire in its last, or Papal form,—the words of Paul to the Thessalonians, which shew that the great opposer of God is one who "sits in the temple of God," or the Church, by profession, and the words of John as to the place of residence, the "seven hills," and other reasons, enlightened servants of God think that the great enemy of God described in the Revelation, is that first rank enemy of the true Church and interests of God, the Papacy,—and that the vials or seven last plagues are a description of its downfall,—with a description also of the downfall of that other great enemy the terrible Mohammedan Power.

Undoubted historic facts tending to shew the decline of that mysterious anti-Christian power which has had its seat in the seven-hilled city, and had for many ages reigned with nearly absolute sway over the kingdoms of the ancient western Roman earth, are these. Through the heaven-blessed preaching of Luther and other true servants of Jesus Christ, multitudes of the people became enlightened in the truth of the Divine Word, and by 1560, the nations of England, Scotland, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, some of the Cantons of Switzerland and smaller States of Germany fell away from under its sway. Its sovereignty of the sea passed away into the hands of the Protestant nations of England and, for a time, Holland, at the destruction of the Spanish Armada, in 1588. Its ability, or will to injure the adherents of the truth, at least, by bloody violence, in the inland countries of its Empire, departed when the conquering hosts of Gustavus Adolphus prevailed over the veteran armies of the Austro-German Empire near the middle of the seventeenth century. The wonderful event by which that wonderful nation—France, foremost often through its civil rulers and leading ecclesiastics, at the bidding of Rome, in shedding the blood of the righteous, turned right round, about 1789, and shed the blood of rulers of the persecuting race of Bourbon, of ecclesiastics and people of well nigh every name, and became a fearful scourge to the nations of the old Roman earth. A no less wonderful event was the removal of the Pope from his formal temporal sovereignty. The great Bonaparte, in the beginning of the present century, as a prelude to what was, ere long, finally to take place, by a simple act of his arbitrary power, effected this great change. Italy, however, not being yet ready for the full deliverance, the temporal power had, after some time, to be restored to the Pope. The spirit of civil liberty, carried into Italy by the victorious French armies, having had time to spread in this once very mighty country, and with it, the spirit of national independence; but for French bayonets, in that year of amazing upheaval of popular wrath against the crafty and powerful enemy of Christ and the people—Papal Rome, or its kingly supporters—1848, or soon after, there would have been a speedy and final end put to the irrational, unscriptural anomaly. The materials were then, however, made ready. It remained for the Lord of Hosts to enable Protestant Prussia to prevail in its bloody strife against Rome's remaining chief supporters—Austria and France,—and in 1870 the kingdom of United Italy was established, and the temporal power descended to its grave.

There are other facts in the present line of remark.—as the high national position now attained by the free Protestant American United States; Austria passing from its concordat with Papal Rome, and not disposed of late to carry out its behests; the failure of the recent attempt to get Republican France to again give way before Ultramontane pressure, and fall back on the tactics of the dark middle ages; Belgium surprisingly passing from under a heavy Ultramontane yoke, and for the present, at least, presenting an opportunity for the spread of the truth not enjoyed, it is said, "Since the King of Spain and the Duke of Alva thrust out the Gospel;" the commencing advance of even Spain in the direction—notwithstanding frowning appearances for the moment—of rational liberty, as if, at length, come to see that its long utter intolerance of the truth and righteous men had brought it to its present low national condition; the high national position now reached by the Protestant Prusso-German Empire, with also the increasing power of Russia, which, though, by the idolatry, and other gross evils of its