

the unbelief of the disciples when they could not cure the epileptic boy—"O faithless and perverse generation." How he reproves the two disciples on the way to Emmaus as "Foolish and slow of heart to believe"; and how he insists on the potency of Faith, if even as a grain of mustard seed, to remove mountains out of our way. We may well ask why are the devils not now cast out? Why do we find our way hedged in? Why do we find ourselves truckling to an evil world, and resorting to all kinds of questionable expedients? Why are we deploring the aggressions of worldliness, superstition and infidelity, instead of being the aggressors ourselves? Why, but because of our own infidelity.

What most injures humanity is not the infidelity or unwise credulity of the unfortunate souls who know not the Scriptures nor the power of God, nor that of those who thoughtlessly neglect to accept God's gift of salvation, nor even that of those who scoff at God and religion. It is the infidelity of professing Christians, who conform themselves to the world, who weakly succumb to the opponents of the truth, and fail to give a reason for their faith and hope, who will not make confession before men, and decline to make any sacrifices for Christ's Kingdom, who will not walk in God's strength or accept the commission and opportunities He gives: it is this prevalent infidelity of Christians, not current but stagnant infidelity, that is the ruin of the present age. Were our Master now among us, it is to be feared that the words "O faithless and perverse generation" would be addressed not to the infidel Sadducees or credulous Pharisees of our time, but rather to those who profess to be His own disciples. By faith, in the times of old, even before the light of Christ's personal teaching dawned on the world, men and women "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions"; and it now only requires like stalwart, firm and rational faith to enable us to "turn to flight the armies of the aliens" and to conquer the world for Christ.—*Presbyterian College Journal*.

PRESBYTERIANISM IN THE NORTH-WEST.

BY PROFESSOR BAIRD, B.D., MANITOBA COLLEGE.

The circumstances of the country during the year 1891 have been favourable to the development of missionary activities; there has been a considerable increase of population through immigration, new railway lines are being built, or have been completed. A bountiful harvest has been gathered in, and altogether the people, freed from undue anxiety about making ends meet, have been unusually willing to contemplate and put into execution plans for church extension and for the better organization of Christian work. Growth in these respects is of course only external, and is by no means a decisive test of the deepening and hallowing of the religious life, but it is confirmatory evidence; and more direct evidences have not been at all lacking in many congregations that the Spirit of God has been mightily present to change the hearts and build up the lives of His people. It is only facts, however, connected with the external growth of the Church that come in any general way within reach of the chronicler, and to such, therefore, the present article must confine itself.

The Synod of Manitoba and the North-West Territories is the largest Home Mission field of the Canadian Church, and accordingly it is to this field that attention must first and chiefly be directed. The progress that marks the year has been more conspicuous in British Columbia than in any other part of the Synod. Thirty years ago the work at New Westminster, in the hands of the Rev. R. Jamieson, which was maintained by the Canadian Church, was classed as a "Foreign" Mission. For many years our work in that rich province languished, and even with considerable contributions in men and money from the Church of Scotland—which has been a good friend to these colonists ecclesiastically—but little progress was made; but a change has come within recent years, and now, in the same year as it happens in which the last congregations in connection with the Church of Scotland, Nanaimo and Nicola, came into the Canadian Church, the Presbytery of Columbia makes application to the General Assembly, through the Synod, to be divided into three Presbyteries, and to have these erected into a new Synod. The Synod has expressed approval of the request, and there is little doubt but that effect will be given to it at the next meeting of the Supreme Court.

The Synod of Manitoba and the North-West Territories was established in 1884, and now has seven Presbyteries—one for each year of its existence, but the stride it makes this year in giving off a new Synod indicates the greatest advance of all. Over the whole Synod the number of places in which regular services were held amounted to 539 in 1890, and these are the latest statistics accessible. They surpass those of the previous year by 116, and in all probability when the statistics for the current year (1891) are made known, they will indicate that a somewhat similar rate of increase has been kept up. Eighteen churches have been built during the summer, and three manses. The Church and Manse Building Board has given assistance to these to the amount of over \$7,000, and the total value of the buildings erected amounts to \$26,000.

It is not merely along the recognized lines of preaching and church building that progress is evident. A vigorous effort has been made during the year to supply needy settlements with wholesome literature. For many years something in a sporadic fashion has been done in this direction,

but it was left to the Presbytery of Calgary to organize for the purpose, and make the most of such literature as it could lay its hands on. Inspired by the zeal of the Rev. C. R. Gordon, of Banff, a Presbyterian circulating library has been formed, and under the auspices of this association several hundreds of books have been collected. A parcel of these is sent to a neighbourhood and kept in circulation till most of them are read; then another parcel, which has been in use in another part of the Presbytery, is substituted for the first, and so on. It is difficult to imagine any part of the Church where such a scheme is more needed or is more likely to be successful. The people in the North-West are for the most part readers, many of them readers of an especially intelligent class. The winters are long and so severe that not a great deal of work can be done out of doors. In many places, owing to distance, frequent social intercourse is not easily maintained. In order to awaken a deeper interest in the special mission work in which the Church in the North-West is engaged, an excellent monthly paper of modest dimensions has been established. The *Western Missionary* contains every month a well-selected amount of valuable information respecting the work among the Indians, as well as of a more general character. In short, it makes an able presentation of the practical Christian work the Church is trying to overtake in this new land. The venture has met with a very gratifying degree of success both within and without the Synod, and gives promise of surviving the dangers which beset such publications in the critical days of their infancy.

The interest the city of Winnipeg feels in the evangelizing of the country was shown very clearly last spring, when the Superintendent of Missions was engaged in collecting special contributions to provide for the extension of Home Mission work, in the face of a threatened deficit. Of the \$13,000, all told, which he collected, fully one-tenth was raised in Winnipeg itself. And since these sums are guaranteed annually for five years, and are to be paid in addition to the sums now contributed for the schemes, it will be evident that the star of Home Mission work is in the ascendant.

In several of the western towns evangelistic meetings were held last winter, and in most cases with results of a very gratifying character. Portage la Prairie received 150 members at one communion; Port Arthur, seventy; and Regina, forty-seven. And some of the mission congregations show proportions quite as high. Golden stream, an outlying part of the Gladstone congregation, received thirty-three members at once; Keewatin, thirty-five, and others at the same rate. Along with growth of this kind there naturally comes a drawing of the denominations more closely to one another, and the Presbyterian Church, as responsible for the religious training of about one-third of the people, according to the census, finds herself face to face with a problem which suggests the modifying of some of our traditional Presbyterian usages. When a community in which there are half-a-dozen denominations, none conspicuously more numerous than another, and the people unite in asking the Presbyterian Church to establish services among them, it is evident that a new responsibility is laid upon us. This has been done in cases where the people frankly confessed that they were anxious for religious services, and not especially for Presbyterian services. Is not the Church justified in modifying her form of worship in such a case? We profess to behold with regret the divisions that keep up two or three weak congregations and half-supported ministers in one little village, for which a single pastor is quite competent to do all the work needed; we pray and we legislate that such a scandal may cease. Shall we then, when the people are ready, and ask us—as they have done in some cases—be willing to leave in the background some of our traditional Presbyterian forms, dear as they are to the hearts of some of us, in order that the doctrine of the cross may have the opportunity of commending itself, without let or hindrance, as the power of God and the wisdom of God. Here is our opportunity if we wish to show that the Presbyterian Church is not intended only for Scotchmen and their descendants, but is adapted to the needs of all who would draw near to the Lord Jesus in spirit and in truth.

The year has been one advancement to the Indian missions. In places where the ground was broken before, the work has been carried on with no less vigour than in past years, and in some cases with more marked success than ever. The Rev. F. O. Nichol has entered into the labours of the late Rev. John McKay, and is reaping a harvest from his sowing. At a recent communion he received seventeen members into the Church. Besides the growth of work in places that have enjoyed for several years the benefits of the Gospel, work has been begun in three new places. The Government Industrial School at Regina has been opened under the care of the Rev. A. J. McLeod, B.A., and a competent staff of assistants. The number of pupils already mounts up to about fifty, and the institution, thoroughly equipped as it is, gives promise of great usefulness.

The Rev. J. A. McDonald, B.A., has been sent to open a mission among the Indians of British Columbia, and, after a prospecting tour up the coast as far as Alaska, has settled among the natives on the west coast of Vancouver Island, at Alberni, and is busy with the language. He has already opened two Sabbath schools among the children, and has in immediate contemplation a plan for taking some ten children into the house in which he lives, and converting it into a rudimentary boarding and industrial school.

The third case of new work is Miss Baker's mission school among the Sioux Indians at Prince Albert, which made

a small beginning a little more than a year ago in a tent, and which, established now in a more permanent abiding-place, gives promise of much usefulness.

In response to an earnest request from the Presbytery of Calgary, Mr. Thomas Paton, formerly a missionary in China, has been set apart to carry on mission work among the Chinese, considerable numbers of whom are employed in the mines, lumber camps and towns in the Rocky Mountains. For the present Mr. Paton spends part of his time also among the white settlers in the same territory, and his work, especially among the Chinamen, has already been signally blessed.

The interests of missions in the west have always been closely identified with those of Manitoba College. She sent forth fifty labourers into the harvest last spring, ten of whom were young men who had completed the theological course. She is thus able to supply more than half the fields within the Synod for which students or catechists are required. But the very efficiency with which the work is overtaken in the summer causes the want of supply in winter to be more painfully felt. During the winter her students supply some eighteen or twenty places which are said to be within reach of the College, but which are still so far away—one train a day being still the rule on western railways—that the student does not get home till late on Monday afternoon, and then in a fatigued condition from long driving that unfits him for steady intellectual application. After all these have been supplied, and all for which catechists can be got, there remains still thirty-five mission fields unprovided for. This is a condition of affairs which has led to such serious losses in the past, and it so neutralizes each summer's work that the theological professors have felt moved to offer that, if the General Assembly so requests, the theological session of Manitoba College shall be held in the summer rather than in the winter, so as to set free a band of young men each autumn to take the places of those students who return to resume their studies in other colleges. The proposal has already met with the approbation of Synod, and seems both to meet the needs of the case more fully, and to be open to fewer serious objections than anything that commended itself to the General Assembly at Kingston as a possible solution of what is admitted on all hands to be an evil for which some cure must be found.—*Presbyterian Year Book*.

HOW ARE WE TO EVANGELIZE THE WORLD?

MR. EDITOR,—I would say, first, Begin at home by removing the hindrances to the spread of the Gospel. In our day pride in the Church is a great hindrance; it leads to extravagance and extravagance leads to debt, and debt in a great measure kills the missionary spirit. How can a Church be a missionary Church when they are asked twice a year for money to pay interest on mortgage? What ought to go for missions goes to pay interest. Is it not solemn mockery to dedicate a Church to God with a debt on it that will crush the missionary spirit out of its members and stunt the spiritual growth of the rising generations? Some will ask where is the extravagance and point to Solomon's Temple. Was it not a national building and clear of debt?

Is there not a spirit of rivalry in the Churches in our day which leads to adding mortgage to mortgage, and that means adding hindrance to hindrance to the spread of the Gospel.

Anything that hinders the spread of the Gospel must be of the evil One. How are we to remove the evil? I would say, by every one of us giving one-tenth of our income to the Lord, and others might give more, as it would be easier for some to give one-fifth than others one-fiftieth. Then there would be no Church debt, and one of the devil's strongest holds would be taken. Let us try and help to bring all the big artillery in this city and country, yes and in the world, to bear on the fortress of the enemy of souls filled with pounds and dollars and blow every mortgage and note out of existence.

Then we would have a true missionary Church, and the next Church dedicated to the Lord will be a whole offering and not a part, lame or diseased. I would like to hear from a more able writer on this subject.

A LAYMAN.

THE FORMOSA MISSION.

MR. EDITOR,—You make prominent in your editorial columns this week a sentence from a letter of Mrs. Jamieson's, the insertion of which in your issue of the previous week I had noticed with regret, because it revived some old perplexities regarding Mrs. Jamieson and the work in Formosa.

Can you be in earnest in drawing from Mrs. Jamieson's altogether unique and inexplicable experience the conclusion that "\$70 may do more good than could be done by an individual labourer"? Are the conditions of language, climate and native prejudice so different in Northern Formosa from those that exist in the rest of the Chinese Empire as to render the labours of foreign women almost valueless? Is the experience of every other Church and Missionary Society in the world, and of our own Church in every other field, to be set aside because of this singular instance of self-effacement?

What is the "true inwardness" of this difficulty in regard to the employment of cultivated Christian women in Northern Formosa? No one questions that the great work of building up the Church of Christ in heathen lands is to be done in the future by a native ministry and native helpers; but we are as yet at the stage of foundation-laying, and the experience of all Missionary organizations is that devoted Christian women can render most valuable service. What is it that makes Northern Formosa so striking an exception? Mrs. Jamieson's letter does not furnish any explanation. Yours truly,

D. J. MACDONNELL.

St. Andrews Manse, Toronto, Feb. 13, 1892.