

HOME MISSIONS IN THE NORTH-WEST.

ness derogatory to the well-being of their Christian life, it is the duty of the Church authorities to place these matters in the proper light before the eyes of those who err. The same is necessary regarding home reading. There is no use mincing matters, rather let us fearlessly and prayerfully face the difficulty, and recognize and admit the truth. Our people are not gaining, rather losing, in the matter of good literature read versus bad and doubtful quality. So much is published nowadays of that doubtful quality that it behooves us to be up and doing, and the request for essays on this subject comes in good season. The responses ought to be powerful incentives for the direction of the minds of those in authority in the household, towards an earnest consideration of the whole matter.

The Church then may be held responsible for the proper introduction into the home of good literature, regular reading habits, self-improving methods and the proper oversight, by the older members of the household, of the literary pabulum of the younger portion. This much the Church can do without making Church societies, literary and educative. When we say Church, we include of course Church workers, and none among these will be found stronger for good and more enthusiastic than the C. E. S. This work could very properly be left to their oversight, to look after the introduction into the home of good literature, and after it reaches there, to encourage the reading of it.

To interest others properly, the Christian Endeavourers must be themselves interested. Everyone should see to it that they have in their homes at least one of their own denominational papers. It cannot be dispensed with—at least, not satisfactorily. The latest missionary intelligence alone is often intended for the very widest circulation of any other news contained in the paper; so that it is almost the duty of the members to take their own paper and read it thoroughly. It is also good policy whenever possible to read papers of other denominations and thereby keep informed of their current thought and methods.

The meetings of the C. E. Society, partaking as they do of a devotional character, need not necessarily be devoid of all references to anything in literature, outside the Bible, grand old Book! It has caused the production of thousands of volumes of the world's choicest literature; and while in not a single case do we have a book which rivals the good book, in literary style, grammatical correctness, or beauty of thought, many have been blessed of God to the furtherance of His kingdom. These could be taken up, references made to them or extracts read from them, and a very interesting and instructive evening spent indeed.

All of these ideas and schemes would serve very well to interest the members and prepare them for work in the several homes, which it would be their duty to visit. Having become informed regarding the periodicals, also Bible literature, the visitor should read some of the world's classics. A knowledge of these, however scant, would be invaluable in assisting the visitor to suggest to the father and mother what books their children should read. Very many of these well-written books are not suitable for family reading, and the work known by the endeavourer, who is trying in no matter how feeble a manner to direct the reading of say half-a-dozen families, the greater the power for good. The next thing to be done is to form reading circles to be managed by the members themselves. This idea could be very well managed in conjunction with a magazine club. The plan is very simple. A, B, C, D, E, F, form a club and buy six magazines at club rates. Each selects the paper he prefers, and it comes to his address from the publisher; after he has read it, which he does immediately, an interchange is made, A passing his to B, B to C, and so on, A finally getting F's periodical. The scheme works admirably and smoothly, is helpful and inexpensive in the extreme; each member, as will be readily perceived, having the run of six magazines, keeping one as his own. These papers would be invaluable for the proposed reading circle. They would form the basis (if thought best) of the evening's reading, other literature of course being substituted in part, or entirely if necessary. An hour spent in this way by a reader in each of the homes of half-a-dozen families would be a tremendous power in introducing good literature into the homes of the land. This would entail six hours per week, which in many cases, and with the multiplicity of meetings, might be thought excessive. At all events, two could work together and divide the work if found necessary.

Another idea which is quite feasible and easily worked out is to start a good Bible class or congregational library. Nothing in Church work exceeds this branch in opportunities for doing good. The formation of a really first-class library and opening of a bright reading room (open every week night) ought not to be beyond the capabilities of any live Y.P.S.C.E. The securing of a suitable room and case would ensure the filling of the case and reading table in a very short time. Many members would give a book or two; the nucleus being thus to hand and the expenses trifling, there is no reason why growth should not proceed rapidly. The benefits to be derived are so apparent that enumeration is not necessary. This much would not be disputed. Many who could not afford to buy at all would borrow of the stock of good, wholesome reading which should be constantly at the librarian's command.

The Y. P. S. C. E. which attempted to put the ideas mentioned above into practice would not find itself overburdened with work. Plenty of work means plenty of workers; many would gladly undertake work of this description, who are perhaps not attracted by any other kind now. The Society would be encouraged by the healthy tone of the post school education which it was seeking to impart to the families of the Church. The workers would thank God and take courage; thank Him for the good which they could accomplish with the hands and brains with which they were endowed, and take courage in the face of the tremendous tasks which lie ready for every willing hand. "Whatsoever lieth to thy hand to do, do it with all thy might." MARK.

At the Synod of Manitoba and the North-West, held in Regina, in moving the reception of the Home Mission report, Dr. King referred to his position as an honorary member of the Committee and declared that there were no two opinions in the Synod as to the value of the services of the Convener, Dr. Robertson. His course previous to his appointment as Superintendent of Missions had been in the line of Home Mission work, and he congratulated him on the success attending his unwearied efforts to secure from liberal minded helpers the means necessary for the prosecution of the work. The progress of settlement demands the attention of the Church, for it measures the extent of their obligation. Even as a matter of policy the only economical method is to keep up with the advancement of settlement. Such labour will save from a great deal of doctrinal discussion. He referred to the work of the late Rev. Angus Robertson and the fruits of his labour as observed in the reports of the representative of Calgary Presbytery. To fall in the field was an honour to be coveted. He called the attention of the court to the importance of the circulation of good literature, which he regarded as next in importance to sending living men. He referred to the interesting character of the labour and almost envied the young men who were engaged in the work. There were many difficulties. Discouragement arose from the smallness of congregations and the driving involved long distances in a severe climate; but such labours he believed were on the road to the best and highest satisfaction which this world has in store.

Dr. Bryce seconded the motion of Dr. King. He spoke of the great work in the North-West. Twenty years of it had convinced him that it was most interesting. There were experiences of a romantic character. The material to be found was the finest. The settlers as a rule responded with great heartiness to the approaches of the missionaries. He believed in each missionary being a true Canadian and loyal to the highest interests of the country. The Gospel of Christ was the foundation on which a true nationality was to be built. He believed in education in the history of our fathers. He thought the interests of the work demanded better organization. They were laying the foundations; let them advance. Their enemies were powerful, but let them go by the help of the Lord against the mighty.

The Rev. C. W. Gordon, of Banff, referred to the large extent of the Presbytery which he represented. It measured 750 miles from east to west. Few men were employed in the work, but there was a prospect of having five ordained missionaries during the coming season along the main line of railway. There had been an increase in the number of fields from fifteen to twenty-two during the year. Emigrants were coming in considerable numbers, and he believed in a policy of pre-occupation so that the memories of home and religion might not be dropped. The establishment of infidel societies with the evils observable in some quarters showed the need for this. He believed that it was needful to have the help and prayers of the people in the East and their approaches to the people there should not be with the tones of apologists and suppliants. They should offer them the opportunity of taking up the work for the exhilarating effect it would have upon them.

The Home Mission Report was presented by Dr. Robertson, Superintendent of Missions, who read portions of the report and gave an account of the whole work from Lake Superior to the Pacific. The past year, the report stated, was on the whole full of encouragement. Progress in financial matters had been arrested, it is true, at some points owing to meagre crop returns, but on the whole there was a decided advance. Settlements that had been neglected before were visited and provided with missionaries, and new districts had been organized. The prospects now are that there will not be any district of any size in the Synod this year without a missionary. Last year 121 mission districts, with 414 stations, received supply. Seven of these became congregations. This year 139 missions, with 493 stations, are to be supplied, with twenty-four augmented congregations (which are missions in a more advanced stage), with seventy-six stations. The total will be 163, with 568 stations, 4,977 families, and 5,847 communicants. Besides families there was a large number of young unmarried men who are householders who are connected with the Church.

The amount of supply given during the year for these missions was over 116 years of service which would amount to about forty Sabbaths for each mission. The average for the preceding year was only thirty-five Sabbaths. The Superintendent strenuously contended for continuous supply and pointed out the losses that must result from leaving fields for so long a portion of the year without any supply.

The grants for missions amounted to \$22,850 and for augmented congregations \$5,140 or including travelling expenses \$30,493. These grants make about one-fourth of the salary paid to missionaries and ministers. These figures of course do not include self-supporting congregations. The growth since 1880 was dwelt on and from it the Church was encouraged to persevere in this work. In 1880 there were only two congregations west of Lake Superior; in 1890, fifty-eight; in 1880, only twenty-five missions, and in 1890, 121; in 1880, eighty-six preaching stations and in 1890, 613; in 1880, 1,070 communicants and in 1890, 9,600; in 1880, \$14,000 were contributed and in 1890, \$181,756.

The report stated that last year twenty-two missions received supply for less than six months and twenty more for only seven or eight months. This the report deplored. The report seemed to favour the idea of requiring all graduates of colleges to labour for one year after graduation in the mission field and to provide for a summer session in some college of the Church so that students could relieve each other in the field—some taking the fields in summer and others in winter so as to provide continuous supply.

It was stated by the Convener that the expenditure of the Home Mission Committee exceeded the reserve by about \$8,000, and that the Committee proposed to pay all missionaries pro rata. This was opposed and the law left as before.

To help the finances the Superintendent appealed to members of the Church and congregations for special contributions, and for five years. Such was the response that over \$9,500 yearly has been promised in this way. Among the generous individual contributors were Mr. and Mrs. Clark, Toronto, \$400, yearly; Mrs. Topp, \$400; Hon. G. H. Bronson, Ottawa, \$600; Mrs. Bronson, Senr., \$400; John Leys, Toronto, \$400; members Crescent Street Church, Montreal, \$600; John Kent, Toronto, \$250; John Charlton, M.P., \$250; lady in Truro, N.S., \$250. Hamilton gives about \$2,000, Brampton \$300, the Churches in Toronto \$250 each, Summerside, P.E.I., \$200, Paris \$250, Springhill \$250. Winnipeg promised already \$600 and is likely to double the figures. The Superintendent maintained that if the people of the East knew the wants they would assist to plant missions here.

There is a decided advance in Sabbath school work. At as many points as possible schools are organized. An agent was employed last year to attend solely to this work and with good results. The report urged the greater importance of this work from the fact that family religion was not as generally observed as was desirable. It was stated that eighty-five of every one hundred young men coming from Ontario are not communicants. It was estimated that over 12,000 scholars attend the Sunday school.

The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper were dispensed in the different districts during the year and registers and rolls are generally kept so as to preserve a history of the congregation from its inception.

The report stated that there was a strong temperance sentiment in the country and that rural districts favoured prohibition. Four per cent. beer and the permit system as now administered were condemned and the hope expressed that there might be no lowering of the lever by which liquor was sought to be kept out, but rather the reverse. Satisfaction was expressed with the action of the Legislature in British Columbia in closing all saloons and bar-rooms from Saturday evening till Monday morning.

As favourable indications of the state of religion in the country the report referred to a large accession to membership, the observance of the Lord's Day, general attendance at church, generous contributions for salary and church building. The moral state on the whole was healthy east of the Rockies and in British Columbia which had suffered from early neglect, it was certainly rising.

The report expressed a generous appreciation of the character and work of missionaries. Their privations and arduous labours were dwelt on and the self-sacrificing spirit in which these labours were performed. Nor were ministers' wives forgotten. "Their work is never done and it is all work and not make believe." The obscurity and neglect of home missionaries were contrasted with the prominence given to foreign missionaries and the injustice pointed out. The Convener maintained that the advanced position of the Church in the West to-day was largely due under God to the character of the missionaries and their labours.

The report pointed out the high intelligence, scholarship and wide reading of the settlers in the West and maintained that only first-class men should be sent as missionaries.

In presenting the report the Superintendent pointed out the importance of the district in which they were planting missions. The resources of the different parts of the country between Lake Superior and the Pacific were dwelt on and their variety and vastness pointed out. The country was destined to have a large population and every effort should be made to provide the incoming settler and his family with the means of grace. He spoke of the enterprise of the C.P.R. in connection with development, and showed how China and Japan had been brought to every part of America and even Britain by the swift steamers on the Pacific and the fast flyers running between Vancouver and the Atlantic coast. He predicted a revolution in many things as the result of this movement and urged that everything might be done to keep Canada religious, sober, honest and pure, so that the work of God abroad might not be hindered by the heathen enemy in witnessing vices and practices to which the heathen were strangers.

SPRUCEDALE.

MR. EDITOR,—At the late meeting of the Presbytery of Barrie, an item of business came before the court which was entrusted to my care and which should have received attention from me earlier had circumstances permitted.

I shall best bring the matter before your readers by quoting an extract minute of Presbytery. "A memorial was read from the Sprucedale congregation relating the circumstances which required them to remove from their present place of worship and build a new church in the village, and requesting leave to appeal to friends of the Church for aid. Mr. Geo. Copeland supported the petition. It was agreed that the Presbytery, having heard Mr. Copeland, cordially recommend the case of the Sprucedale congregation to the sympathy and liberality of friends in other parts of the Church. Mr. Findlay was requested to put a notice of this matter in THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN and Review."

Sprucedale is one of our stations in the district of Parry Sound. The circumstances referred to above are briefly these. Some years ago this station while under the care of Mr. Jamieson, our late missionary in Formosa, built their church on a site which was then in the centre of the congregation. Changes, such as all new settlements are liable to, have since taken place in the population, so that the church is now altogether on the north side of the congregation. Meantime the village of Sprucedale has sprung up nearly two miles to the south of the church, through which the branch of railway connecting with Parry Sound will run. The old church is too small for the increasing congregation and it has been deemed better to build a new church in the village and near the centre of the congregation than to enlarge on the old and now inconvenient site. The members will do all they can in the way of securing site and material, but they require assistance to complete the building; hence, after due deliberation, the action of the Presbytery in the matter, Mr. Geo. Copeland, elder in the congregation, was commissioned by the Presbytery to secure aid from friends outside the district and will make a personal canvass in some parts for this most needy cause. Any contributions forwarded to him, Sprucedale P.O., will be acknowledged and applied to the building fund.

Barrie, May 11, 1891.

A. FINDLAY.