

cause! Do you owe nothing to Christ and his cause? Are you not a great debtor?

Be zealous then to promote his cause.—While you have opportunity use it. It will soon be beyond your power to help. Now is the day of trial. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

VICTORIA—THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

It has been in my power to attend some of the sittings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, which are just closed, and I think that a few notes respecting them may not be without interest to the Committee and the Church at home. Your attention has during the past year been called, at our own Assembly and otherwise, to the condition of this sister Church by the presence of one whose absence here has been much felt, the Rev. Dr. Cairns. I cannot speak of Victoria and its wants as he can; yet the observations of a visitor may possess an interest of their own.

As you know, the Victorian Assembly is not a representative Court like ours, but like the Synod of our United Presbyterian friends, embraces all ministers holding a cure, with, of course, an equal number of elders. It gives, therefore, a just idea of the size to which this Church has grown, to say, that, instead of the fifty-three ministers of charges who united to form it less than seven years ago, ninety-six names of settled pastors stood on the roll of this Assembly. The first duty of the House was the election of a Moderator, the eighth who has filled the chair of the united body. In previous elections, the claims of long as well as of prominent service in the colony have been wisely recognised; and the Church's choice, on this occasion, fell on the Rev. Thomas Hastie of Buninyong, a gentleman who for nineteen years has diligently discharged the duties of that charge, and whose worth has won the esteem of all his brethren.—Here, however, length of service does not yet mean what it does at home. The colony itself is only thirty years old, counting from the landing of the earliest colonist; and the fathers of its Church are still in their strength. A large proportion of the ministers are men whom I myself remember as students; nor could I fail to observe that while a few of the older heads in the Assembly are growing gray, hardly one of them

is white. As the Victorian Church needs, so it surely ought to possess the energy and activity of youth. What good and noble work it is achieving in this new land, I shall presently show you.

But my friends here can afford to have it suggested that youth has drawbacks as well as advantages. A large deliberative body, recently constructed out of diverse elements, and not yet old enough to be guided by its own traditions or follow the tactics of accepted leaders, is not likely to be very decisive and orderly in its business. Accustomed to see the whole crowd of affairs which must be attended to at the meetings of our own Supreme Court got over within ten days, I was surprised to find the sittings of our Victorian brethren spread over a period of no less than nine. This was partly due to a rule they have, limiting the daily sederunts to four hours in the morning and three in the evening; a leisurely arrangement which consults the comfort of members more than the despatch of business, and which, however it may contrast pleasantly with our excessively protracted and late sittings in the Free Assembly, does seem somewhat needlessly to detain ministers from their congregation. As it was, the rules had to be relaxed towards the close of the proceedings; and yet the business, which had dragged heavily all along, had to be too hastily wound up at last. There was another cause for this. I have been accustomed to reckon it among the disadvantages which attend the possession of leaders versed in Church affairs and long used to guide its deliberations, that the proceedings of our Assemblies fall too exclusively into our hands, that younger men are scarcely encouraged to take part, and that the functions of the House tend to degenerate more than is desirable into the mere confirmation and recording of conclusions already arrived at by a few. Here the evils lie on the other side. The Victorian Church suffers from a want of leaders. Those who are most fit to guide appear to be hardly influential enough to be readily followed. With colonial freedom, a large proportion of the clerical members mingle in discussion. Time is too often wasted over random or crude proposals; and a hasty suggestion of the moment may be at last substituted for a well considered judgment. These inconveniences, however, are due to the Church's youth, and the circumstances of her formation. Better for her that all her ministers should take interest and part in her work, and that thus through free and equal consultation she should win her way to more settled days, than that she should be bound in her infancy to the leading-strings of a party or a leader. The proceedings of her Supreme Court may be meanwhile a little