

Our Contributors

Dr. Robertson's Last Appeal.

The following letter was prepared a few days before Dr. Robertson's death. He left with Dr. Warden the names of a number of gentlemen to whom he desired copies to be sent. It is thought well to give the letter much wider publicity. Many throughout the Church may feel like responding.

PRESBYTERIAN OFFICES,
TORONTO, JAN. 7, 1902

DEAR SIR:—The Home Mission and Augmentation Committees of the Church are greatly embarrassed in the prosecution of their work by the lack of an adequate revenue. But for a contribution of \$13,570, from Britain, and a special collection from our own Church, the Committees would have closed the past year \$20,000 in debt.

The outlook just now is not cheering; the fund being upwards of \$50,000 in debt. The receipts for 1901 are less than for 1900 at this date, and yet the liabilities for this year—owing to extensions in New Ontario and the West—are higher. The grants promised last Spring are \$25,000 above the normal revenue of last year.

The Explanation:—Missions are increasing at the rate of 25 per cent., and revenue only 10 per cent. Last year Ontario gave about 20 cents per communicant, to plant and maintain missions and augmented congregations in Western Canada.

The Need:—Last year from 70,000 to 80,000 settlers found a home in the West, and the immigration of 1902 is expected to reach 125,000, if not 150,000. From the United States, Eastern Canada, Britain and the continent of Europe they come. If the foreigners are not educated and made loyal, they are sure to prove a menace to the free play of popular government. If not evangelized and brought up to our moral level, they are sure to drag us down to theirs. This, we cannot afford; our ideals and conduct are not high enough now. At present, about 100,000 English speaking settlers in the West are without ordinances, and a large mass of foreigners in the same sad plight. Of Slaves alone, 50,000 are like sheep without a shepherd, and their children are without schools. These foreigners are receiving accessions from Europe every year, and the birth rate among them is high. Neglected, what shall the harvest be?

Census Figures—during the last decade, the population east of the great lakes increased 100,000; west, 310,000. Ontario loses five members of parliament, the West gets them. The rural population has been steadily diminishing in Ontario since 1861. The increase of 60,000 in Algoma, Muskoka, Parry Sound, Nipissing and Renfrew, alone saved Ontario from a decrease. The centre of population in the Dominion is steadily shifting westward. After the census of 1911, the West is likely to hold the balance of power. If the electors are largely Mormons, miners and foreigners, is there not peril if the work of the missionary and schoolmaster are suspended?

Encouragements are many. During the past ten years, the population of the West increased 83 per cent.; the adherents of the Presbyterian Church increased 187

per cent., and her communicants, 168 per cent. Missions and Augmented congregations are becoming self supporting every year;—about twenty are supposed to go off the lists next spring, and become helpers in the general work of the Church.

For work done in the Kootenay and Klondike, the Church has been highly commended—even by Roman Catholics. Missionaries have been a saving salt where drinking, carnality and gambling hold high carnival. Past success is a potent plea for aggressiveness. The respect in the West for law and order is largely due to missionary effort.

Remedy:—A larger revenue is imperative;—Whence is it to come? Not from Britain; her people will not give it, because they think Canada abundantly able to support her own home missions. Nor with the means at our disposal, should we ask Britain for money.

The general contributions are rising, but too slowly for the present emergency; hence, an appeal is made to the wealthier members of the Church to contribute specially for a few years. In addition to the contributions of the people connected with a Mission, \$250 will support one missionary. To many, in these prosperous times, \$250 is a mere bagatelle. Scores of our people could give this amount, and not a few could double, or even quadruple it, and not feel pinched.

Several have been appealed to already, and they have promptly and generously responded. Two members in Chalmers' Church, Quebec, give \$250 each; five in Knox Church, Ottawa; six in St. Andrew's, Ottawa; three in the American Presbyterian Church, Montreal, give \$500 each, and another \$375; one in Crescent Street gives \$250; one in Smith's Falls, \$250; one in St. Andrew's, Peterboro', \$250; one in Brockville, \$500; one in Central Church, Toronto, \$250; and Westminster congregation, Toronto, undertakes to support five, —\$1,250; a gentleman in Paris, \$250, and his wife, \$250; two in Central Church, Hamilton, \$250 each. And more are considering the matter. But we require, for present needs, 100 special contributions of \$250. Will you please come to our help in this way? You are asked as a Canadian and a Christian, as a lover of Canada, of your fellowmen, and especially, of Jesus Christ. His religion has raised us where we are, and by His grace alone, whether as men or as a nation, can we hope to stand.

Will you kindly consider this matter and notify Dr. Warden as early as you conveniently can. The Church year closes on 28th February, and it will be of very great service to the cause if you could forward the money before then. Should it not be convenient to forward the full amount within the time named, one half might be sent now, and the balance later. Soliciting the favor of a reply at your early convenience.

Yours faithfully,

ROBT. H. WARDEN,
Convener, Home Mission Committee.
JAS. ROBERTSON,
Superintendent of Western Missions.

The Watchman: When there is no place in the ministry for men of thorough education, good character and all round efficiency because they are not genuineness or are over forty, the effect reflects more seriously upon the standards of the churches than upon the ministers or the theological seminaries.

Wise Men's Gifts.

Giving is the genius of Christianity. It is its very foundation principle. God is its Rock-bed and God gave. His giving was based on love, and no other giving is acceptable to Him. "For God so loved the world that He gave." Giving in a spirit of love is a test of the true Christian.

As we read of the incarnation of our beloved Saviour we learn that wise men came from the East saying: "Where is He that is born King of the Jews, for we have seen His star in the East and are come to worship Him," and when their seeking was rewarded by finding Him, they presented unto Him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh. It is remarkable the Christian shrewdness of these heathen—though enlightened men—they were evidently under the influence of the Spirit of God. From a Christian standpoint they were wise men because they first sought and found the Saviour, then they presented their gifts. This is God's method. The Church established in Corinth received the commendation of Paul for acting in this same way—their gifts were acceptable because they first gave their own selves to the Lord. True wisdom is in receiving what God gives, then giving what we have to God.

Zacchaeus was a wise man because he first "sought to see Jesus" and after accomplishing this end his soul was stirred to true benevolence—1st in giving to the poor and 2nd in restitution—giving back what he had wrongly taken: "Beloved Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four fold."

The wisdom of the world reverses this—men think themselves wiser than that which is written—wiser than God, and thus they bring gifts to merit God's favor, forgetting that the highest wisdom is to receive what God gives, then from a feeling of gratitude and love towards Him to give the first fruits of our lips and of our lives.

Wise Christian giving has a holy purpose, aim and end. Men may not always know what that purpose is—yet it invariably carries out in whole, or in part, one of God's designs or plans. These wise men from the East were co-workers together with God in the gifts they gave to the infant Christ. Herod had a malicious scheme to destroy Him who was born King of the Jews. It was necessary that his scheme should be frustrated and the Infant of Days preserved. "Depart into Egypt" was the divine message sent to Joseph. Egypt a strange country with strange people. He and his would be strangers among strangers and withal were poor. The gifts of the wise men show the superintending providence of God, how He watches over and provides for the anticipated wants of those who are the objects of His care. With the gold the Holy family would be provided for in Egypt and in journeying to and from that country; without it they would have anxious care and possible distress. The wise men from the East were God's financial ministers, his angels of mercy; and their gifts were timely, wise and useful. These men were wise in seeking, finding and worshipping the "Young Child" and then after such earnest and devout service opening up their treasures and presenting their gifts.

London, Ont. Geo. W. Armstrong.