

Original Communications.

REV. A. M. STEWART'S LETTERS.—XX. COLUMBIA AND SONORA, CAL.

"How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people"—complained Jeremiah, when Jerusalem was deserted of her people and the temple unfiled with worshippers. The empty house, the vacant hall, the silent battle-field and the desolate village, all jar into sadness man's social being. Were Goldsmith here, he might sing over again, and with an unction, his "Deserted village."

In my last letter, notice was taken of the appearance of things in the vast placer-mining regions of California. Since then, a further advance of fifty miles has been made, through these mining counties to Columbia and Sonora; famous localities where gold was found. These towns are but four miles apart, with intervening space occupied by pleasant villas. Ten years ago, they numbered probably, two thousand inhabitants each, beside thousands of gold-washers who filled the entire section. Busy, crowded marts were they; and gold as a thing of nothing.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES.

Through the operations of our Domestic Board, a flourishing church was organized in each place, and by successful ministerial labor a commodious House of worship, free from debt, was erected in each locality. The congregations became self-sustaining and promised great things for the future. All is now changed. The congregations are silent and for the past season both churches have been closed. Some who have been pastors here die now on the Atlantic side,—deserted, perhaps, too readily the field where the Redeemer had placed them to feed His lambs and His sheep.

The causes leading to this condition of things have already been noticed. The placer-mining has ceased to be profitable and the miners are gone. The town's people soon found themselves without an avocation, and many of them have also gone, and are going, in order to find profitable avenues for human effort in other parts of the State. A score of members are perhaps left in Columbia and half a dozen in Sonora. In the former place, a good Sabbath school and prayer meeting are still kept up; in the latter, all is silent.

To this remnant I have come, by quite a detour, to preach for two Sabbaths, dispense the sacraments and counsel about the future. Hard is it to counsel with intelligence, when all the premises for the future are not before you. Shall our Home Mission cease effort here? Shall the church at large allow a weak outpost to be abandoned to the enemy? In military operations, it may be policy to desert an outpost, blow up a fort, or burn a town, but for the church in her warfare against sin, to permit an advanced position again to be wholly occupied by the powers of darkness, seems a doubtful, if not imbecile policy.

No sadder illustration of sectarian divisions or demand for union of effort and co-operation among professing Christians is to be found than here. In both Columbia and Sonora are four Protestant church organizations—Presbyterian, Episcopal, Baptist and Methodist. Not one of these is self-sustaining, but each struggling for a precarious existence. Were all united in each town there would be a large self-sustaining congregation. Under present conditions, there is not likely to be regular preaching in any of them, and none is able to live without foreign propping. How long, O Lord?

Society here is undergoing a sudden transition. While mining continued profitable, little else but mining was thought about. Gardening, fruit-growing, farming and stock-raising were looked upon as too slow processes to the goal of wealth. It is now, however, manifest, that this vast, foothill region of California, with a climate more salubrious than Italy, and with scenery excellent, has also a soil prolific as the home of Virgil or the valley of Sharon.

A PARADISE.

During the few days' sojourn at Sonora, my gains has been Mr. E. Dane with his wife, living in the suburbs, and formerly of Massachusetts. Coming here twelve years ago, and viewing the situation, it was resolved, in true Yankee style, that instead of mining or saloon-keeping, fruit and vegetables would be raised to supply the miners; and their orchard and garden have become as Eden. In no former place, and in many beautiful ones have I been, were there so many suggestions of Paradise. A greater variety, richness and beauty of fruits and vegetables are here ripening and maturing, than I ever before supposed could grow together in the open air. And this too in a climate of the temperate zone. In no other land could it be thus. Apples in variety and size unequalled; peaches, which if the best New Jersey fruit-grower saw, he would quit his business in disgust; plums large and beautiful as peaches, apricots, acetarines and almonds; large fig-trees both of the purple and white fruit, now bending with a second crop of delicious figs; pomegranates fully matured, &c. Grapes of the choicest kinds, in any quantity desired, and the purest wine from these, well refined, at one dollar per gallon; and all the vegetables that can be grown in gardens anywhere. On the 30th of September a plate of large, beautiful strawberries, were brought in from the garden; and I was assured that in every month the past year, ripe

strawberries had been gathered from the vines in the open air.

And yet mine host's occupation languishes. Buyers and eaters have gone or going. His remaining neighbors have as much and more fruit than needed. A foreign market is yet too distant without a railroad. If any Christian family in the East, having done up the world's business, are looking after an earthly Eden in which to retire, let them come and buy this one, which could be had at a cheapness that would create surprise. Come and help to maintain the languishing cause of the Redeemer; and find also as cheap, as quiet, as pleasant, and as healthy a place in which to live, as the heart could wish.

Such a region cannot become wholly unpeopled, and even if so cannot long thus remain. Some of the people, now here will remain. Others will come for different purposes than mining. Presbyterian churches will be demanded here and should not be abandoned. Conversing with an intelligent Christian lady about the condition of matters here, I made inquiry, as to why they had not been able to retain a pastor. "The strong ones won't stay and the weak ones the people won't hear," was her answer. "True this of more localities than Columbia and Sonora. The outposts as well as the more fashionable centres demand the strong." A. M. STEWART.

SYNOD OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY.

We condense from the favors of two correspondents an account of the recent meeting of this body.

BROTHER MEARS: The Synod of New York and New Jersey met in the First Presbyterian church of Newark, New Jersey, October 20th. At the same hour, the Synod of New Jersey met in the Third Presbyterian church, which stands on the same noble street, and but a few hundred rods distant. The committees appointed to make the preliminary arrangements for the meeting of these bodies, had judged it wise to combine their action, and act as a joint committee in providing for the entertainment of the members, and suggesting union in devotional exercises. As a one of the results of this joint action, members of the two Synods found themselves in several instances guests of the same family, and ministers and elders, O. S. and N. S., sitting side by side at the same table. Another was the Union prayer-meeting held in the Third Church on Tuesday evening, conducted by the moderators, Drs. Newell, of New York, and Reed, of Camden, and addressed by Drs. Cuyler, of Brooklyn, Hamill, of New Brunswick, Wheeler, of Poughkeepsie, and Rev. Geo. S. Mott. The members of the two Synods and a large congregation united in the exercises of this interesting occasion. To some, now or in former years, members of the Presbyteries of Newark, Rockaway, and Montrose and once connected with the Synod of New Jersey, it was an occasion of absorbing interest to meet in social intercourse, and to unite in thanksgiving and supplication at the mercy seat with brethren from whom we had been separated for thirty long years. One of the city papers remarks, "Many thought that there was probably never such a meeting in the city of Newark before." In this opinion the writer concurs, and he has been familiar with that city for more than half a century. In the afternoon following, Wednesday 21st, the two Synods sat together at the Lord's Table in the First Church, and enjoyed another season of Christian fellowship. The exercises were conducted jointly by the two moderators, and Drs. Joseph T. Duryea, R. K. Rodgers and others participated therein. Do not such joint services, shared with such heartfelt interest, point to a more perfect union in which all dividing lines will be erased, and it will be felt and known that we "are all one in Christ Jesus?"

THE POPE'S ENCYCLICAL.

The following paper offered by the Rev. Dr. Wm. Adams, of New York, was unanimously adopted:

"Whereas, the Pope of Rome, called Pius the Ninth, did on the 13th day of September, in the year of our Lord 1868, issue a certain letter, a proclamation addressed to all Protestants and non-Catholics throughout the world, the import of which is to invite and urge all persons and organizations thus designated to hasten to return to the only fold, meaning the Church of Rome. Whereas, the said Pope, in the said letter, called paternal and apostolic, has in an unwonted manner, and as if pleading at the bar of public opinion, assigned several and various reasons for its preparation and publication.

Whereas, among the reasons so mentioned are the assertion of his own supremacy over the human conscience as the vicar of Jesus Christ, and "the authority to govern the persuasions of the human intellect, and direct the actions of men in private and social life," as also this, that the rejection of his authority and protest against it, by so many has promoted and nourished those perturbations in human affairs in this our day, which the said Pope pronounces miserable and grievous, but which must be regarded by every friend of his species as eminently hopeful and auspicious;

Whereas, all such claims and assertions on the part of the Pope of Rome are to the last degree unfounded in fact, contrary to the truth, reason, Scripture, and the whole genius of Christianity, and, if allowed, would prove subversive to all human rights and liberties;

Whereas, recent movements, especially in Austria and Spain—countries long in subjection to the monstrous pretensions of the Papacy—command the prompt recognition, sympathy, and

support of all friends of humanity, freedom, and religion throughout the land; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the facts here recorded furnish and present a proper and fitting occasion for all Protestant churches throughout Christendom, each in the mode which its own wisdom shall suggest, to prepare and set forth for general distribution, through the same channel which the Pope himself has chosen, a suitable response to his letter, which response shall contain a statement of the reasons why his claims can in no wise be recognized, as inconsistent with a catholicity more Catholic than Rome—the authority of infallible Scripture, and the glorious supremacy of Jesus Christ.

Resolved, That a committee be appointed by the Synod, whose duty it shall be to consider the expediency of corresponding with other Protestant bodies, in this country and in Europe, as to the propriety of such timely action for the furtherance of free Biblical Protestant Christianity.

Resolved, That it be referred to the same committee, if they deem it wise, to prepare and publish a reply to the said letter of the Pope, which shall be regarded as an expression of the sentiments of this Synod concerning the matters therein contained, as of vital importance to all civil and religious liberty throughout the world, and to the salvation of the human race.

The following were appointed the committee contemplated in the resolutions: Dr. Wm. Adams, Henry B. Smith, Roswell D. Hitchcock, Jonathan F. Stearns, Edwin F. Hatfield, Samuel T. Spear, and George L. Prentiss, and Messrs. William E. Dodge, Prof. Theo. W. Dwight, L. D., Hon. Daniel Haines, Hon. E. A. Lambert, J. B. Pinneo, S. F. B. Morse, and Cyrus W. Field.

An appeal from certain persons claiming to have been elected Elders in the Church of Pleasant Valley, in Dutchess county, N. Y., from the decision of the Presbytery of North River occupied a large share of the time and attention of the Synod; and it was finally disposed of by directing that an election be held after such ample notice to the Church as shall leave no doubt respecting its choice—a conclusion which seemed to promise the restoration of harmony and peace to a church long disturbed by dissension and division.

The prayer-meetings at the commencement of each morning session, and on Thursday evening, the Synodical prayer-meeting, as well as the union meeting on Tuesday evening, were seasons of rich spiritual interest, and the brethren present were reminded of the out-pouring of the Spirit upon church after church in which the meetings of the Synod have been held in several preceding years. Testimony was also given to the precious influences which brethren have carried from these seasons of devotion to their homes and their flocks, and how resolutions formed here have been followed by revivals there.

Our Synod is a large body, having on its roll at the close of these sessions the names of 303 ministers, and 170 churches. Of these, 242 ministers and 89 elders were recorded as present, a larger attendance than at any former meeting. May the measures adopted result in much greater good to the cause and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

BROOKLYN, October, 1868.

Mr. Edrora.—The Synod of New York and New Jersey met last Tuesday in the First church Newark. This is the mother of churches in that city. New School Presbyterianism has a strong hold in Newark. The type is quite conservative but very genuine. The meetings were baptized with the spirit of union. The Old School Synod of New Jersey being in session at the same time, one Committee of Arrangements extended the hospitalities of the city to all without respect to Schools. Old School ministers and elders found themselves in New School families, drinking in, I fear, those deadly heresies which Princeton so much dread. Dr. Craven was certainly very remiss to allow the tender lambs of the flock to be exposed to such wolves. As a result and legitimate consequence of such indiscretion, the O. S. Synod adopted a resolution in favor of union.

The two Synods united in a prayer-meeting, and in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. It was a good place. To many it foreshadowed a better day when there shall be but one great Presbyterian family. It cannot be doubted that there is a strong current of opinion in behalf of union. The people want it even if learned Professors do not. The sessions of the Synod were especially interesting to some who seemed to feel that the Spirit was present in an unusual degree. Surely the Spirit ought to be present when and where the Church holds her gatherings of the leaders of the host. Dr. Spear preached on "Revealed Things," just such a sermon as he can preach; one solid mass of thought condensed, boiled down. As it is to be printed, I will say no more of it, only this, that so far as Dr. Spear is concerned, it will forever settle the question whether New School men believe in a vicarious atonement.

NARRATIVE OF THE SYNOD OF MINNESOTA, 1868.

The recent harvest of grain garnered from this State is but a type of those fields here which are already white for the spiritual harvest, and the reports from the various churches in our Synod sound like the sharpening of the reapers' tools making ready to go out to labor, in these great fields. They are the words of men conscious that the harvest is great and the laborers are few; but they are also the words of those conscious that the eyes of the Lord of the Harvest are bent approvingly upon them, and that laboring for Him and with His blessing, there is strength and power for the work. May the great Lord of the Harvest send more laborers into the field, and so strengthen those that are already at work, that when we gather together, one year hence, we may joy before God "according to the joy in harvest" and "as men rejoice when they divide the spoil."

The year just past has been one of quiet work with no very great ostensible results to report, and yet one in which almost everywhere there has been a reasonable degree of progress. Not one church in our midst has participated in what may be technically called a revival of religion, and yet many have received quite large accessions to their membership.

THE CHURCHES.—GREAT GROWTH.

Nine new churches have been organized during the year including three new Indian churches. Those within the State are located at Leroy, Cleveland, Beaver Falls, Winnebago Agency, Keniska and Minnereka. There are about six church edifices in process of erection, and a much larger number of congregations are preparing to build soon. There are 2,087 members in our churches, being an increase of about 510 during the year; 301 on examination and 209 on certificate. (A discrepancy in figures occurs somewhere as 1,688 were reported last year, but as the new report is made up of necessity, partially from Minutes of the General Assembly, and partially from reports given at this meeting, it is natural enough that a discrepancy should occur.) This is a very encouraging increase and one much larger than was reported last year.

The churches receiving twenty accessions and upwards are as follows: Minneapolis, 1st, 42; House of Hope, St. Paul, 34; Shakopee, 27; Cleveland, (new church), 26; Red Wing, 25; Stillwater, 22; Mankato, 21; Hastings, 20. It will, however, be noticed that these churches are mostly in the larger towns and those increasing most rapidly in population, so that in much smaller places there has perhaps been an increase more gratifying.

There have been baptisms of adults, 121, of infants 224; (of these 65 adults and 98 infants were in the Daotah Mission.) The attention of our ministers is earnestly called to the disproportionately small number of infant baptisms in their congregations.

SABBATH SCHOOLS.

Of these it is difficult to give an accurate report, for it is believed that many of the small schools kept up in school houses in the country are not reported. We hear of about ten new Sabbath schools, but this is doubtless an underestimate. Of the members of the Sabbath schools there 2,876 reported (no report for the Indian churches). This is an increase of over 500 from last year's report.

BENEVOLENT CONTRIBUTIONS.

It is believed that many of our churches are gradually and slowly learning the hard lesson of giving according to their ability. Some of the contributions are however piteously small, and that, too, for congregations well able to give, and who if trained to give systematically, would soon find that they were able to give so much as to astonish themselves. The number of ghastly blanks opposite the names of many churches is very much to be lamented. The only two churches in the Synod whose blanks are all filled, are those at Mankato and Stillwater, (though in reality the church at Chatfield has filled its only remaining blank by generously contributing to the cause of Ministerial Relief in its own congregation.) It is fostered upon the minds of your committee that the ministers of the Synod have not done their whole duty in asking for the contributions of congregations. It is perhaps the hardest task of a ministers life to ask for money for the various causes pressed upon us, but when we remember that it is begging for Christ, all timidity should vanish. It is the duty of every minister to be a beggar for the cause of Christ; it is part of his profession. Let us learn to beg as Paul did, who followed up his argument on the glorious doctrine of the resurrection, by calling attention to the collections, and who urged the church at Corinth to give liberally that they might thus imitate Christ, because they knew the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty, might be rich. We need to educate our congregations to give, in order that the salaries of the ministers of this State may be speedily equal to their support, for this will be the result.

Let us have no blanks unfilled on the Minutes of the General Assembly next year. Even if the amount be small it will look like progress and business to have each blank filled, and will encourage others to emulation. Let some of the money from our twenty millions of bushels of wheat, find its way into the treasury of the Lord. Your committee would also call attention to the importance of giving first and most to those causes recommended by General Assembly and Synod. Much of the money contributed by our branch of the church goes unquestionably into extraneous channels. We love our own dear church; we believe its affairs are administered with such economy and discretion that the means we have to spare will best contribute to the great end in view, the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom, by giving to the causes it places before us. From the report of this Synod to General Assembly, and from our own observation it has seemed to us that these hints were needed.

GENERAL FEATURES.

We have said above that there were many encouraging features in the report features in the reports given us from the churches—one that is very prominent is the practical methods adopted to carry on the work and reach all classes, young peoples' prayer meetings, Young Men's Christian Associations, the visitation by the eldership, the

setting to work of lay members, the election of deacons, preaching in school houses and private houses, ladies' prayer meetings and associations, Local Bible Societies, Relief Committees, Temperance Associations and various other practical ways of working. These signs are very encouraging. That pastor who has any materials at all with which to work, and who is endeavoring to carry all the weary burden himself, is not only wickedly ruining his own health, strength and spirits, but is blocking the wheels of the chariot of the Lord. A minister's duty is to marshal the hosts of the Lord, to give every soldier his position, and make others fight also, while he leads them onward to victory.

DEATH.

The Synod has lost during the year a faithful and gallant soldier of the Cross. Entered into rest at Troy, Kansas, on the 9th day of March, 1868, Rev. Chas. S. LeDuc, of Hastings, aged 47. A brother we are told of loving and lovable disposition, of fine talent and earnest aims to serve his Master, who in preparation and through college struggled to be independent of aid and free from debt. After preaching two years in Ohio, he came to Hastings, in 1855, organized a church in January 1856, and remained in its service until 1867. We are told that as strength and health failed he felt more and more the priceless privilege of preaching Christ, and Him crucified; that his death was free from fear, full of hope for himself and trust in Providence for the future welfare of his wife and little ones; and so God led him to his glorious rest.

COLPORTEUR.

It gives our committee pleasure to report that our Committee of Publication has seen fit to grant a colporteur to labor in and with this Synod in distributing the publications of the church, and in preaching the word of life, and we cordially commend to the kind care and cordial cooperation of the brethren, our brother Rev. Ransom Wait in this new enterprise.

BIBLE AGENT.

It is but justice to notice the faithful labors and indefatigable exertions of Bro. M. N. Adams who has during the year presented the Bible cause to the churches, and distributed the word of truth where it was needed.

NEED OF MORE MEN.

A report of our worthy Dist. Sec. of Home Missions, Bro. Ruliffson has not yet been presented to the Synod, but we are told he has many items of interest to give us; new enterprises and encouragements to report as the result of another year of faithful labor. He has told us of the urgent need of more men for this field, which has led your committee to put forth the inquiry whether we, as pastors of churches, have done our duty in endeavoring to turn the faces of competent Christian young men to the work of the ministry, and of encouraging laymen in our churches to begin the preaching of the word.

WORK AMONG THE GERMANS.

Our hearts, with yours, have been warmed by the accounts our German brethren have given us of the labors put forth among their countrymen, and of the practicality of more extended and more successful work among them in the future. Let us not forget to pray for them. The Swedes and Norwegians in our midst receive the printed page with thankfulness and read it with avidity. Let us not forget to send to the Tract Society for publications in their languages to distribute among them.

INDIAN MISSIONS.

Across our State borders the devoted missionaries are laboring to bring the very savages out of a state of barbarism and heathenism into civilization and the influences of Christianity. The report from our Daotah churches is on the whole, quite encouraging. The Daotah Christians are evidently becoming more and more confirmed in their steadfastness in the faith, and their adherence to upright morals, and it seems to us, brethren when beholding such scenes as we have witnessed here in this house,—a Daotah warrior, once rejoicing in the glory of bearing the scalps of his enemies, now a Christian pastor rejoicing in his faith in the Lord Jesus, and laboring to bring his tribe to Christ,—surely we can say, what has God wrought? And when we remember what the Daotahs are by nature, and reflect what many of them now are by the grace of God, we can point to them as a triumphant evidence, sufficient to silence cavillers and unbelievers forever. We can point to them as a triumphant evidence that the Gospel and salvation of Jesus Christ was designed for the whole race of man of every tribe and nation.

We learn from the report of the mission that one native pastor has been ordained, and two men licensed to preach during the year. We also learn that by far the largest Presbyterian Church in our Synod, more than doubling in number any other, is a church of converted Daotahs. We also learn that the tribes beyond, especially the Yanktons, are asking for the preached word. May it not be, that in the Providence of God, the wrongs this people have inflicted upon the Indians shall be atoned for by the giving them the Gospel through the Christian church of these United States? May our brethren John Williamson and Ardenas Ehamani, return from this meeting richly laden with the blessing of God, and may they and their coadjutors feel in all their labors and trials, that they have the prayers and sympathy of us all.

[We omit the statistics, as with the exception of figures already given in the Narrative, they may be found in the last Minutes of the Assembly.]

Let us with prayer for the Holy Spirit's aid and with faith and hope and love to Christ, labor in the year to come.

The voice of the Great Captain of our Salvation gives the order, "Forward" and conquest Minnesota for Christ. Let us remember that they who go forth even in weeping, bearing the precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing bringing their sheaves with them. Above the din and noise of a sinful world opposing us, let us ever hear the voice of our Master saying, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Ed. B. WRIGHT, Jos. W. HANCOCK, R. MARVIN, } Committee.