

Some . . .

Urgent. . .

Church. . .

Problems.

**Address** GIVEN BY

**The Right Rev. John Walker,**

THE MODERATOR.

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# Some Urgent Church Problems.

Centenary Retrospect, Outlook  
and Proposals.

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## ADDRESS

GIVEN BY

The Right Rev. JOHN WALKER,  
THE MODERATOR,

At the Opening of the General Assembly of  
the Presbyterian Church of Australia,  
in the State of New South Wales,  
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## Centenary Retrospect and Proposals.

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Fathers and Brethren,—

I deeply appreciate the very high honour which you have conferred upon me in calling me to the Chair of this Venerable Assembly. For the generous confidence of my brethren in the ministry and eldership,—which I take my election by an almost unanimous vote to indicate,—I am most grateful. Love of our Church is with me a passion, and I think I can say with simple sincerity, that with the best of my capability, I have tried to serve her and her blessed Head. This, I can further say, that working in the Bush as a pioneer, and in my present parish, I have found the service of Christ in the ministry of His Church a great delight. While occupying the office of influence to which you have called me, I shall, as the Official Head, do my best to serve you and the best interests of the Church to which we all owe love and loyalty. On taking the Chair, I do so with some misgivings; but have great confidence in the essential kindness of the brethren. I am not without hope that your sympathy and assistance will make the responsible and, at times, difficult work of presiding over the deliberations of this Venerable Court, more a pleasure than a burden. As Moderator, I will do my utmost to facilitate the business which brings us together, to maintain the rules of debate and to guard the order of the House, and, as your Chairman, will, so far as I know, be to all consistently fair. If I fail, no one will regret it more than I, and I am sure you will be patient with my shortcomings. Longing that this may be both a very

happy and inspiring Assembly, may I ask you to unite your prayers with mine for that Divine grace which sweetens all human and all Church relationships, and without which all our best efforts and deliberations must be in vain.

#### LOSSES.

Fathers and Brethren, since last we met, three of our Ministerial brethren have passed within the veil:—The Rev. W. F. Fraser, M.A., Emeritus Minister of Murrurundi, after 28 years of service; the Rev. John H. Archibald, Emeritus Minister of Moruya, for 32 years a humble-minded, leal-hearted, beloved pastor; and the Rev. Alexander G. Michie, of Bombala, called away a few weeks ago, without a moment's warning, from the work of a very active and valued ministry and from a loving family circle. Such a sudden summons may well articulate to us the Master's words: "Be ye also ready, for, in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." Let us be up and doing, brethren, for the working day is wearing through. Of the faithful Elders whose departure has made our Church the poorer, I must mention Mr. Robert Miller, of Petersham,—often a member of this House, a good man and true, with moral and religious backbone, equally trusted in the business world and the Church; Mr. James McIntyre, of Stroud, gentle and beloved at home, who in his country parish was a tower of strength to our Church, and last Assembly, as often before, represented Dungog in this House; John Yambo, for years well-known and honoured amongst us,—a South Sea Islander and voluntary Missionary to his countrymen in Sydney, an Elder of St. Stephen's, and a zealous Christian. Then recently, two gentle-natured, influential members of country parishes (both large givers to the Centenary Fund), passed away,

greatly regretted: Mr. Alex. Park, of Longford Station, Bendemeer, New England; and Mr. John Strahorn, of Mungery Station, Bogan River. We also lament the sudden death of Mr. Donald McIntyre, of Kayuga Station, Muswellbrook,—a thorough Highland gentleman and staunch Presbyterian. The names of many other office-bearers and members, whose going hence has left big blanks in our congregations, are enrolled above. To the many of our people who have lost dear ones fighting the battles of the Empire in Africa, we offer our tender sympathy; and we cherish the hope that a permanent Peace is not now far distant.

#### TWO MATTERS OF IMPORTANCE.

Before coming to my Address, there are two matters to be touched upon; First, the Consummation of the Union of the various Methodist Churches in Australia,—in which we all rejoice, and on which we would offer to our brethren our cordial felicitations, with prayers that the blessing of God may richly rest upon their earnest labours. Then, Second, a Drought of unusual severity still rests upon almost the whole of this State. The action of the Government in setting apart a Day of Humiliation and Prayer was altogether right; and the manner in which it was observed everywhere, calls for thankfulness. Showers have fallen, but there is the utmost reason why the whole Church should continue in prayer to Almighty God for abundant rain. Meanwhile, our sincere sympathy is with the many of our people and many others to whom the Drought means more or less disastrous loss. Surely we have reached the "darkest hour before the dawn"; and ere long, we may, by God's grace, look for plenteous rains and fruitful seasons.

In view of the unique opportunities which have been mine during the past two years, of becoming intimately acquainted with the ministers and parishes of our Church, it may reasonably be expected that I should use this occasion to give the conclusions to which I have come as to the practical needs of our Church, rather than for the discussion of any more academic theme. Accordingly, Fathers and Brethren, I propose to address you upon

THE ACTUAL CONDITION OF THE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THIS  
STATE, AND ITS MORE PRESSING  
NEEDS.

Of course this is a wide theme, and, in the time at my disposal, can only be treated from certain aspects. This year,—I would commence by reminding you,—the Presbyterian Church in Australia attains to the august dignity of a Centenarian. Its history goes back to within 14 years of the Foundation of the Colony. The bald

OUTLINE OF ITS LIFE-STORY

is as follows:—Presbyterian services were commenced in the year 1802, on the Hawkesbury River, by Mr. James Mein. In 1809, the first Presbyterian church was erected at Ebenezer—church and school combined (typical of our Church's method in all its history). In 1823, the Rev. Dr. John Dunmore Lang arrived in Sydney, the first ordained Presbyterian minister. Scots Church, Sydney, was built in the following year. In 1843, the Disruption of the Church of Scotland extended to Australia. Shortly after, the Presbyterian congregations in Victoria (Port Phillip) became independent of the N.S.W. Churches. In 1865, the bulk of the Presbyterians of N.S.W. belonging to the Established, Free, and United Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, and

the Irish and English Presbyterians, united, forming the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales. A few Free Church ministers and congregations stood out from the Union. The recent Census gives the number of Presbyterians, outside the United Church to-day at 286. In 1880, the Rev. John Miller Ross came from England as first General Agent of the Church, and did a great and notable work in improving the organization of the Church and in extending it, reorganizing the Sustentation Fund, etc., etc. In 1886, the coming of age of the United Church was celebrated by the launching of the Majority Fund, in connection with which a sum of £26,260 was raised in five years for local and general Church purposes.

In July of last year (as is in the memory of all) the Presbyterian Churches of N.S.W., Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia, and Western Australia consummated their Union, in Sydney, and—with great rejoicing and becoming ceremonial—the Presbyterian Church of Australia came into existence. May the Divine blessing rest on this Union and upon all the State Churches included in it! and may the spirit of practical, helpful, and loving brotherliness grow between all the office-bearers and members of the Presbyterian Church of the Commonwealth! Whatever criticism may be justly made of the early days of Australian Presbyterianism, let it never be forgotten what enormous difficulties the Founders of our Church had to face, and how little there was of an outward sort to nerve their hearts. There was, in truth, very little to attract capable ministers to Australia from the Old Country during the first 60 years of our Church's life. Let us honour the memory of those men who long ago heard Australia's spiritual call; and let us never forget their courage, their perseverance, their

faith and actual achievements for Christ and His Church. When the History of the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W. (now being written by our learned and well-beloved father, the ex-Moderator, Dr. Cameron) is published, I trust that it will be found in all the homes of our people, and that young and old will read with zest the story of our Church's cradle-days, and of the Ministers and Elders—so many of them have gone to their rest and reward—to whom we all owe so much. We have indeed much to thank God for, as we face a New Century in our Church's life, for—with whatever of failure and shortcoming in many directions—our Church has during all these fateful years vindicated Evangelical doctrine, a spiritual ideal of worship, and a high standard of ethics. The Presbyterian tradition of an Educated Ministry has been heroically maintained, and our strong Scriptural polity has proved itself, under the testing conditions of Colonial life, well suited for orderly Church government, and, with the progress of the years, has commanded, increasingly, the confidence and respect of the general community.

#### PROSPECTS, IDEALS AND DUTY.

Fathers and Brethren, the prospects of the Presbyterian Church in this State and throughout Australia, were never brighter than to-day. We are a united Church, free from internal dissension, and with a definite, stimulating, and growing ideal of Church life and responsibility. The *esprit de corps* of our Church has vastly improved during recent years. We have a body of cultured, earnest, and hard-working ministers, most of whom are facing the practical problems of difficult spheres, and of various kinds, with a fine courage, zeal, and

hopefulness. Our position as a Church in Australia is such that no Presbyterian need be other than proud of the ecclesiastical name which he is honoured to bear. We do well to thank God for the Presbyterian Church: for its past history in many lands, and for its present position, spirit, and work. At the same time, I am sure you would have me say here, that, as a Church and as individuals, we heartily recognize and lovingly esteem all other faithful branches of the Church of Christ—the spiritual homes in which countless human hearts have found rest in the Saviour, and the impulse to a higher life; and, further, I will say, that the ultimate goal of our ambition is not a mere triumphant Presbyterianism, but a purified, love-lit, unselfish, heroic Church of the Redeemer in this land, including all and ennobling all:—where diversity of method and government, and even of doctrinal view, shall not mar nor weaken that true unity of love and of service for which the King and Head of the Church prayed and longs. However, Fathers and Brethren, the issue of the golden Future cannot be forced. Our plain duty *now* is, First: To pray for unity of spirit, and for the growth of that love of Truth and genuine Christian charity in our own and in all the Churches of Christ, out of which the Ideal must be born; and Second: To diligently and faithfully do our own work, and to realize more broadly and deeply our duty to God and the nation, as an ancient and vigorous branch of the One Catholic and Apostolic Church. By virtue of our spiritual privileges and responsibilities, now and always it must be ours to face and carry out reforms in our Church administration and methods, whenever and howsoever experience and the Spirit of Wisdom shews that such are needed. A lazy Church; a narrow, parochial, sectarian Church; a hide-bound, unexpansive,

unadaptive, growthless Church has already "Ichabod" written upon it. Presbyterianism has, at certain epochs and under certain conditions, produced *narrow* men, but—they were strong, virile men, and only narrow in certain aspects; and Presbyterianism, rightly known and understood, is neither narrow in its ideals, its principles, nor its sympathies. It rests upon the reverent recognition of the Absolute Will, Wisdom, and Love of God; and its ideal of human life is that of our Shorter Catechism: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever." The Presbyterian view of the Church and its Government directly tends to develop the moral manhood and womanhood of its people, by placing on the shoulders of its membership, male and female alike, spiritual and ecclesiastical responsibility. I appeal from the Chair now, not only to the Ministry and the Office-bearers, but to the members and adherents of the Church, young and old, to stand together shoulder to shoulder, to think, pray and use their varied gifts to devise and loyally accept needed reforms, and with fresh faith and fervour, seek great things *from* God and attempt great things *for* God.

#### THE CHURCH'S MISSION.

Are there Christians in Australia to whom it needs to be said: that the glorious, mystic, supernal Temple, the Church of the living God on earth, was not founded by Jesus Christ our Lord to be an esoteric club house, a carefully-guarded palace of hidden religious delights for "the nicest people" On the contrary, it is meant to be an asylum for sinners, a Haven of Rest to those to whom life has proved hard, a House of Light whose beams are to shine out upon and subdue the cold darkness of this work-a-day world; and the office and call of the members of the Church

is not to sit at ease, but with hearts aglow with compassion to go out and gather in the ignorant and the evil, the sensuous and God-forgetting, the weak and down-trodden, the broken and broken-hearted. The world has no room for a Church wrapt in contemplation, sitting apart, admiring and talking about its own real or fancied perfections. The Church the earth *has* room for and cannot do without, is the Church which feels sympathetically the throb of the world's great heart: its agony and its joy. This Church must ever be honest with the nation's sins, backslidings, pride; but it must abhor Phariseism and cant, and with unselfish love and purity which none can gainsay, it must be always humble and helpful. The Church is not the world's aloof-sitting judge, but is appointed by Christ to be His Hands in saving, healing, correcting, uplifting. The Presbyterian Church cannot—nor can any Church—be heedless of the vice, the drunkenness, the Sabbath-breaking, the damnable selfishness, greed and villainy of the Gambling mania: cannot leave the "lapsed masses," whether rich or poor, alone: cannot neglect the Orphans, the Fallen, the Sick and Poor, the sailors and soldiers, the navvies on the Railway Extension works, the isolated Bush dwellers, miners prospecting by lonely water-courses, the people of the inchoate townships springing silently here and there, the 7,000 Chinese outside Sydney,—without great guilt and loss.

As a Church, we have a good record of spiritual and intellectual work done in this Australian land, and the influence of Presbyterian thought, principle and zeal is found in all ranks of life, in philanthropic movements, and legislative enactments. I suppose that there are very few philanthropic movements in Sydney or throughout the State, in which Presbyterians are

not either active personal workers or towards which they are not liberal givers. But the thought that presses on me, and I must press on you, is, that we are, in the providence of God, a strong Church—strong in intelligence, virility, numbers, and wealth, the representatives in this land of more than one great National Church of Europe, and of powerful Churches in America, throughout the Empire and the world,—it becomes us therefore to be large of view, divinely ambitious in aim, humbly recognizing that we have great and national responsibilities in this new world.

Fathers and Brethren, have we not been content to let the Salvation Army—which does not claim to be a Church—have the burden of a great deal of work which we—and all the Churches—should be doing? The Church of Rome—despite its errors—may well teach us here. So far, we have no Presbyterian Orphanage (a vast pity, in my view!), no Rescue Home, no Seaman's Mission nor Bethel (I rejoice to hear that St. Stephen's congregation is about to support a missionary to work amongst Seamen and the Hospitals), no Deaconesses' Home (though our Church in Victoria has one).

Could we not, as a Church, and on a large scale, seek to reach the unchurched and godless multitudes who crowd various districts of our great metropolis? The Methodist Church has its Central Mission, with many conjoined philanthropic and aggressive organizations. Does not the actual religious and moral condition of this great and crowded city cry out to the Presbyterian Church to go and do likewise? Should we not have one or more attractive Halls, such as the City Mission have erected, with men of the people in charge, specially qualified with the conquering trinity of virtues: grit, grace, and

gumption? Should our Church not have a Gospel Tent for Evangelistic work in the crowded Parks? These questions, I respectfully submit, this Venerable Court should earnestly face, and answer according to the will of God. The awakening of this worthiest kind of Churchly spirit—a spirit which nobly realises its high destiny and courageously arises in Christ's name to fulfil it,—*this* will assuredly fire the enthusiasm of the best of our people, and this will arouse, we doubt not, the Lord's Purse-Bearers to realise more adequately the responsibilities of wealth, and to provide the necessary funds with a generosity which will reprove our halting faith. The success of the Centenary Thanksgiving Fund, thus far, proves the stuff of which our people, rich and poor, are made.

I must, however, in view of Forward Movements which I have ventured to suggest, and of others which I have yet to urge,—pause to touch on the urgent subject of

#### CHRISTIAN GIVING, AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF WEALTH.

Generally speaking, the attitude of the Church (in all its branches) towards *giving*—in view of the lack of readiness to give in any fair proportion to means, for Christ's cause and kingdom—is paralyingly pessimistic and faithless, and the Church's ministers and office-bearers act and speak very often, as if this state of things were *fixed*. And this but perpetuates the evil it deplures. But surely, the Church of God must refuse to be dominated by such a low-pitched, worldly doctrine of the possibilities of human nature brought into any real touch with Christ. Avarice, selfishness, meanness, are all amenable to the Spirit and ideals of Jesus. Over the narrow

horizon of the money-worshippers may come swiftly and overwhelmingly the thought of the sacred responsibility of money and property; and with this, a vision of the joy and glory of the right, the altruistic use of it. In view of the spiritual needs of our land, and the crippling of the Church for lack of means, I refuse to *beg*, but I do solemnly appeal to the Christian money-makers and property-inheritors of this country to be sure that they are not withholding from God's work more than is meet; and to look afresh at their cheque-books, and see whether they are spending their incomes in such fashion as God can approve. Undeniably, there is yearly an enormous amount of Christian money spent in most unchristian ways. The huge sums wasted on mere pleasure-seeking, luxury and display, and in pandering to the increasingly extravagant tastes of the young, is a chief reason why the Church and the cause of Christ are starved. Surely it would be wise for us all to deal with this question *now*, for certainly we shall all have to face it before the Judgment Seat of Christ. For the physical, moral, and spiritual weal of the people themselves, and for the great gain of the Church and Nation, we plead for a simpler life, for the cultivation of simpler tastes, and for a brave breaking away from the mandates of Fashion and Society, when these traverse the evident will and purpose of God.

#### THE CHURCH'S DUTY TO ITS WORKERS.

And now, Fathers and Brethren, I have a burden pressing on my heart—a burden which has grown more insistent month by month, during the past two years, when I have been living in the manses of our faithful frontier ministers, and driving with them—thinking and talking the while—over their tremendous parishes, and over

those solemnly-silent Bush roads, which these brethren have so constantly to traverse alone. The burden is: that the Church has not been, and is not, doing its duty by the ministers in the Bush and to their parishes. Numbers of our ministers—so far as the Church is concerned—are left in pitiful, nay pitiless, isolation. What wonder, then, if in these and their office-bearers, Church loyalty should grow feeble, when the Church cannot but appear as a careless step-dame, instead of a warm-hearted mother. At present we send out men to distant centres, and, if they fail, the Church frowns upon them; and if they succeed, the Church, in its Presbyteries and Committees, says something amiable of such, and then—leaves them alone! And many men *fail* because they are—*left alone*, and successful men gradually *break their hearts* because they are—*left alone*. What every minister and office-bearer in the Church wants is the strong and nerving sense that the big heart of the Church beats in sympathy with theirs, and that that heart is a *kind* heart. More good work is got out of all of us by kindness and encouragement, than by criticism and neglect, and our method hitherto has, I fear, too much been: to leave men alone if they are doing fairly well, and to frown upon them if they are not. Fathers and Brethren, we must find a better way. We are discovering a growing reluctance, among even our young ministers, to go out to the Back Blocks, and we reprobate this tendency. But should we be so greatly surprised? Say, for ten or twelve years, we leave a minister and his wife and family in a distant centre, in the hot, hill-less, dusty, dreary West. And they do good work, so (though the climate is trying and the stipend small) they are left alone out there, and neither they nor their children get a holiday or a chance of feeling the intellectual or spiritual stimulus of

the Church's larger life and warmth. And, at last, that minister does the only thing that seems left for him to do: he resigns his parish, and throws himself on the Home Mission Committee for such preaching work as it has to give. Who is to blame for it? Is it the congregations in the cities who neglect the claims of ministers who have faithfully and well served the Church in the country? Yes, to some extent, it is. Is it the Presbytery of the bounds? Is it the Home Mission Committee? Is it some person or persons "in Sydney" who are supposed by Bushmen to have mysterious powers and patronage? None of these last three are specially to blame. It is the lack in our present system. Our methods need revising. There are those who will say at once: "The fault lies at the door of the Presbyteries. The Presbytery is the constitutional cure for the evils of which you speak." I believe that Presbyteries might be, and should be, vastly more practically useful than they are. They should generate more of the heat of Brotherhood and Helpfulness. But Presbyteries are made up of busy, overwrought men, generally, with big, clamant parishes and small salaries; and in the Bush, the ministers and elders forming these Presbyteries are widely separated—in some cases by hundreds of miles. Why, even in the Metropolitan Presbytery of Sydney, one of its parishes is 1,396 miles from the G.P.O. I refer to *Broken Hill*. Are you going to censure the Presbytery of Sydney because it does not make the minister and session of that great city periodical visits of encouragement? Ideally, Presbytery should be the loving mother of its workers; actually, Presbytery itself, in many cases very much needs "mothering" by the Church. There are Presbyterians who make a fetish of Presbytery, and some of these are satisfied with a mechanical fetish at that. Fathers and Brethren,

for the sake of the greater efficiency of the Presbyteries, as well as for the good of the ministers, elders, and people in their widely scattered parishes, the present machinery and organization of our Church—in Australia, at any rate—must be supplemented. We need, and *must have*, more men of ability and energy, who are *free from parochial ties*, who, as the Agents of this General Assembly, and the helpers of Presbyteries, shall be free to visit and hearten every minister and parish in the Church, bringing into more loving touch the far and near—men with large views to develop, extend, and strengthen the Church; men of kind and sympathetic hearts to help and encourage all who need—as so many *do* need now—help and encouragement. Spiritually, ecclesiastically, financially, the appointment of such special agents would, I am certain, be of immediate and untold benefit to the Church; and their appointment would not, in any sense, interfere with our Presbyterian system and order.

#### PRACTICAL PROPOSALS.

After giving the matter prolonged thought, and discussing the pros and cons with not a few of the brethren during long Bush drives, I venture to urge upon this Venerable Court the appointment, without loss of time, of at least *three separate officials*, with special duties, namely:—

1. A *Superintendent of Parishes* (one or more),
2. A *Home Mission Organising Commissioner*,  
and
3. A *Church Evangelist*.

1. *The Superintendent of Parishes* has his prototype in John Knox's scheme. But I do not ask for him anything of Episcopal status or ultra-Presbyterial power, such as the early Scottish

Superintendents had. His status would be but that of a Minister of the Church, with special duties laid upon him by the General Assembly, under whose orders he will be and to which he will regularly report; and his power shall be the power of helpfulness and sympathy, freely rendered in every parish of the Church. Such an official on coming into a parish would be received with the honour befitting his position and work, and his advent—like the infrequent coming of a Moderator—would do much to improve the status of our Church in each community. But the work of the Superintendent would be by no means ornamental mainly; indeed, my thought is that it should be laboriously practical. It would be his to practically help the Sustentation Fund organization in each parish, meeting with Committees, and interesting individuals. Such a wise, tactful, genial official could enormously increase the revenue of this splendid basal Fund of our Church, and the salary of well-nigh every minister could ere long be raised to a more adequate sum, naturally and without strain. Such a man could accomplish far more in this direction in a fortnight in a parish, than local Treasurers and Committees, or the wisest of Circulars, could in a year. In initiating Church enterprises, the services of such a Superintendent would be of untold helpfulness; and by the statesmanlike organisation which the experience of such a man ought to be able to set agoing, we would get our necessary ecclesiastical buildings, without condemning our ministers and office-bearers to years of purgatorial, and often hopeless, debt; and the giving could be more and more straight-out and God-honouring, instead of, as often at present, degrading and weakening to the Church. As the Superintendent would visit parishes *not* as judge of ministers and congregations, but as brother,

helper, and friend, his visits would be seasons of golden fellowship, and his tactfulness could remove out of the way many a mote which looked like a beam, many a cross which threatened to crush to the earth over-tired toilers, too long left to toil alone. The Superintendent must be a man in whom the whole Church has confidence, and his salary must be worthy of his responsibilities and onerous labours. The latter, it seems to me, should be largely borne by the Sustentation Fund, whose revenue would be enormously increased by his labours;—the balance coming from the General Capital Fund, which should be very greatly strengthened by donations and legacies.

*II. The Home Mission Organising Commissioner.* This official is needed for the launching of new parishes and the resuscitating of feeble Home Missions enterprises. In my view (and I find that the feeling is pretty general) without some such experienced and skilled official, the benefits of the splendid Logan Bequest will be very largely nullified, and the income accruing from that Fund wasted. The H.M. Commissioner should spend two or three months in each new parish organising, starting the Sustentation Fund, fixing preaching centres, and obtaining sites, etc., etc. On his leaving, a minister, ready for settlement, should follow. Thus four or five new parishes could be launched on a scientific basis every year, to the enormous gain of the Church. This official should receive such a salary that he would not be on the outlook for a Call himself!, and this should be provided by the Logan Bequest, under conditions conformable to the terms of that Benefaction.

*III. A Church Evangelist.* There are those who are lukewarm as to the value of special Evangelistic work. In my judgment, it is part of

the Divine order for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom upon earth. Evangelistic Missions, from the time of Nehemiah until to-day, have marked great forward movements in the spiritual life of the Church and of nations. And, from what I know of our parishes and ministers, in town and country, I have no hesitation in pleading for the setting apart of such a worker by this Assembly, and of asserting that the appointment of an Evangelist—clerical or not—who is wise, zealous, free from cranks, brotherly, competent, would be hailed with thankfulness by the great majority of our ministers, elders, and people. Ten days or a fortnight might thus be given to all our country parishes once in two years—which would be frequent enough;—and the result would be seen, under God's blessing, in a greatly enlarged Church membership, a heightened spirituality in parochial work and relations; and ministers would prosecute their labours with new heart and hope. The Evangelist's salary could, I am persuaded, be almost entirely provided by Thanksgiving Collections at the close of each Mission.

Now, Fathers and Brethren, the prompt appointment of these *three officials* in my view is *essential* and *urgent*, and can be accomplished without any serious financial difficulties to overcome,—in the ways which I have ventured to suggest.

#### MINISTERIAL RETREATS.

But I have yet another proposal to make:—a movement of a material kind, which would have far-reaching spiritual and ecclesiastical results in helping forward our Church's great task for God in this State. The work of faithful ministers and their wives is—more than in most employments—a work which tells keenly on the nervous system; and if ministerial efficiency is to be maintained at

a high level—specially under the stringent conditions of our Australian climate—ministers and their wives should have *an annual holiday*. The gain of this would be felt in every department of the Church's work. But some of our ministers *never* get such a holiday: and in cases where they do manage it, by ministerial exchange, for a few weeks, they have still to work, and their wives have to remain at home and mind the family. Now this matter must have attention. We have big-hearted men and women in the membership of our Church to whom God has given ample means: and I believe that a large and well-conceived movement with regard to this matter would meet with their generous and enthusiastic support. My suggestion is: that roomyhouses—"Ministerial Retreats"—be purchased at some such places as Manly, Lady Robinson's Beach, or Sutherland, in which suites of furnished rooms would be allotted to ministers and their families for, say, a month each, without charge. Two such "Retreats"—with a fair amount of ground attached—might well be donated to the Church and endowed for this purpose, each "Retreat" to bear the donor's name. Such benefactions would confer lasting loving benefit on the Church's tired ministerial toilers in the most difficult spheres; and at such Seaside Resting Places, isolated ministers and their wives and families could get personally acquainted, with collateral advantages.

Now this is, doubtless, a large scheme, but not too large for a great and wealthy Church like ours; and I am not without hope that the putting forward of this suggestion in this Address from the Moderator's Chair, may lead some of our wealthier people—who are really anxious to use their means as may best advance the Church of Christ—to take this matter up promptly, and carry it through. This minor Centenary Thanks-

giving Memorial,—which I have made bold to suggest,—would re-juvenate many a worker, and open new vistas of hope to many for the widening work of this new Century.

We come now, Fathers and Brethren, to the great subject of

### CHURCH EXTENSION

the consideration of which in a very special way is forced upon this Assembly by the Government's Religious Census Returns, recently published. Before dealing with these, however, I will place before you a few figures showing what speed we, as a Church, have been making during the past 21 years.

#### PROGRESS IN TWENTY-ONE YEARS.

On the whole, it is gratifying. In 1881 we had only 85 ministers, settled and not settled. In 1901, we had 159; but, of the latter, 12 were ministers *emeriti*. Then, we had only 9 *Presbyteries*; now we have 14. The *Elders* have risen from 231 to 611; *Deacons* and *Managers* from 668 to 1815; *Church members* from 5,399 to 12,427; and *adherents* from 16,506 to 42,662. The *Preaching-centres* have grown from 363 to 855; and *Church sittings* from 21,691 to 43,834. The *Sabbath school scholars* have increased from 8,240 to 19,508; *Teachers* from 929 to 1,912; and *Bible-Class Members* from 725 to 1,450. Then we had 134 *Sabbath Schools*, now we have 291. As to progress made in *erection of Churches and Manses*; in 1881, the sum for which these were *insured* was £69,300, the *debts* being only £9,769. In 1900, the *insurance* reached £183,011 (an increase of £113,711), but the *indebtedness* had also risen to £52,262—an increase of £42,493. Deducting, however, the increased indebtedness from the increased value

of Church property, we find that in 20 years, our people have contributed £71,218 for Church and Manse buildings. It is pleasing also to note that during the past 14 years, the Capital Funds of the Church—mainly, however, by two large legacies—have increased fourfold. During these years we have also added to our organizations those two splendid branches of our work: the Women's Missionary Association, and the Fellowship Union,—the great value of whose labour is being more and more felt.

Coming now to the

#### RECENT GOVERNMENT CENSUS

we get facts, which as a Church *we must seriously consider*. The population of New South Wales now reaches 1,354,846 souls. Of these, 72.18 per cent. are Protestants; 25.96 Roman Catholics; the balance being non-Christian, or objecting to state their religion. During the past decade, Protestants have made more progress than Romanists; and it is remarkable that there are now nearly 4 per cent. fewer Roman Catholics in this State than there were 40 years ago. The Protestant Churches, on the contrary, have added over 4 per cent. in that period. Turning to the *Presbyterian Statistics*: 132,705 return themselves as belonging to some branch of the Presbyterian Church, and all of these, except 652, claim adherence to the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales. It is satisfactory to find that whereas, during the preceding 30 years, we remained at 9.86 per cent., during the past decade, we advanced to 9.91 per cent., or very close on 10 per cent. of the population. What we have now to ask ourselves, as before God, is:—*How is our Church discharging its spiritual responsibility towards this 132,000 people?* In the first place, from our own Blue Book Statistics for 1900, we learn that we had

only *Church accommodation* for 43,834 of the 132,000 Presbyterians of the State. Now, if we *deduct* the 16,000 *children under 5* (though I was taken to Church when I was 3), and 10,000 for *nurses of such*; the 2,500 people *over 70 years of age*; and, say, 30,000 for the *sick and nurses of the sick*; we still find that we are *under-churched to the extent of 28,000 sittings!* And, we are adding to our Presbyterian population 2,200 a year. Further, if we *had* these 28,000 sittings extra, we would have made no provision at all for strangers; and woe to the Church which is not "careful to entertain strangers!" The fact is, that our Church accommodation needs *doubling*.

Fathers and Brethren, "Facts are chiefs that winna ding"; and these facts should call us and the whole church to greatly increased activity.

#### NEED FOR A BIG FORWARD MOVEMENT.

Next, let us examine the Returns sent in by Sessions, of the people connected with our congregations. The *membership* (enrolled communicants) at the end of 1900 was only 12,427, and the number of *adherents* (including children) 42,662. That gives a total of only 55,089, all told, on our Church books. Now, we may probably add 2,000 *members* as not having presented their certificates when the Annual Returns were being made up, although attending Church services; and knowing what I do of the temperament of many Australians, I think we may safely add as many as 25,000 to the list of *adherents*, to cover the large number who fairly regularly attend services, yet have not sought closer connection with the Church. But this done, what do the Statistics tell us? That there are 50,000 Presbyterians in New South Wales of whom our Church knows nothing. Surely that is an appalling pro-

portion of our people! and we cannot rest under such a state of things! Probably, numbers of these 50,000 are attending churches of other denominations, because there is none of their own accessible; but this in no way absolves us from our duty to these 50,000 who, in the official Census, return themselves as belonging to our Church. But Fathers and Brethren, I must press this matter home closer yet, for I pray God that the ministers, elders, and members of our Church will arise in their strength, and in the higher strength and enthusiasm born of the Holy Spirit, and say: We shall begin now, and allowing no petty or personal considerations to thwart, shall set ourselves to make this decade on which we have entered, the Great Church Extension Decade, the brightest in our history as a Church. To fire your zeal, I ask you to note that within the *Metropolitan Presbytery of Sydney*, the Census reveals the fact that there were a year ago 41,876 Presbyterians, and our last year's Blue Book shews that we have only Church accommodation for 14,866 of them, or only about *one third*. Why, for over 4,000 of our *enrolled members and adherents*, we have no room in our churches, in and about Sydney! The natural increase of our own people adds to the number of metropolitan and suburban Presbyterians over 1,000 a year, and this year, we have started *one new parish!* last year *none*, the year before *none*, the year before that *none*. This is culpable and suicidal, and unworthy of our great ecclesiastical traditions. In view of the state of the case, which vitally affects the whole Church, and the special urgency which there is for immediate action on a large scale, within the Metropolitan Presbytery, I venture to recommend, that a strong Committee of Assembly be forthwith appointed, to consider the facts of the case, and to make a

practical recommendation to this court before its rising. I have with care, gone over the Statistician's Returns of the Presbyterians in the city and suburban municipalities of Sydney, with the help of a large detailed map, and I say from this Chair that, if we do our duty as a Church, we will start *nine* new parishes within Sydney Presbytery before next Assembly, and at least *five* in the succeeding year. In *the Presbyteries outside of Sydney*, we have 36,061 enrolled members and adherents, and have only church room for 29,000. Taking the Census figures, there are 61,000 Presbyterians in our Country Presbyteries for whom there are no churches of their own order, in which they may worship God. In the Country, they have now (and have had for some time) on our Home Mission books, 13 centres to which ministers should be sent, and there are some 15 parishes requiring Assistants, if they are to be at all effectively worked. Then, every year will provide its own quota of fresh ground to be broken. Fathers and Brethren, in view of the above facts and figures, and as the magnitude of the task laid upon us by our Lord and Master unfolds before us, let us not faint, but rather let our hearts throb in sympathy with the grand ideal of Dr. Chalmers, speaking as Moderator of the first Free Church of Scotland Assembly. Sketching the Home Mission Work demanding to be done, he made his appeal thus:—"This will open a boundless field for the liberality of the Christian people—a bright and beautiful ulterior, to which every eye should be directed, that each may have in full view the great and glorious achievement of a Church commensurate with the land in which we dwell, and every heart be elevated by the magnificent aim to cover with the requisite number of churches, and, with God's blessing on the means, Christianly to educate, and,—in return

for our performances and prayers,—to Christianize the whole of

*THIS FAIR LAND OF OURS.'*

#### RESOURCEFULNESS ESSENTIAL.

But, Fathers and Brethren, to reach this ideal, we and our people will need to be additionally earnest and unselfish, resourceful and awake to the finger tips; determined, by God's blessing, by one method or another "to get there"—to use an expressive colloquialism. Many of you, doubtless, have read Claudius Clear's articles on "*Firing out the Fools*," and "*A Fellow by the name of Rowan*." Some of us found a good deal of food for thought there. This, I must quote: "When war broke out between Spain and the United States, it was very necessary to communicate with Garcia, leader of the Insurgents, who was somewhere in the mountain fastnesses of Cuba. No mail or telegraph message could reach him. Nobody knew exactly where he was, and yet he had to be found. Someone said to the President: 'There's a fellow by the name of Rowan will find Garcia for you, if anybody can.' Rowan was sent for and got the letter, started at once, landed at night off the coast of Cuba from an open boat, disappeared into the jungle, and in three weeks came out at the other side of the Island, having traversed a hostile country on foot, and delivered his letter to Garcia." Bravo, Rowan! Those are the men the State and the Church need! Men who are loyal to trust, resourceful, who act promptly, concentrate their energies, do the thing to be done. Amongst the office-bearers and members of the Church, and amongst those who have money to-day, the Church in a special sense needs crowds of "Fellows by the name of Rowan," or at all events, fellows of that indomitable, enthusiastic type. The crowds outside the

Church,—neither interested in her nor her Divine Message of Salvation,—*must* be sought out, interested, brought in! We *must* see the careless, the supercilious, the religiously indifferent, face to face, and for their soul's sake, for Christ's sake, with tact, sympathy and courage, have it out with them, and at least excite their interest. If old methods will not do, then others must be tried. But we cannot say that the old methods are failing, while we are simply *neglecting to try them* with tens of thousands. We must encourage *resourcefulness* in Church work. The thought of *defeat* must not be so much as named among us. We read somewhere recently that: "There are very few businesses in London now-a-days that can be left to themselves for a single week. New enterprise, new energy, new ideas, must be put into them constantly, else they will soon disappear." Now—in one sense—this cannot be said of the Church's business, for it has its origination, its continuance in God, and His Evangel is never old. Still, God's method of Creation and of carrying on His world and work seems mainly to be the method of Evolution; and the Church, if it is filled with the Spirit of God, *cannot* be stagnant, undeveloping. And, if the world's business is worth "new enterprise, new energy, new ideas," surely God's great work is! The Apostle Paul understood this when he wrote: "I am willing to be all things to all men, if by any means I can save some." The Church has always needed, and the Church must lay itself out to get, the brightest-brained, most energetic, hopeful, enthusiastic, common-sense men and women that she possesses to work for her, guide her, and, by all means advance her interests, which are her Lord's. And all such as are heavy-footed in the race, all such as are sleepy and inert, self-satisfied and easily satisfied, all workers who are without resource, had better wake up and seek the

Baptism of Fire else the Master may have to deal with such as "cumberers of the ground." "Linesman,"—whose letters and book on the Boer War have made him famous,—discussing the need of more mobility in action, says:—"This must be the last campaign in which our soldiers are to be seen equably, contentedly immobile in the midst of galloping foes." Upon this the Boston *Congregationalist* suggestively asks: "Is the Church to-day 'equably, contentedly immobile in the midst of galloping foes?'"

#### HOW ARE WE TO GET MINISTERS?

But, Fathers and Brethren, how are we to make up our serious lee-way, *how* are we to start the 15 or 20 new parishes which we should inaugurate before next Assembly, when the supply of ministers for our *present needs* is altogether inadequate? At this hour we have 26 vacancies, 6 Home Mission Stations, and 6 Assistantships, and to occupy these 38 positions, we have just 18 ministers, 5 catechists, 12 students in Hall (who cannot leave Sydney during term), and 10 other students (whose whole time should be given to their studies, if they are ever to reach the ministry). During the past year, the worry of the Home Mission Committee has been excessive, because of the totally inadequate supply of ministers. What then is to be done for present wants, and to obtain the needed ministers for Church Extension enterprise? These are my suggestions, respectfully given for your consideration:—

*I. Let us send Home at once for 20 young ministers from Scotland, Ireland, England, and Wales.* The expense for the passages of these (say £1,000) could be met in one of two ways: (a) by one or more of our richer Presbyterians, who are eager for the expansion of our beloved

Church, contributing specially for this purpose, through the Centenary Fund. What a splendid service to the Church, and to untold men and women, would such a gift be! Why, it would yield interest an hundredfold. But (b) Failing the receipt of such gifts in a reasonable time, then let this sum be charged to the Home Mission section of the Centenary Fund—although this would, alas! use up nearly all coming from that source for Home Missions.

*II. Then, for the future—that is, for the normal supply of ministers!*

1. Let the needs of the Church in this matter be plainly and earnestly brought before our boys and young men (both publicly and privately) by ministers, S.S. Superintendents and teachers, and by Christian parents. And let prayer be constantly offered at the Throne of Divine Grace, that He Who has power over men's hearts would "thrust forth labourers into His vineyard," for, verily, "the harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few." And surely the time is near when the high importance and honour of the Ministerial office and vocation will fire the hearts and imaginations of a fair proportion of the noblest and choicest of our young Australian manhood!

2. Let individuals and congregations provide Bursaries at Coerwull Academy and Scots College, to enable boys and young men to qualify for matriculation at the University. If this were done, many young men of the right stamp would be available, for just here is the great initial difficulty. Then more Scholarships for Divinity Students are needed at St. Andrew's College, to help men through their Arts and Divinity courses.

3. Let this Assembly respectfully suggest to the Assemblies of the Home Churches, the immense

practical advantage which would accrue to the Home Churches themselves—as well as to the daughter Church of Australia—if a fair proportion of their choicest licentiates, on leaving the Hall, were sent to Australia to serve an apprenticeship of three years in Bush work, before settling in parishes in Scotland, Ireland, and England. I honestly believe that the experience of utterly unconventional life, and the development of native resourcefulness demanded in a high degree in "Out Back" Bush ministerial work here, would greatly increase the usefulness of such men on their return to the Old Land. Such a procedure would also be in accord with the growing Imperial spirit, and would work for the sympathetic and enlightened unity of our Church throughout our world-wide Empire.

But, Fathers and Brethren, after all, the Ministry of the Australian Churches must be more and more

AN AUSTRALIAN MINISTRY.

Why, 80½ per cent. of our people now are Australian Born, and the proportion grows larger every year! Our appeal then is to the native born! Sons of the soil, the Church needs you and your special aptitudes and gifts in its Ministry: disappoint her not! We have more men at the University and the Theological Hall, just now, who are preparing for the Ministry of our Church, than ever before, and we thank God for this, for the need is indeed clamant. But why are not *more* Australian youths studying for the highest and holiest of all vocations, although the other professions are over-crowded? One reason may be lack of spirituality in the community. But I will name another. Parents, and others who influence young people's minds, are responsible to a large extent. How many parents,—

members and office-bearers of Churches, even—distinctly discourage their sons from giving themselves to the Gospel ministry, using specious but telling arguments in accord with the modern Utilitarian spirit. The Rev. Hugh Black, of St. George's, Edinburgh, in his recent excellent volume "*Culture and Restraint*," says, "Naturally enough, in the opinion of the mass, the active energetic life takes precedence over the contemplative life, and the temptation is a real one to look upon everything, which cannot be rated in the money-market, as mere idleness. In some business circles, for a boy to wish to be an artist is to blast his character with a lasting disgrace, and a father would not dream of encouraging his son to become a minister, or enter into a life of study, and would be alarmed and shocked to know that he wrote poetry,—though he might forgive him if he could write popular novels and make plenty of money at it! This false and vulgar standard of judging life plays endless mischief: it even ruins our industry, and is responsible for the ugliness and poor quality of so much production. . . . The end of civilization is *not money but men*; and there is a higher standard by which to judge things than the standard of mere utility, since, in Victor Hugo's pregnant phrase, 'the beautiful is as useful as the useful.' This view of things I commend to our Christian business men, pastoralists, men of means and men of thought, urging such to remember that the son whom they give to the Gospel ministry, may—specially if he have ability and force of character—do a work for God, for this new land and his age, which will completely throw into the shade the brightest achievements in the line of Commerce or mere money-making. At all events, the Church must ever, in its courts and from its pulpits, protest against and condemn that "false and vulgar

standard of judging life," which is playing "endless mischief" with the national character, while it is weakening the Church and all altruistic enterprises. The Church must ever call youth to its highest destiny; and with warm love and high hope I take this opportunity to specially recognize and salute the young manhood and womanhood of the Church in the name of this Venerable Assembly. In Matthew Arnold's words:—

"Beacons of hope, ye appear!  
Langour is not in your heart,  
Weakness is not in your word,  
Weariness not on your brow.  
  
Strengthen the wavering line,  
Stablish, continue our march,  
On, to the bound of the waste;  
On, to the City of God."

In this new giant territory of the Australian Commonwealth is work to be done for God and humanity sufficiently splendid, sufficiently urgent to excite and nerve and spur the best energies of the most radiant youth of the Church. No work could be higher, nobler; no work will have more long-reaching, indelible results. To all young Australian men and women, I say, in the name of this august Assembly: Seek your own highest good and happiness in whole-hearted submission to God, and in the unselfish service of your generation. And it seems to us that—whatever your life-calling may be—you can best do that, in advancing the Church of Christ; and, through the Church, reaching forth helping hands to multitudes, young, many of them, like yourselves, and ready to perish.

#### CONCLUSION.

Fathers, Brethren, and Friends, I have put your patience to a severe test, and you have come

through it with credit! I have spoken only that which I felt impelled to say. May the Spirit of God rest upon the labours of all Christ's servants in all the Churches of the Commonwealth! May Christ's Kingdom come! In all our aims and undertakings, Fathers and Brethren, as individuals and as a Church, may we be guided by God and obedient unto His will; for only when we work *with God* shall our work *abide*; and you and I are labourers for *Eternity*. And we must not lose heart, you and I, and all God's servants. True, the allotted task is tremendous, and what are we to accomplish it? But our God gives us our work and the strength with it, surely! What a splendid ideal that of Browning's in the Epilogue to *Asolando*;—and with that I have done:—

“One who never turned his back but marched breast  
forward,  
Never doubted clouds would break,  
Never dreamed, though right be worsted, wrong would  
triumph,  
Held we to fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's worktime  
Greet the unseen with a cheer!  
Bid him forward, breast to back as either should be,  
‘Strive and thrive!’ Cry ‘Speed,—fight on, fare ever  
There as here!’ ”

*So may it be!*

