



ARROSSAN E. U. CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

At the present stage of the E. U. Congregational Church in Ardrossan, when the brethren are building a new edifice in which to worship God, it may be desirable to let the readers of the "Christian News" have a history of its rise and progress.

The life of the church began sometime about 1838. The services were held in a little hall in Princes Street, where the Railway Hotel now is.

Messrs. Simpson, Kirk, Pullar, and Wight were men of spiritual power in the Congregational Church, went forth in the power of the Spirit, and souls were being saved wherever they came. They came to Saltcoats at a time when revival was in the air, and many were awakened and entered into life.

When the number of believers increased they formed themselves into a church, and applied to Dr. Warlaw for a pastor. The Rev. Peter Mather was sent to Ardrossan as the first pastor of the church.

Mr. Mather in his life-time was joiner, student, preacher, and editor. He was ordained to minister to a Secession Church in West Kilbride on 16th July, 1820. Here he laboured till 1836, when he changed his views of church government. He applied to the Congregational Union, was accepted, and ordained over a church in Brown Street, Glasgow, on 26th October, 1836. He was sent on to this church in Ardrossan in 1838.

Shortly after this Rev. James Morison, of Kilmarnock, and his persecution began. The Ardrossan Church adopted the "Morisonian" views, broke off from the Union, and called themselves Independents.

In 1841 they removed to a larger hall in Glasgow Street, and the church greatly prospered under his ministry. The people came from Saltcoats, Stevenston, Kilwinning, and West Kilbride to Ardrossan, as a central place for the church. Mr. Mather was colossal in size, in mind, and in labours. Besides preaching three times on Sabbaths in Ardrossan, he held regular week-evening meetings in Saltcoats, Stevenston, and West Kilbride.

In 1846 Mr. Mather resigned, and was for some time after this the editor of the "Christian News."

Rev. Alexander Cross succeeded Mr. Mather, and was ordained on 16th November, 1846; and for forty years this man of God was a faithful minister and witness for Jesus Christ in the town of Ardrossan. A very Nathaniel, in whom was no guile. A lover of all men, and beloved by all the community. He passed to his reward on 2nd October, 1887.

The work was carried on in Glasgow Street till the year 1860, when the congregation removed to a neat little chapel they had built for themselves in Harbour Place. Here they have worshipped up to the present time; and now they remove to the new and more commodious building just erected in Glasgow Street, nearly opposite where they had the hall.

The church has had a succession of ministers since. Rev. J. S. King was ordained in 1888. He resigned in 1892. Rev. J. M. Cowan was inducted in 1893; but in failing health he left in 1895 to go abroad. Rev. J. Magill, of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Ireland, laboured with much acceptance, by arrangement, for eight months. Rev. John Masterton was ordained on 4th February, 1897, to be the pastor of the church. He ministered four years to this congregation, when he accepted a call to Manchester as a greater field of labour, where he is ministering now.

The present minister, Rev. George Sharpe, although originally a Scotoman, came over from America, where he had a wife and child; brought all the glow and fire and go-ahead of the Americans. He does not preach a "nebulous theory," he preaches clean hands and a pure heart for all believers—consecration and sanctification for those in the church, and for those out of it the necessity of being "born again."

Two years ago Rev. George Sharpe was in this country on a visit from America. He preached several Sabbaths in Ardrossan, when the church was without a minister. They set their heart on this man to be their pastor, and sent a call to America, which he accepted.

The new and handsome building in Glasgow Street is a credit to the town. It will cost over £3500. It will seat 500 on the ground floor, inclusive of the space set aside for the choir; and about 170 can be accommodated in the end gallery to be erected when required. The building is of Ballochmye stone. It has a frontage of 63 feet, and reaches to the back 156 feet. The school-house which was on the site of the ground remains at the back, and will be utilised as a hall for meetings and Sabbath school, etc. Commodious rooms are provided for the managers, ladies, pastor, and other accessories. The building is roofed with arched steel principals, having a height from the floor of 35 feet.

The window in the front elevation will be enriched with stained glass, the gift of friends; the subjects being Faith, Hope, and Charity. Mr. Marwick, the architect, is placing two stained windows in the church—one "Christ the Light of the World," the other "Christ the Good Shepherd"—in memory of his daughter, Mrs. Dr. T. D. Newbigging.

Many friends in the Congregational Union, after reading this description of the effort made by this little church trying to help their pastor in advancing the Redeemer's Kingdom, will be glad to help on the Lord's work by sending a little contribution to Mr. William Craig, the treasurer of the Building Fund; for we hope the influence from this church will go out far and wide.

J. S.



Rev. George Sharpe.

THE Rev. George Sharpe, whose successful work in Ardrossan has found outward expression in the erection of the new church which has just been completed, is a native of the Parish of Dalziel, near Motherwell. His father, who belonged to the Established Church, was deeply interested in Sunday schools and other forms of religious work, and did his utmost to bring up his son under Christian influences. Mr. Sharpe received his early training in the public school of his native

parish; but left it at the age of twelve. After spending two years in an ironmonger's shop and six in an office, he was brought to a knowledge of the truth. This important event in his life was preceded by a few weeks of deep anxiety and darkness; but by the help of an evangelist well known in Lanarkshire he stepped boldly into the light. Not long after his conversion Mr. Sharpe began to feel that he was being called to preach the Gospel. For a time he fought against the feeling, although encouraged by his friends; for he preferred at the time business pursuits. But slowly the way opened up in a way that he could not have anticipated at the time.

An opportunity came to him to go to America. Five weeks had scarcely gone by after crossing the Atlantic until he was met by a young man quite a stranger to him with an invitation from a little church in that country to be their preacher. After one or two refusals he accepted the invitation. This brought him under the influence of Dr. C. C. Wilber, pastor of a Methodist Episcopal Church. This minister influenced him deeply, and set him on the path towards the ministry. Two years were spent in a theological seminary; and after becoming an assistant minister, he began a four-years' course in theology, and several happy years of successful ministerial work followed. His third pastorate was in a town called Hamilton, N.Y. As there was a Baptist University in the place, Mr. Sharpe had an opportunity of influencing many of the students, who came to hear him in great numbers. Before coming to Scotland three and a half years were spent in Chateaugay, N.Y., where Mr. Sharpe was again privileged in doing a good work. During this pastorate a revival far-reaching in its results took place. It is said that hundreds were brought to Christ in connection with this movement; and on several occasions the meetings had to be continued into the small hours of the morning. One evidence of the good that was being done was manifested in the keen hostility shown by the drink trade—a hostility which only resulted in defeating its own object.

After spending sixteen years in America, Mr. Sharpe returned to his native country. Two very happy and successful years have passed since he was inducted to the charge in Ardrossan. No fewer than eighty have been added to the membership in this time, the regular attendance has increased, and the prayer meeting has been turned into a powerful factor in the church's life. With the greater facilities for service that the new church will give, it is anticipated that the progress of the future will be greater than it has been in the past.

CURIOSITY.

THE MOTIVE THAT LEADS TO KNOWLEDGE.

They say curiosity once killed a cat, but if it were not for curiosity many wonderful discoveries would never have been made. A gentleman tells the following good story about his curiosity, and how it led him to the knowledge of a scientific food: "One day, down at the store, I noticed a yellow package with a curious name, 'Grape-Nuts.' The name fascinated me and aroused my curiosity. I didn't like to display my ignorance by asking, so I bought a package and took it home, where I read all about it. When wife and I tried it we thought it delightful and commenced using it morning and evening with cream."

"Before this I had suffered from lack of assimilation of food, and my stomach was so weak that what I ate for breakfast seemed to lie there a long time before being digested. I was usually in distress, and had no appetite for dinner. All this has changed since my diet has been largely on Grape-Nuts. I have gained steadily in strength, health, and weight, sleep soundly at night, and get up refreshed in the morning. Wife says I look like a new man, and she herself has been greatly benefited by the food."

"After my breakfast of Grape-Nuts I don't need anything in the middle of the day, as a rule, but I always keep a little of the food handy, and if I have any sense of exhaustion I just take a few mouthfuls of it. It gives me immediate relief, and does not destroy my appetite for dinner, but seems to sharpen it. It surprises me that we never seem to tire of Grape-Nuts, although we have now been using it for several years." Name given by Grape-Nuts Co., 66, Shoe Lane, London, E.C.