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Toronto, February, 8, 1894

The Missionary Conference.

REV. R. Mackay, Secretary of Foreign Missions, writes: "People are naturally interested in, and enquiring about, this conference to be held in Toronto, during the four days beginning with Tuesday, the 13th of February, at which Dr. A. J. Gordon, of Boston; Dr. A. T. Pierson, of Philadelphia; Mr. W. E. Blackstone, of Chicago; Dr. G. L. MacKay, of Formosa; Rev. J. H. MacVicar, Honan; Mr. Spencer Walton, of Africa; and Mr. Hermann Warszawiak, of the Jewish Mission in New York, are expected to take part.

The presence of so many distinguished specialists in missions, at one time, is an unusual event, and justifies unusual expectations. So far as the human instrumentality is concerned we may reasonably expect such an interest on the question of Foreign Missions, as in this city has rarely, if ever, been experienced. The interest is much wider than this city. Already a notice of it appears in a Bombay Journal—how it got there I cannot explain. My special object in writing this note, however, is to ask attention to two points.

First, that if we lean upon the human instrumentality, however distinguished, we shall be disappointed. That is a very commonplace remark, and yet how we do constantly forget it. Crowds of Christian people come to hear, partly from curiosity and partly to get some spiritual gift that will be helpful to themselves. It never occurs to them that they should contribute some spiritual gift to help the world, and the result is usually disappointing. Let the Christian people of the City of Toronto, so far forget themselves as to unite in seeking an outpouring of Divine blessing on India and China and the result will not be disappointing. In blessing they will be blessed. Whether we shall gather sheaves of rejoicing during and after these days, will depend chiefly on the amount of prayer during the interval.

The second point to which I would like to draw attention is that the sole object in getting up this convention is, as is said in the circular letter to the Pastors of Toronto, "The awakening in this city and country of an interest in the evangelization of the world, such as will result in a more worthy response to the Divine command than has yet been given." I want to emphasize that because it has been said, that this is an effort to boom pre-millennialism. It is well known that Doctors

Gordon and Pierson are prominent advocates of that view, but that is not the purpose for which they are invited here on this occasion. On the programme there will be in all about twenty-five subjects upon which addresses will be given, and one of these twenty-five is entitled "The Lord's Coming," to be discussed at a morning session. The public will be duly advised, and all can stay away that morning who fear the infection. The other twenty-four addresses are upon such subjects as "India," "China," "Africa," "Japan," "Formosa," "Honan," "The pathway to power," "How to develop interest in the Home Church," "The present movement amongst the Jews," etc., etc. Surely the most pugnacious will not say that one address in twenty-five is a very extravagant concession to the large and intelligent number of Christians in this city and country who hold that doctrine and say they find great blessing in it.

However, I am not discussing the doctrine. I am simply stating the purpose of this convention, and earnestly hoping that we shall not be divided and defeated by any misrepresentations or misunderstandings.

The world's need is ever before us—let us unite in seeking to glorify Christ by the world's redemption.

The Gothenburg Liquor System.

The Gothenburg system has been receiving some attention in Canada of late on account of the views expressed by Mr. W. T. Stead and by witnesses who appeared to give evidence before the Royal Commission on Prohibition. *Forward*, a temperance organ, gives the following opinion by Bishop Vincent on that system:

"The curse of intemperance falls like a blight upon Norway. The 'Gothenburg' liquor system is not a complete success. By it the Government has control of the sale of ardent spirits. It has a few advantages, but they are trifling. All liquor shops are closed at 5 o'clock Saturday afternoon, and not open again until 8 o'clock Monday morning. In Bergen, Norway, licensed houses open at 8 a. m., and close at noon. They open at 1.30 and close at 8 p. m. The liquor-seller is paid a salary by the Government, and is liable to heavy fines for selling to minors or habitual drunkards. The element of personal and private gain is thus eliminated. But the law does not embrace in its provisions the sale of beer, ale or wine. Nor does it, I think, interfere with the sale of alcoholic liquors in large quantities. My informants insist that the use of liquor is on the increase in Norway. Local option is, however, a part of the law, and in some parts of the country prohibition prevails. Not the prohibition, however, of wine or beer. In Norway the employment of barmaids is prohibited and the barmen are dressed in uniforms. The houses are clean, but not attractive. No seats are provided; no lounging is permitted; no credit is given. Detectives are employed to watch the barmen. These are steps in the right direction; but the cure is prohibition."

A clapper in an old church tower professed to be greatly grieved because the bell it hung in was cracked. It was ever and anon telling of its grief in most dolorous tones, and exciting the sympathy of many simple-minded people. But the ghost of Diogenes coming along said: "Cease your whining, Master Clapper; remember in the first place that you cracked the bell, and, in the second place, no one would know it was cracked if you did not noise it abroad."