

An Important Convention.

A great convention was held recently in Chicago to deal with the subject of religious and moral education. Out of the 497 members only a small proportion were from Chicago. Twenty-three states were represented and there were delegates from Toronto and Montreal. The following notices are interesting and suggestive:—The Outlook (Non-denominational), New York city. If the convictions of a great many men of varying standards of good judgment are not wholly wrong, the Convention for Religious and Moral Education, held in Chicago last week, is to be accounted an altogether unique occasion and a force to be reckoned with the future. In the number and representative character of its attendance it surprised not only all who responded to the call for it, but quite as much those who worked so long and hard to assure its success. Not less than three thousand people faced its chairman as he opened the first session in the great Auditorium, and each of its succeeding business sessions averaged an attendance of fully a thousand. But the most significant fact in this connection was the disproportionately large number of men present throughout. For it is surely a most exceptional feature in any general religious gathering to find men composing from 75 to 80 per cent. of the attendance, morning, afternoon, and evening for two days. The spiritual tone and devotional spirit were as marked in platform utterances as in the earnest prayer and fervent song which opened and closed each session. This religious atmosphere, together with the profoundly serious earnestness and fearlessly free fellowship which pervaded the whole occasion, made it impossible to suspect the presence or possibility of any factional control, ulterior motive, or polemic purpose.

The Examiner (Baptist), New York city. Those who were fortunate enough to attend the great gathering in the interest of religious education, held under the auspices of the Council of Seventy in Chicago last week, experienced mental and spiritual sensations of a pioneer nature that were richly instructive and intensely stimulating. The purpose of this convention was single—to inaugurate "an organized an aggressive campaign for universal Bible study, according to sound educational methods;" but its scope in far-gathered men and material, in reach of thought and suggestion, and in possibilities of influence, was so great that the writer or speaker attempting a characterization trembles before the task. One calls it "epoch-making," another, "the breaking of the dawn;" still another, "grand in its stupendous task;" another "profoundly significant in spiritual power."

Zion's Herald (Methodist), Boston. The Convention for Religious Education, held in Chicago, February 10-12, has more than met the expectations of those who called it, and has almost, if not altogether, dispelled the fears and suspicions of those who have looked askance upon the project ever since it began. The seriousness of the gathering, the sanity of the discussions, the wideness of the scope of the proposed and now completed organization, and the unity of spirit and purpose revealed were manifest signs of the occasion. We are convinced that vast possibilities of usefulness open up before the new organization.

Your correspondent was impressed with certain things: (1) The universal witness in the speeches and addresses to the mastership and Saviorhood of Jesus Christ. There was no uncertainty and no timid testimony to his supremacy. (2) The exaltation of the Bible as *the Book*, and large discussion as to the best methods of its study and its use in educational work. (3) The absolute necessity of religious education; not simply education in morality, but religious education in the home and the schools. (4) The possibility of larger and wiser methods in work and through the Sunday schools. (5) The spirit of sane conservatism and Christian amity that manifested itself in the different addresses. There was no dynamiting, no iconoclasm, no mad spirit of destructive criticism. What was offered as better wisdom in methods must come by co-operation, and not by supplanting.

The Christian Register (Unitarian), Boston. Unless all signs are erroneous, the week ending February 14, 1903, will be notable in the religious history of America. I am well aware how unsafe it is to play the role of a prophet, but there seem to be sound reasons for doing so at this time. . . . The general aim was to create a religious revival—by thoughtful, educational methods—conserving the old, assimilating the new, reconstructing the church.

The men who animate and guide the movement have shown large executive ability. All the details of this convention were forecast with minute scrutiny. Details were not ignored. Consequently, we had admirable results in Chicago. I believe that this machinery will move rapidly and successfully because of the skill and ability of those who have charge of the undertaking. It will be seen from what little I have already cited from the constitution that there is no doctrinal or ecclesiastical qualification. Every article and section is put on a purely educational basis. If I were to sum up the prominent characteristics of the convention, I should say it was marked by a spirit of great confidence and buoyancy, by a cordial attitude toward new truth, by a wise consideration for the past, by an evident desire to conduct everything in a catholic, inclusive manner, uniting on central things and dealing fraternally in matters of difference. There was no attack on the International Lessons, no effort made to draw sectarian lines, no revival of theological animosities. All seemed to feel that they were called to a great work and intended to respond in a large way.

The New Conquest.

There was a time not long since when national conquests were regarded as only for the conquerors. Fire and sword were the agencies, robbery and oppression were the after fruits. The wonderful change in the moral sentiment of the world is seen in the reversal of this. Strife continues and conquests are made, but not as before. Nations now recognize their responsibility to the public sentiment of the world so far as to feel it necessary to explain and vindicate their action if they make war, and a conquest of new territory is made, the obligation to hold it for the conquered people is recognized. English rule in India is very different from what it once was. The English in India do, indeed, take care of themselves, but the administration cares for all the people. Education is encouraged and aided, public

works are undertaken, the possibilities of the land are studied and developed, with the result that in all its history India was never so blessed as it is to-day. The same is true of Egypt. The "occupation" continues. We do not discuss all the questions that enter into that occupation, but the fact is that more has been done by the English for the welfare of the people of Egypt than was done in a thousand years before. The conception of the Assouan dam and its completion in a remarkably short time is one of the seals of this new age. The thousands of native laborers were not driven from their homes and compelled to work, but were paid fair wages. The fifty millions of dollars expended find their return in millions of acres redeemed, in villages that are springing up and in greatly increased resources. We might find another illustration of the same in the treatment of South Africa after the war. We do not discuss the war itself, but would any nation have given such terms to a defeated enemy and done so much to restore the wasted lands and to build homes for the people fifty years ago? We look to our own history. Half a century has not passed since great armies met and thousands of men fell, but now we are one people, in closer relation than before. We may condemn the war with Spain, but the public conscience demands that the natives of the new possessions shall be educated and lifted up into the capacity for the use of free institutions and for self-government. The gospel of the Lord Jesus has taught the world the lesson of righteousness, love and doing good. The new conquest is by his spirit which has entered into the hearts of the nations.—United Presbyterian.

The March number of Harper's Bazar opens with a bright article by Marion Foster Washburne on The Day When Everything is Wrong amusingly illustrated by Miss Cory, who also illustrated a dear little story by Juliet Wilber Tompkins. Sara Jeanette Duncan writes of the "Home Life of Lady Curzon" and Lilian Bell in her Talks to Spinsters deals with the subject, "Making the Best of it." Several pages are devoted to the Early Spring Fashions. Harper and Brothers New York.

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