

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

FROM the paper read at the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance, at Basle, by Professor Christlieb, on "The Present Condition of Evangelical Missions among the Heathen," we learn that the present total number of Christian adherents to the various Protestant missions throughout the world is estimated at 1,650,000, and that the increase for 1878 is put at 60,000, a number larger than the whole adherents at the beginning of the century. Of the 1,650,000 adherents, 310,000 are given to the West Indies; 40,000 to 50,000 to West Africa; 180,000 to South Africa; 240,000 to Magagascar; 400,000 to 500,000 to India and Farther India; 90,000 to the Indian Archipelago; 45,000 to 50,000 to China, and more than 300,000 for the South Sea Islands. Four hundred thousand pupils are taught in 12,000 mission schools, besides hundreds of native-born candidates for the ministry in dozens of higher institutes and theological seminaries. The present total income of the Protestant societies is about \$5,762,000 (or five times that of the Roman Catholic Propaganda) of which England contributes \$3,332,000, America \$1,666,000, and Germany and Switzerland from \$500,000 to \$700,000. In his criticism of the methods and activity of the different churches in missionary enterprise, Prof. Christlieb has to admit that the free churches surpass the established churches in nearly every department, even some large established churches being surpassed by smaller ones in the same country, as in Scotland. Even in England the efficiency of the Episcopal societies does not excel that of the Nonconformists in anything like the proportions which the superior wealth and numbers of the established churches would lead us to expect. The English societies stand first in importance; next are those of the United States. In proportion to the strength of the congregations by which they are backed, the German and Dutch societies are surpassed in liberality by those of France, Switzerland, and Norway, and the Lutherans by some other communions. At the head of all, in proportion to the numbers in the church, are the Moravians, whose contributions average \$1.19 per member, great and small, of their community.

"STAY AT HOMES."

Many a minister in Canada will fully appreciate the following remarks lately made by "The Christian at Work," on the careful students of meteorology, and sometimes ladies at that, to be found in all congregations who can go to late parties, eat suppers in the early hours and brave the rigours of a winter's morning in coming from their favourite dissipation, but who cannot be coaxed out to church if there is a cloud in the sky though no bigger than a man's hand or a breeze blowing though no stronger and no colder than, on any other day, would be regarded as merely sufficient to put the blood into a pleasant glow while it quickened the step, brightened the eye and apparently made life for them all the more worth living:

"Ah! how discouraging these stay-at-homes are! If they knew how depressing their absence often is upon the minister, would they not find themselves more regular attendants upon the church services? It is related of Dean Swift that when the Dean's congregation was so small as to include only the sexton and himself, he began the service by saying, 'Dearly beloved Roger, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge,' etc. Many a preacher has preached most effectually to the few—just as the Great Teacher preached to but one at a time. The minister, then, can but do his duty to those who remain, and, if he choose, pray as we once heard a minister pray—'Not, O Lord, for those only who are providentially prevented from being with us, but for those who have stayed away because of this shower, which would not have kept them from business or a kettle-drum.'"

Too many are found who rather seem to glory in these stay-at-home tendencies and who of course excuse their conduct by alleging that there is little inducement for them to go to church for all the good they receive there. Such talk is all well enough for those who make no pretensions to religion, but surely on the lips of such as profess to know God and to worship Him, it is strange and inconsistent indeed. We cannot do better for the benefit of all such than

give another paragraph from the paper we have already referred to:—

"There are Christians and Christians;—those who always may be seen in their places in church; and there are fair-weather believers, who stay away—we had almost said whenever there is a heavy dew. May the Lord bless the sermon addressed to the gathered few on these rainy Sundays; and may He bestow His richest blessing upon the dainty stay-at-homes, who are either not sufficiently interested in religion to attend church on a stormy day, or have so much of the article at home that they can get their full there, and consequently have no occasion to expose themselves to the inclemencies of a humid atmosphere by going to church when umbrellas and waterproofs are in demand.

FASHIONABLE RELIGION.

Our cotemporary, the Halifax "Witness," is rather exercised, though in a good, pleasant way, over the tendency of wealthy and fashionable people to go off to fashionable churches and leave the one their fathers loved to struggle on as it best may. It says:

"It is all well for John Brown to be a Puritan, or a Presbyterian while he has to walk to church and to dine at one o'clock. His wife is not in 'society.' His children belong unmistakably to the 'lower orders.' It is all well enough for austere people, your philosophers, your hard-headed divines, your enthusiastic devotees, who inherit the martyr spirit of Reformation times, to make an ado over church forms and old connections.—'The Church of our Fathers,'—'Sound Doctrine,'—'purity, simplicity, a plain Gospel,' and such like. This is all very well. But wait till John Brown becomes a millionaire, and his daughters become fashionable, and his sons ambitious. Wait till John is the Honourable John Brown, M.P. or P.C., or something else grand and mysterious, and high above ordinary mortals. Neither he nor his family can afford to worship God with an old-fashioned Presbyterian congregation,—where there may be within sight of them, mechanics, farmers, grocers, domestic servants, and all grades of the social fabric. There must be a 'West End' for all the noble spirits who have risen to wealth and honour. It is absurd to think that they can mingle with common clay, and sing the Psalms of David in metre. There must be a court religion,—religion with a special drone or whine in it,—for all such mortals. Far better not go to church at all than go to an unfashionable one."

Now all this is quite true. The process indicated is one which has been long going on and will continue to do so, in one way or other, let people protest against it as they may. Wherever the Church comes to be regarded as a more or less convenient club-room and church fellowship a more or less handy passport to "good society," defections of the kind complained of will always take place. The worldly prosperity of many a poor creature can easily be traced by the changes he makes in the church or denomination which he happens to patronize. He can't help himself. Every creature after his kind. Everyone naturally and necessarily goes "to his own place." We must acknowledge, however, that we can see very little reason for mourning over the defection of such. In general they have all but ceased to worship God and have taken to the service of a new divinity called "respectability," or something in that line. If their one felt want cannot be supplied in the Church to which they have belonged, far better for them to go elsewhere. If they have become moral icebergs, their continued presence will only lower the spiritual temperature all round. Why regret, then, when they remove to more congenial regions? When the living faith in Christ has ceased, and a faith in fashion and fine clothes has taken its place, it is a matter not in the least to be regretted that a change of front should take place; and we can scarcely see why any one should allow himself, even in a vein of more or less quiet bitterness, to mourn the change or to condemn the changeful.

A MERRY HEART.

'Pd rather be poor and merry than inherit the wealth of the Indies with a discontented spirit. A merry heart, a cheerful spirit, from which laughter wells up as naturally as bubble the springs of Saratoga, are worth all the money bags, stocks and mortgages of the city. The man who laughs is a doctor, with a diploma indorsed by the school of Nature; his face does more good in a sick-room than a pound of powders or a gallon of bitter draughts. If things go right he laughs, because he is pleased; if they go wrong, he laughs because it is better and cheaper

than crying. People are always glad to see him, their hands instinctively go half way to meet his grasp, while they turn involuntarily from the clammy touch of the dyspeptic, who speaks in the groaning key. He laughs you out of your faults, while you never dream of being offended with him. It seems as if sunshine came into the room with him, and you never know what a pleasant world you are living in until he points out the sunny streaks on its pathway. Who can help loving the whole-souled, genial laughter? Not the buffoon, nor the man who classes noise with mirth, but the cheery, contented man of sense and mind! A good-humoured laugh is the key to all breasts. The truth is that people like to be laughed at in a genial sort of way. If you are making yourself ridiculous, you want to be told of it in a pleasant manner, not sneered at. And it is astonishing how frankly the laughing population can talk without treading on the toes of their neighbours. Why will the people put on long faces, when it is so much easier and more comfortable to laugh? Tears come to us unsought and unbidden. The wisest art in life is to cultivate smiles, and to find the flowers where others shrink away for fear of thorns.

A MINISTER'S HEART-ACHE.

During the past few weeks I have received several sad letters from brother ministers who have a heart-ache. Not one of these brethren expresses any regret that he has chosen the ministry of the Word as his occupation for life. Not one of them talks about throwing up his high commission in despair, and escaping through some postern-door into an easier or more lucrative profession. None of them threaten to ride out of the sacred ministry on a "buckboard."

The source of the heart-ache with some of these brethren is the perverse opposition which they are called to encounter. This opposition does not proceed from the ungodly world without, but from unlooked-for quarters—from members of their own churches! One brother writes that he has endeavoured to obey his conscience and his Bible in preaching plainly against certain conformities to the world in the shape of promiscuous dancing, wine drinking, and other loose convivialities. His preaching is on the side of scriptural strictness; their practice is on the side of self-indulgent laxity. Those church members who, on these questions, seem to be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of Christ, keep up an "enflaming fire" upon the pastor, and do their utmost to expel him from the pulpit. His foes are of his own spiritual household; their enmity is active and aggressive to the point of persecution. It is not surprising that a sensitive heart aches under such opposition; for no shot wounds a true soldier like the shot aimed from his own ranks.

What is a minister's duty under such opposition? To silence his tongue, for fear of giving offence, would of course be instant and irremediable disgrace. To resign his position would inflict a heavy wrong upon the loyal majority, in order to gratify a disloyal minority. He is under a solemn installation vow to "be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the Gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever prosecution or opposition may arise on that account." The divine command is to be "first pure, and then peaceable;" and in the long run there never can be a healthy peace in any Christian church without purity of doctrine and practice.

It would seem then to be this brother's manifest duty to stand manfully to his post—not in the spirit of bravado, but in the irresistible might of meekness. Denunciation of opponents would be suicidal. Strong as is the temptation to feel bitterly, or speak bitterly, he has a grand chance to save his church by conquering that minority. He must conquer them by love; by so loving them that he will not give in to their hurtful and evil practices,—by so loving them that he will not allow a resentful word or act to escape him. Towards the malcontents personally he should shew the most magnanimous kindness. His conflict is not with them, but with their errors of opinion and practice. Let him remember that his divine Master both hated sin and loved sinners. Let him remem-