

## RETIRING ALLOWANCES.

MR. EDITOR.—The Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund was originated in the Free Church. There was no such fund in the U. P. Church. At the union of the two Churches the number and ages of the ministers in the U. P. Church were submitted to an actuary and a certain sum was in accord with his report contributed by each of the congregations of that body that its ministers might share in the fund without detriment to the interest of ministers in the Free Church. The fund was thus equitably adjusted and its success in the united body secured, so that it has wrought well with little or no friction or jealousy.

There was no such adjustment of the A. and I. Fund at the last Union, owing to legal difficulties connected with the Temporalities Fund. Ministers of the United Church who previous to the Union participated in the latter fund still continue to do so, and on retiring from active service by leave of the General Assembly retain their annuity. Can such receive also a retiring allowance out of the A. and I. Fund? Surely not, any more than ministers formerly belonging to the Free or U. P. Churches should on retiring have a share in the Temporalities Fund. Is it said that since the union they have paid the rates required and have therefore a right? If this means that they have a right to the benefits of the fund for the years of active service rendered since the Union, well; but if it means that the years of service before the union are to be reckoned there is manifest injustice to those who paid their rates for long years previously, and whose congregations in large measure contributed the whole fund. Such a course would soon greatly diminish the allowance now paid, or prevent it ever rising as high as originally designed, and would certainly result in great dissatisfaction and a large falling off of contributions.

As, already, more than one of the retired ministers are receiving retiring allowances from both funds, and as more may be granted the same unjust privilege, it is time the question should be fully discussed and steps taken by the coming General Assembly to place the matter on a basis compatible with justice and the interests of all parties. EQUITY.

## SYNOD OF MONTREAL AND OTTAWA.

MR. EDITOR.—I have just returned from attending the meetings of the Montreal and Ottawa Synod, and desire to make a few observations thereon.

1st. The retiring moderator gave a good discourse on the "Opening of Lydia's heart," but seemed to take too limited a view of the word heart, making it out to mean the "affections," instead of the whole soul of man, including the intellect.

2nd. The number attending the Synod was not over a third of the members. This ought not so to be. Elders may be excused, but ministers should make it a matter of conscience to attend Church courts.

3rd. The spirit of the meetings was good. The moderator keeping excellent order, and at the same time allowing full liberty of discussion. The reports were good, especially that on the "State of Religion," but I was surprised to find that only three fifths of the sessions had returned answers to the questions. Some way should be found to compel them to reply so that reports might be full.

4th. Temperance seemed to command the unanimous support of the members, who all seemed prepared to adopt prohibition.

5th. There also appeared a strong desire that the Church should take greater interest in matters pertaining to the State, and give no uncertain sound regarding the evil methods generally adopted in political elections.

6th. The case of Mr. Fenwick of Metis, Quebec, was referred *simpliter* to the Assembly. This is a somewhat singular case. Mr. Fenwick has been for upwards of twenty two years at Metis, is evidently a man of great individuality of character, and I do hope the General Assembly will act in a generous way when disposing of his case. AN ELDER.

NINETY FIVE per cent. of the inhabitants of Egypt are Mohammedans, and about one-twentieth are Copts, a remnant of a race remarkable for their likeness to the old Egyptians. Sixty years ago the Church Missionary Society tried to arouse the ancient Coptic Church to fresh life: but it is still sadly corrupted in doctrine and degraded in practice, and does nothing to make known the Gospel.

## GOSPEL WORK.

## INCIDENTS IN LONDON.

A domestic servant says. I attended the meetings at St. Pancras, and heard Mr. Sankey sing "The Ninety and Nine," and I felt I was the wandering one. On March 8th I found the Saviour, not in a hall or a church, but while cleaning the floor. There I heard His voice saying: "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

Another convert writes. It was through your sermon, at Islington, last November, that I was converted. One Sunday evening you preached on the Ten Commandments, and your words went right home to me, as I had committed terrible sin. When I got home that night I gave myself to God. I pray God to send me away as a missionary. Of course I want to study the Bible now as much as possible. Could you tell me how I ought to carry on such study?

From an engineer-driver:—The first night I came to your hall at Clapham, in January, I thought it was good to see so many people going in, and I followed. When I got inside, my eyes were fixed on a Scripture text, "Come," and I too: the word to heart. The next night you dwelt on the same word, and I gave my heart to the Lord. Oh! the glorious sight I saw that night. I now know what it is to be born again, and have a new life.

One brother said that up to eight weeks ago he had for five years been a helpless slave to drink, and had become a professed atheist, labouring assiduously to spread his obnoxious and destructive opinions. His actions agreed with his words, and he adopted a downward course, giving way to drink and all other iniquity, but often while boldly defending his atheism, deep down in his soul there was a feeling of uncertainty and a want of satisfaction. He went one evening merely to hear Mr. Sankey sing, but while listening to the Word the Spirit of God met him and gave him such a view of himself as a guilty sinner that he was constrained to cry, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." In a day or two he found rest and peace. Since then the Lord had given him deliverance from his old appetite, and now he was glad to bear his testimony to the happiness he enjoyed in the service of Christ.

A tall, gentlemanly-looking man followed. Under the power of this great curse he had drunk himself out of two good businesses and out of every situation he had ever had. Whilst pursuing this downward course the question occurred to him whether there was any possibility of regaining his former respectability. The enemy was ready with his suggestion, saying, "You know that you have driven away every good friend from you, and are abandoned by both God and men." But a slight ray of hope came up before his mind. The devil whispered that it was too late—his day of grace was past—and suggested suicide as the quickest means to get rid of his trouble. One night, as he wandered through the streets, without friend or shelter, he prepared to carry out the diabolical suggestion. Reaching the edge of the pond where he was about to take a leap into a dark eternity, the thought occurred to him that when his lifeless body was found no one would know it. He searched his pockets for a piece of paper to write his name upon, and in the bright moonlight he found an old tract which had been given to him. He read the title: "Where shall I Spend Eternity?" The question took hold of him, and turned him from his determination. Wandering alone next day, he sat down in a public park, not knowing what to do or where to go, when a member of the Stratford Mizpah Band came up to him, and in a few kind words asked him to come to their meeting. He did so, and the saving truth there preached took hold of him. At the close, a Christian worker came up to him, and laying his hand upon his shoulder, said: "Brother, how is it with your soul?" That word "brother," spoken so kindly, softened his heart, it was many years since it had been applied to him, and it thrilled his soul. The Holy Spirit enabled him to accept Jesus as his Saviour, and committing himself to his guidance, he had not only realized the pardon of his sins, but had been completely delivered from his craving for strong drink.

Some extracts from letters recently sent to Mr. Moody will be read with interest:—

Some twelve years ago, when you were in Glasgow, I was induced (rather from curiosity than otherwise) to go to one of your meetings in the City Hall. Having been brought up a devout worshipper in the Roman Catholic Church, I did not imagine that anything you might say would have any beneficial effect on me.

But, praise the Lord, your words did have an effect, not only beneficial but lasting, so that from that time until you and your fellow-worker came to Stratford (in January) there was a continual hankering in my mind after something, I knew not what. Although I have been to sea for upwards of seven years out of the twelve, yet living in South America for two years, and knocking about the world, having many ups and downs, I never could get rid of that hankering feeling, that I wanted something. Even when very near death's door with yellow fever, the words of that beautiful hymn, "Once for all, oh sinner receive it," kept ringing in my ears. In storm and tempests at sea, and even in the loneliness of the "look out," those strains haunted my soul, and often I asked myself, "What must I believe? what must I receive?" But the way had not yet been made plain to me, and my weary, longing soul had to wait, but when your mission came to Stratford, I felt I must go, not out of curiosity, but as a duty. So I made a point of being at your first Sunday evening service. Your text was, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," and every word seemed to go home to my sinful heart. I rose for prayer, and in the inquiry-room one of the Christian workers took me aside and enabled me to find consolation in God's holy Word, of which I had hitherto been totally ignorant. . . . So full of happiness was I when I went home that my wife was astonished, and I tried to make her understand, but could not. The next night I took her to the hall, and there, thank the Lord, she also found the Saviour. . . . We are now both candidates for baptism at West Ham Baptist Chapel, and we feel that were it fire instead of water, we could undergo the ordinance for the sake of Jesus. We greatly enjoyed your converts' meeting at St. Pancras, and in conclusion I would say that your *Way to God* and *Daniel the Prophet* have been a source of much profit to us. We pray that the blessing of God may ever attend your work.

## MISSION NOTES.

A NEW steamer has been built for the Old Calabar Mission of the United Presbyterian Church. The mission stations are distributed over some forty miles of country, and the only access to them is by water.

IN Palestine twenty missions have 123 missionaries, with over 500 native helpers, 2,200 church members, and about 20,000 scholars in mission schools. Many of the missions are so-called "Independent" missions, that is, supported not by a missionary society, but by a circle of interested friends.

ONE out of the many striking evidences that the native Christians of India are fast taking the intellectual lead is seen in the relative number of Brahmans, non-Brahman Hindoos, Mohammedans, and Christians who passed the university examinations in Madras. At matriculation the four classes stood thus: 2,702, 1,303, 107, and 332. The percentage of passes among the Christians was 45.4, and among the Brahmans only 35.04, while the other two classes were still lower. In the First Art examination the Christian average was 59.5, the Brahman 32.04, and other Hindoos 32.1. In the B.A. examination the Christians held their advanced position, while the Brahmans gained largely. There are seventeen million Brahmans in India and two million Christians. The former increase at the rate of only six per cent., the latter at the rate of eighty-five per cent. every ten years. "Yet a little while and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

A MISSIONARY in Hankow, North China, stating that many people come from great distances, profess Christianity, are baptized and then return to their homes. Many of these are lost sight of. Occasionally as in the following instances cheering tidings of Christian steadfastness are sometimes heard. Speaking of such a convert he says. For seventeen or eighteen years I heard nothing of him. A few months since he returned up once more, having had to visit Hankow on business, and the first thing he did on his arrival was to seek the old chapel in which he used to worship, and the converts with whom he used to have Christian fellowship, in the days gone by. During his short stay among us he attended the services regularly, and cheered all our hearts by the evidence he gave that the seventeen years of absence had not weakened his faith or cooled his ardour. To me it was a special joy to see him, and to learn from him that he was still a Christian in heart and life.