

# Dominion Presbyterian

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## Note and Comment.

The quaint old New England divine, Cotton Mather, tells of a man who, when called upon to decide any question of importance, was accustomed to say, "We will first advise with the town clerk of Ephesus." The counsel of that discreet and tactful official will stand one in good stead all through life. "Do nothing rashly" is excellent gospel. There is a difference between rashness and promptness. The prompt man acts without delay when he has decided, for sufficient reasons, that a certain course is the best for him to take. The rash man acts under the impulse of excitement and without due consideration. "Hasten slowly" is sound advice. The time is not wasted, but wisely spent, that is given to cool deliberation and prudent planning before any enterprise is begun.

The blind and unremitting pursuit of money continues to be one of the distinctive features, as it is the bane, of this twentieth century age. All manner of speculation is rife, and the wonder is, says the Canadian Baptist, not that a great financial crash comes now and then, but that such failures are not even more frequent than they are. Paul's words to Timothy are as true and applicable to-day as when he first wrote them, and the disasters that have overtaken certain monetary companies in this city, (Toronto) and elsewhere, throw a lurid light upon the utterance of the apostle: "They that desire to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil; which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

The Presbyterian church in New Zealand has put itself at the head of a movement whose purpose is to restore the Bible to the common schools by a vote of the people. At the last General Assembly of this church a committee was appointed to confer with other denominations in that colony, seeking to secure from the parliament of New Zealand the submission of the matter to a plebiscite. The Baptists and the Congregationalists had previously adopted resolutions of their own, so that they were already prepared to cooperate; and the leaders of the Methodists gave their assurance that the proposal would be brought before their spring conference. It is the purpose of those appointed by the various churches to meet in Wellington some days before the opening of the colonial parliament, and prepare a petition to be jointly presented, asking submission to the people of the colony the question whether the Bible should be longer kept out of the schools or restored as an important factor in forming the minds and morals of the community. The day is not far off when the evangelical bodies in Canada will have to inaugurate a similar campaign and carry it forward to a successful issue.

The first practical step towards union has been taken by the Presbyterians and Methodists of New Zealand. Rev. Dr.

Gibbs, ex-moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly, of New Zealand, by direction of that body presented to the Methodist Conference of the same colony the Presbyterian proposal for a union of the two denominations, at their late session. The overture which he bore was clear, unambiguous and fraternal. In presenting it he said that the Methodists were good Calvinists in their prayers, and the Presbyterians good Arminians in their preaching. He felt it folly for them to continue divisions which had their roots in philosophy rather than in the words of their Saviour. He did not look to see immediate action; but he believed that when the aim was once placed before them in course of time the way would be found for carrying out so laudable a purpose. The conference replied by a standing vote that its members had listened with pleasure to the proposal and to its advocacy. It appointed a committee of conference, and both bodies are thus brought into relations whose results will be watched with interest by these denominations in other lands.

A letter published in the Christian Observer gives some rather disturbing news from Korea. Persecutions by Roman Catholics, or Protestants and heathen, under the leadership of French priests, have assumed such enormous proportions in the north of Korea that it has attracted the attention of the American and French Governments, and at one time it seemed that the other Powers represented in Seoul would also be involved. The Korean government has had to send a special inspector to assist the governor. At the investigation which took place a French priest practically claimed for his church administrative control over Koreans claimed to be Roman Catholics to the subversion of the legal authority of Korean officials. It was the claiming and exercise of such authority by French Roman Catholic priests in China that did a great deal to arouse Chinese officials against all foreigners and contributed not a little to the development of the Boxer movement. The writer of the letter quoted says the question has come right down to this point, "Will the French Government uphold its subjects in inciting Roman Catholic adherents to persecute and rob Protestant adherents who are under the leadership of citizens of the United States?"

Hon. John D. Long, ex secretary of the United States navy, was not addressing a Sunday-school class but the Commercial Club of Boston, when he said that he "would not exchange freedom, home and heart-content for all the wealth of the multi-millionaires." It was a striking tribute that he paid to the toiling ancestors of the American people when he said that the richest legacy they bequeathed to their posterity was a respect for labor and a veneration for duty. "I believe in and trust to the providence of God and the virtues of the common people to work out safely the problems which confront this nation," was the optimistic creed which he boldly stated in the presence of the accumulated wealth of an opulent city. It was a noble address, says the Chicago Interior, "fit to be placed side by side with that of Secretary Hay, who

lately told the curious reporters that the only safe basis for any diplomatic relations between sovereign states was the golden rule. So long as the affairs of our country remain in the hands of men evincing such sentiments we may make mistakes but we can make no fatal ones. Policies that are founded upon eternal principles out-last those resting upon apparent expediency."

John Wesley, the father and founder of Methodism, was born at Epworth, Eng., June 17th, (old style) 1703. This fact is to be borne in mind in connection with the Bi-Centenary of Methodism which is being made a distinguishing feature of the present year. As might be expected this auspicious event has given birth to a flood of historic literature bearing upon the rise and progress of Methodism and of the famous men who were its leaders in the past, along with which are incorporated many interesting and inspiring incidents respecting the great preacher and his work. One of these latter may be noted. Rev. Dr. Sutherland, of Burlington, Iowa, (Presbyterian) in an article published in the Chicago Interior, quotes the late Cardinal Manning, of London, as saying: "No man could tell into how deep a degradation England would have sunk had it not been for the preaching of John Wesley." This is a notable tribute to the character and work of the great Methodist, and serves to recall the terrible condition of morals which prevailed in England in the earlier years of the eighteenth century. Dr. Sutherland says: "The scepticism and indifference which pervaded all classes of society outside the pale of the Church during the beginning and middle of the eighteenth century was fully matched by the formalism and dearth of spiritual life within its folds. With the restoration of the Stuarts there rolled in a flood of wickedness which swept away almost every barrier interposed by religion for the security of good manners and morals. "The church had become a place in which to lull conscience through a perfunctory service rather than a place to quicken it. It was, as one says, 'A fair carcass without the spirit.' It showed no disposition to stem the tide of vice and immorality, which had so strongly set in, menacing the very life of the nation." It was this condition of things Cardinal Manning had in view when he paid the notable tribute to Wesley quoted above. Soon after, about 1738, John Wesley and George Whitefield began the evangelical campaign which resulted in the most notable religious awakening of the last two centuries — as the writer in the Chicago Interior says: "The most notable religious awakening that has taken place since the days of the apostles — an awakening the beneficent effects of which will continue to be felt down to the end of time." This was the great awakening which gave the world the Methodist Church, one of the most powerful factors in the moral and religious life of Great Britain, Canada, the United States and nearly every portion of the British empire. The Bi-centenary of Methodism is well worth celebrating.

Sorrow is only one of the lower notes in the oratorio of our blessedness.—A. J. Gordon.