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**C. BLACKETT ROBINSON**

Manager and Editor.

OTTAWA, WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 1907.

The attendance at the Synod meeting at Brockville was fairly good. Many city ministers did not enter an appearance. This is true of the country districts also. From Ottawa there were present Drs. Ramsay and Armstrong, and Messrs. Turnbull, Anderson, Milne, Melroy and MacLeod; from Montreal, Drs. Campbell, Scrimger, Patterson, MacKay, Heine, Reid and Ross. It is but fair to add that members from the cities—ministers and elders—took an important part in the transaction of business.

The Board of Management of the Presbyterian College, Montreal, has decided to make two nominations for chairs at the approaching Assembly, the Rev. Dr. Welsh of Toronto for that of Apologetics and Church History, and the Rev. A. R. Gordon for that of Old Testament Literature and Exegesis. As these additions will call for an increased revenue of from \$2,500 to \$3,000 per annum, which has been as yet only partly provided for, the board has decided to ask the Rev. J. G. Inkster, B.A., to devote the next six months to presenting the claims of the college in the congregations of the church and to canvassing for an increased endowment of \$50,000. Mr. Inkster is a Canadian, a graduate of Toronto University, who took his theological course in Scotland and was induced to give a few years to mission work in the city of Bristol, under the auspices of the Presbyterian church of England, but has now returned to Canada and is applying to be received as a minister of our church at the approaching General Assembly. We bespeak for him a cordial reception and a sympathetic consideration of the claims of the institution which with its completed staff will offer exceptional advantages to students.

**IMPORTANT GATHERING IN JAPAN.**

A World's Students' Conference has just been concluded in Japan, at Tokyo, which in many respects is considered to have been one of the most important gatherings in the world's history. The numbers, the enthusiasm, the generosity, the hospitality, were astonishing. The number of delegates enrolled was 627, and these came from 25 countries, over 400 being from Japanese institutions and 76 from universities and colleges in China. India sent 19, Korea 5, and the other 122 were from practically every nation on the globe. The personnel of the convention was even more remarkable than its enrollment, there being present such well-known leaders as John R. Mott, Bishop Cranston, Sir Alexander Simpson, Bishop Nicolai (of the Greek Church), and professors from Cambridge, Oxford, Leyden and Upsala. Telegrams were read from President Roosevelt, King Edward, King Haakon and the Crown Prince of Sweden. A note from the Marquis Ito inclosed a cheque of \$5,000 toward the expenses of the meeting. Delegates were entertained by American Ambassador Wright, Viscount Hayashi, Count Okuma, Baron Goro and other influential statesmen and diplomats, and courtesies were freely extended visiting delegates by representatives of the imperial family. The newspapers of Japan were with scarcely an exception friendly, and the citizens of thirty-two cities about Tokyo convened in overflow meetings which were addressed by visiting delegates. The tone of the meeting was joyful yet profoundly spiritual, and there was no mistaking the deep religious purpose which had brought together such a notable assembly. Some of the hymns were sung in six different languages at the same time, and prayers were heard in more languages than in the day of Pentecost. Perhaps no one address made a deeper impression than that of Professor E. J. Bosworth, of Oberlin, upon "Jesus Christ our Lord," and the paper of Bishop Nicolai upon "The Scriptures and the Christian Life" was just what one would have expected from this warm friend of missions. President J. F. Goucher, of Baltimore, showed in his address how the churches in America gained in their membership last year 3.41 per cent. upon the population, swollen as that was by immigration, and told his hearers that Christians in the United States gave last year \$227,000,000 to philanthropies, while 16,000 churches were built.

The sin of swearing was denounced in scathing terms in St. Patrick's church, Toronto, last Sunday, by Rev. Father Sheehan. Among other things he said: "The nationality of a man is known by the language he speaks. The language of hell is cursing, and those who curse are on the road to hell. How would you like to have the names of your sister, your wife or your mother bandied around by street corner toughs? To Christians, Christ's name should be more sacred than the names of family, and its abuse should not be tolerated. 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,' and the user of profane language is stamped by sensible people as an essentially bad man. The profane man cannot succeed in this world, for he will not be tolerated by polite society." Profane swearing is becoming terribly prevalent over the land. Drastic measures must be taken to suppress it. Let every pulpit and every newspaper help to stamp out this vice.

**LAPSING FROM CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.**

We note in the Northern Ensign of Wick, Scotland, of a recent date, an address on "Lapsing from Church Membership," the importance and gravity of which is not by any means confined to Scotland. The address was given before the "United Free Church Office-Bearers' Association of Wick, and the speaker, a Mr. Davidson, dealt with facts which he had gathered by personal enquiry and otherwise from a wide field. The startling fact which he presented was that in the first five years of the United Church, the number struck off the communion rolls without certificates amounted to 50,119—or 10,000 a year! These figures include persons struck off through neglect of ordinances; but the vast majority is made up of those who lapse when they change their places of abode, many of whom do not ask for a disjunction certificate. Many of them leave home without any definite plans; their minister's dismiss them with a simple request to let them know when they get settled, which congregation they will join. In too many cases this is the last they hear of them, or they only hear of them again after they have been laid hold of by some other denomination, more on the alert to secure recruits than Presbyterians are. (This is an interesting and suggestive fact that might be noted in the latitude of Canada.)

A very significant comment on these figures is the fact ascertained by the strangers' committee of Edinburgh Presbytery, that during the five years when 50,119 members lapsed, that committee received just twenty-three intimations of change of membership!

Mr. Davidson then told of his experience in seeking by personal and epistolary enquiry with many people over a wide extent of country, the causes of this state of things. He found that the opinions of these people coincided very largely with his own, and he grouped the results of his correspondence under the following three headings:

"1. Inefficiency of ministers; 2, laxity of office-bearers; and 3, adversity among members. Now when speaking of the inefficiency of ministers I wish it to be clearly and distinctly understood that I am not throwing broadcast indiscriminate censure on the whole body of ministers. There are among our ministers men of whom our nation and race may justly be proud. But, while we make that most willing admission, we have at the same time to admit that there is a minority, I fear we must say a large minority, who are not worthy of the office they hold, and because of the inconsistency, the laziness, the indifference and deadness which the people see in these men they get careless, irregular in attendance and then lapse altogether."

**Inefficiency of Ministers.**

Some of the replies received by Mr. Davidson in answer to his inquiries are sufficiently interesting to be almost starting. Here are a few of them:

"Members remove too far from church and ministers encourage them to keep up their old connection, thus they become 'paper members.' The distance makes regular attendance impossible, then non-church going sets in, and finally lapsing." "Expense of church