

Fuller statistics of this Society's operations will appear in their published report.

The annual public meeting of the Missionary Society was held on Friday evening. There was a large and interested audience present. The Rev. R. W. Wallace conducted the opening services.

The Rev. C. Duff, M.A., was the first speaker. He referred to the interest in Missions in all the churches. But he held it was not a talked out theme. He next spoke of the need of making our missionary efforts spread over both the cities and country districts. Specially is this the case in Manitoba, where there is a great field for good Christian effort. We have then a duty as to our nation. And no less does missionary work need to be done in respect to our theology, also in regard to our civilisation. We have need to do good mission work in our own churches, and in our own hearts. We must be progressive.

The Rev. R. Hay read a paper on work in Manitoba and the North-West Territory. A spirit has called men west, and men are going from all parts to these plains. Many of our wisest statesmen have expressed themselves as confident that in a few years this will be the most important part of Canada's domain. Enough of our people have already gone there to make us seek to care for them. It may be supposed that in the near future Winnipeg will be the Montreal or Toronto of the North-West. We ought to occupy this field at once. But how can we do this? (1.) We could do it by colonization. Secure a tract, and let our people locate themselves there. (2.) We could do it by direct missionary enterprise. Could we not send out at least one man to work there? And let him share the hardships of the early settlers, for these will thus feel kindlier towards those who labour for them.

Mr. George Hague referred to the financial operations of the Society, and urged its claims with his accustomed energy and ability. His appeal was well responded to by the audience in a good collection.

The Rev. A. F. McGregor thought we must not look too much at the unsatisfactory elements in our denominational life, but at those which are helpful and inspiring. Perhaps the present gloom is the precursor of the dawning. This thought was well enforced by a historical illustration from Luther's life.

The Rev. Mr. Stevenson closed the meeting with a very happy speech on the brighter side of denominational life and work. He thought no one need hang his head at the idea of being a Congregationalist. First, he rejoiced in being a Christian; next, in his being a Briton; and third, in his being a Congregationalist. To cheer the brethren, all that was needed was a glance at our ancestry. No one could remember the noble men in the English Congregational Union, or the men who have made New England what it is, without feeling honourable pride in knowing he was in the brotherhood of such men. These sentiments were received with greatest enthusiasm by the audience.

Thus the work of Friday came to a close.

SATURDAY.

The discussion on the paper read by Rev. Dr. Wilkes was continued and completed.

Rev. J. L. Foster opened the discussion. He maintained that there were certain eternal verities which were essential to communion.

Rev. Chas. Duff thought that in regard to the essentials of Christianity there was not an unsound brick in our whole fabric. We are all orthodox.

Rev. Hugh Pedley, M.A., thought there was a strong antagonism between some of the brethren. One brother held that we must hold to certain prescribed tracks, while another gave unbounded liberty. Who is right?

Rev. Wm. Allworth could say, Grace, mercy, and peace be upon all them which love our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rev. John Wood thought that there was a difference between denominational fellowship and Christian fellowship, and that we could hold fellowship with those who loved Christ. But if we were to admit all who loved Christ into the Union it would cease to be a Congregational Union.

Rev. Dr. Cornish maintained strongly the need of holding to certain cardinal truths in order to fellowship. There must be some common ground for us to stand on if we could enjoy fellowship the one with the other.

Rev. W. H. Warriner thought we were anticipating trouble. He did not believe there was one to whom he could say, On account of what you hold we cannot accept fellowship with you.

Rev. J. B. Silcox thought from remarks made, that some members were suspicious of the younger brethren. To whom did they refer? He thought if a man's faith in God was genuine he would not always be questioning his brother's faith.

Prof. Fenwick said that those to whom reference had been made are those who had written in the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT on "Liberal Theology."

Rev. J. F. Stevenson, Chairman, said that reference had been made to the right wing and left wing in theology. He thought it was necessary to have both wings. The left wing often stirred up the right wing, and thus good was the result. He (the Chairman) was neither the right wing nor the left, because he was Chairman, and was between the two wings, and so was quite safe.

A hearty vote of thanks was accorded the writer of the paper—Dr. Wilkes—who responded in a brief but able address on some of the great fundamental truths of the Christian faith. He pleaded for patience in all our theological thought, feeling satisfied that it would not depart from the living Christ.

The membership Committee recommended that the Rev. Mr. Cuthbertson, Rev. Mr. McKinnon, and the Rev. Mr. Wrigley stand proposed for membership, to be received next year as by rule of the Union. The names of some churches which had virtually become extinct, and the names of some ministers who had removed from Canada and were labouring in foreign countries were dropped from the roll of the Union.

Rev. W. Ewing spoke a few words on the Mission to Labrador. He gave a sketch of the work in that region, and appealed to the churches for support.

The College Corporation was then called to order, and after a few remarks from Dr. Wilkes and Dr. Cornish a resolution was passed commending the financial condition of the College to the notice of the churches, and urging increased effort on their part to sustain it.

The adjourned meeting of the Missionary Society was held. A resolution passed of which this is the substance, That the Society sympathise with the Rev. Mr. Ewing in his anticipated work in Manitoba. Regret was expressed that the condition of the Mission Fund would not permit an appropriation to his work at present, but that it was hoped that the future might permit substantial help. This motion was unanimously carried.

The meeting was then closed with devout prayer, in which Mr. Ewing was not forgotten.

On Saturday afternoon a boat was chartered by the Kingston friends, and the members of the Union were taken to various points of interest, the Rockwood Lunatic Asylum, the Penitentiary, the Military College, Fort Henry, etc. The trip was very greatly enjoyed by all.

In the evening, the Alumni and Professors of the Congregational College were entertained at "Elmhurst"—the handsome residence of G. S. Fenwick, Esq. Mrs. Fenwick spread a sumptuous repast, which was greatly enjoyed by all. After tea a conversational meeting was held, when a fraternal feeling prevailed, and the hands which bind the alumni together were drawn tighter. After a recognition of the kindness of the host, the brethren separated.

THE UNION SABBATH.

The weather was charming. The trees and flowers were in their gayest suits. A holy calm came down upon the city. Numbers sought the houses of prayer. Many of the city pulpits were supplied by the brethren with general acceptance.

At the First Congregational Church, the morning sermon was by the Rev. J. G. Sanderson, of Danville. The text was taken from Matthew vii. 2. In a practical manner the speaker enforced the idea that the religious life was more than a mere belief in certain doctrines and truths, and more than the enjoyment of emotion, it was a divineness of character growing out of obedience to his will Divine.

The children were not forgotten. A pleasant service for the little folks was held at 2.30 p.m., at which the Rev. H. Pedley, B.A., of Cobourg, R. W. Wallace, M.A., B.D., of London, and the Rev. E. C. W. McColl, M.A., of Quebec, delivered addresses. Perhaps the brightest feature of the service was the singing by the children led by G. S. Fenwick, Esq.

In the evening the Rev. J. F. Stevenson, L.L.B., preached from John vi. 50. The theme was Christ the bread from heaven. The germ thought of the very able and scholarly discourse was this, That as men eat material food that their physical nature may not die, so spiritually they must partake of Christ lest their spirit nature should perish. The sermon, which was an elaboration of this thought, was greatly enjoyed by the large congregation.

The Union Communion Service with which the day was closed was very precious. The Rev. Mr. Jackson presided, and had associated with him the Rev. Prof. Fenwick and the Rev. H. D. Powis. The service was concluded with prayer by the Rev. Dr. Wilkes. Thus closed one of the most pleasant days of the Assembly.

MONDAY.

On Monday morning the Union was in Session again for a short time, when the following resolutions were passed:

I. "That we rejoice in having with us at this annual gathering the Rev. Dr. Wilkes, and especially do we appreciate his coming at this time when it involves so much toil and effort. We trust that he may be spared to be with us in future meetings, and that the remainder of his days on earth may be abundantly crowned with the richest of God's blessings."

This resolution was unanimously passed by a rising vote. Amid emotion which quite overcame the Doctor for a few minutes, he returned his grateful acknowledgments to the brethren for their kind wishes. The Rev. Mr. Powis then led in an affecting prayer to the throne of Grace.

II. Resolved, That this Union reaffirms its deep interest in the Temperance movement, and commends it to the thoughts and co-operation of all the churches of our order throughout the Dominion.

That it looks with profound pleasure on the passing by several counties of the comparatively new and greatly improved Act known as the Scott Act, and hopes that by a wise and continuous enforcement of its provisions these counties may witness a diminution of the ills which attend the free indulgence in alcoholic stimulants, and further prays that public sentiment may yet reach a loftier and more Christian plane, so that the blessings of abstinence may rest in fulness upon all the many provinces of our land.

III. That the gratitude of the Union be tendered to the Railway and Steamboat Companies for reduced rates.

IV. That the Chairman and Secretary of the Union be

instructed to prepare and forward an address to our Governor-General and his illustrious consort.

Adjournment until the evening was then carried.

FAREWELL.

The closing meeting of the Union was held on Monday evening, with Dr. Jackson in the chair. Rev. E. Ireland conducted the devotional exercises.

The Rev. J. F. Stevenson, L.L.D., was the first speaker, and delivered a powerful address on "The relation of Congregationalism to the free-thought of the age." He began by asking what is the free-thought of the age? It is not always irreverent. It is not license to live as one pleases. It is, in most cases, an earnest, honest endeavour to come face to face with the facts concerning God, creation, human destiny. What was Christianity? It is a love of righteousness, as incarnate in the Righteous One. It is the gift of God to man through the atoning sacrifice for sin. It is the pouring out of the Spirit of God upon the human heart. In this brief outline of a definition he had given no creed, but had indicated the position which must be taken in the adjustment between Christianity and free-thought. We are to bring the righteousness of God into contact with this free-thought. All the churches have a mission to perform in relation to this. We have a special mission. Congregationalists have no written creed to which they are bound. One of the characteristics of Congregationalism is that it has no historical creed to which it is bound. This he considered a special advantage in regard to the great question before us. We can use all these creeds, take the great truths they contain, and mould them into such forms as will best meet the needs of the present day. While tied to none we are free to use all. We should not forget the facts in connection with Congregationalism, and one important fact was this: That it has a history, and that that history has a close and definite bearing upon the condition of thought and feeling in the day in which they lived. What was that history? That in olden times their fathers pleaded for the rights of the local churches, pleaded for the rights of bodies of Christian men to give expression, in their own way, on the basis of the divine word, according to the phase of opinion which existed from time to time. They

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but they had a literature, enough to form a complete theological library—and from this literature they found clear statement in regard to the great central doctrines of the Christian Gospel. They knew just where they were. Congregationalism lives in the world for a purpose. It is a great missionary institution, and the churches were nothing if not great Gospel churches. Thank God they were so placed face to face with the great wants and needs of the human soul that it was utterly impossible to live in the midst of the world unless they had a clear, definite, articulate Gospel to preach to sinful, suffering, anxious men around them! There was much free-thought to-day, there will be more to-morrow, more the next day, and they should go from man to man, soul to soul, heart to heart, with the grand message of God's love. He did not think in Kingston that it was necessary for him to say that he was not a bigoted man, but he valued the denomination to which he belonged. He valued it because it was bound under penalty of instant death to keep a beating pulse of spiritual life at the centre. Our days are numbered wherever there is no evangelical salt in our preaching. He was not insensible to the gravity of the crisis. Here and there and yonder they saw those who had made shipwreck of their faith, but he believed that Congregationalists had a surer and better guarantee for more substantial adherence to the gospel of God than any other denomination. It is possible to take a creed, and to explain it away clause by clause and sentence by sentence. A certain Rationalist said he could drive a coach and six through any creed, and there was some truth in the statement. The Confession of Faith and Catechisms may, by an ingenious man, be distorted, and while one believes he is living within them he may be living a long way without them. What is our guarantee of orthodoxy? It is by adhering rightly to our standard. What is that? Have we a standard? Indeed we have. It is the written scripture, the meaning and scope of it—the written scripture as thoroughly investigated, as calmly interpreted, and the meaning inducted. Many religious bodies claimed to have a scriptural basis, but has the Bible any particular meaning? Is there any central truth in it? Is there a something only discoverable by careful comparison and by a method of induction? If so he would rather have it than any secondary standard which man can form. Loose standard did some say! Was the inspired Word of God loose? Were the blessed words of Christ loose? Was Paul loose? If Paul were inspired and was a thinker who knew what he said, and how to say it—if the grand gospel be the articulate word—if these things be, they had a standard which they could hold up before the whole world without fear of the result. He spoke of the attitude which Congregationalists should assume—the attitude of absolute fearlessness. He had no fear for the blessed gospel of the blessed God. He did not dread the form of thought or the freedom of thought, but the want of thought. Let thought be strong, free as air; let there be an honest searching after truth, a burning thirst for righteousness, and he feared not what the result would be. He commented upon the attitude of sympathy which they would have for the earnest thinker. Men fell here, there, and yonder. If these were to be aided and saved it was only by the great mercy of God, by the use of an intelligent sympathy and a discrimination between good and evil. We are to show men that true liberty begins in self-sacrifice. Man is free for the first time when he bows his

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