

## MISSIONARY CONFERENCE AT COCANADA.

**T**HE twenty-sixth meeting of the Canadian Baptist Missionary Conference was held in Cocanada, from Jan. 9th to 12th, 1904. One had almost written the words "annual meeting" by reason of long usage, but the fact is that the further existence of this Conference is somewhat uncertain and its meetings have not been annual for the last three or four years. Some have advocated its discontinuance, arguing that the necessity for gathering once a year for fellowship and helpful exchange of ideas has been done away with by increased railway communication which permits the missionaries of the two Boards to visit and help one another more frequently than was formerly the case. But this year's Conference would seem to indicate that there is still sufficient ground for its existence, for there was a large representation, every one of the Ontario and Quebec Board's missionaries being present. And the success of our meeting was such, that it was decided by a majority vote to accept the invitation from Vizi-anagram, to meet there next year. The burning question brought up for discussion this year, had to do with the existence of this Conference. It was the question of the union of the two Baptist Foreign Mission Boards in Canada for work out here. "If we do not unite in our work out here, why continue these Conferences?" was asked. The older missionaries tell us that this question of union used often to be raised in the past, but was always dropped for lack of support. But "times are changed," we are told that "union is in the air," and the spirit of union is drawing various religious bodies together; and certain it is that the idea of union in our work out here seemed to meet with rather general favor, for after many eloquent speeches had been made *pro* and *con*—chiefly *pro*—it was decided to bring the question before our separate home Boards for their favorable consideration. We would seem to have arrived at the turning point of our history as a Baptist mission in India in this regard. Shall we unite and present an undivided front to the forces we meet here, be known as one large mission instead of two small ones, and enlarge our resources for the various branches of our work here—or shall we separate still further and discontinue our union Conferences as it seems to some we must do if union is not effected? "Question!" Think about it and pray about it.

This Conference was one of the best we ever had. The devotional hours with which every session began were especially helpful and inspiring. Surely every one who was present must have felt the benediction of the Master's presence, for His promise to be with those who gather in His name, was most amply fulfilled as we met *with Him*.

Immediately after the opening prayer meeting our retiring President, Mr. Craig, gave us his address, which was full of practical help and stimulating thought. Mr. Churchill was elected to the chair and shortly after had the great pleasure of welcoming to the Conference the new missionaries, who had joined us since last we met. When we saw these new men and women, whom God had given us, His direct gift to the work, and the visible answer to our prayers, no wonder the doxology burst from our hearts in thanksgiving to Him!

That evening an informal reception to the new and returning missionaries was held in the Mission House, when the new comers spoke to us words of cheer and earnest purpose, and thorough experiences were shared by those who had just returned from the ever-loved Homeland.

The papers read before the Conference were of a high order. Mr. Stillwell's paper on "How to make the Missionary's Meetings with his Workers more Profitable," was full of practical suggestions which had been thrashed out of seven or eight years experience. And Miss Archibald's bright and enthusiastic address on "Work Among Heathen Children," brought before us as never before the claims of these little ones and how much can be done for them, and through them for India. This paper was most heartily received and is to be printed and circulated at home for the benefit of Sunday School workers and scholars; Mr. Hardy's thoughtful and spiritual paper on "Soul Winning," should stir us all up to more earnest endeavor.

The Industrial School, the publication of Telugu Christian literature, the *Ravi* and the Timpany School came in for their share of attention and discussion. All of the mission enterprises are doing good work for the Kingdom. The Industrial furnishes the young men of one mission with a manual training and a good and respectable means of livelihood at the same time. If manual training is important and valuable at home it is ten times more so here, where the