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Manager and Editor

OTTAWA, WEDNESDAY, APR. 7, 1909

Next week we shall try and give a condensed report of the great National Missionary Congress held in Toronto last week; a full report would fill two or three issues of this paper. It was a grand meeting and it is expected will have far-reaching results.

The state legislature of Indiana has passed a bill permitting the playing of baseball on Sunday. A similar measure previously passed was vetoed by the Governor, but having been enacted a second time he declines to either sanction or veto it, and leaves it to the Supreme Court to pass on its constitutionality. But the Supreme Court cannot make right that which the word of God declares to be wrong. Governor Marshall should have stuck to his colors.

The awakening in China may have its good effect in encouraging young Chinamen to go abroad and obtain the advantages of a superior education, as the Japanese have done in numerous instances. A Chinese student of marked ability is attending the University of Philadelphia, his home government bearing his expenses. We have no doubt Chinese students are to be found in some of our Canadian universities, and we should welcome all such without taxing them on entering the country like so many cattle.

Though the Bible is not taught in the schools it is scarcely conceivable that, under the system of education which prevails in Canada or the United States, a child could attend school and be ignorant of the existence of a God. Yet we are told that a lad of sixteen, who was recently baptized by a Catholic priest in the jail at Great Falls, Montana, had never heard of a God till the priest began to instruct him. We venture to say he had heard of a devil, at least by name. Surely there is something wrong with a system of education under which such ignorance is possible.

OUR CANADIAN INDIANS.

Our Indian population is decreasing. Last year the shrinkage was 140, caused by the removal of 100 to the United States, and an excess of deaths over births of 40. The number all told is now only 110,205. Last year the Government expended \$1,277,000 in feeding and clothing them. They are distributed as follows: Ontario, 23,513; Quebec, 11,469; New Brunswick, 1,861; Nova Scotia, 2,129; Prince Edward Island, 276; Manitoba, 8,595; Saskatchewan, 7,496; Alberta, 5,529; Territories in treaty limits, 4,212; Territories outside treaty limits 16,845; British Columbia, 24,964; Yukon, 8,802. Some 85,000 are placed where they can farm if they will, and they raised grain, roots and hay to the value of about \$15 per head, a very small average. In addition they earned as wages \$1,660,211. Many are exclusively engaged hunting and fishing. The problem what to do with our Indians is still a difficult one. Our efforts to educate and civilize them—efforts in which the Presbyterian church has taken no insignificant part—have been only partially successful. To educate them for farming seems to be the only course open, while to educate and Christianize them is an imperative duty.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT INOPERATIVE.

One would fancy that in Italy, where the head of the Roman Catholic church has his seat, and with the advanced form of government which prevails, more respect would be had for the Sabbath than to hold a general election on that day. But the fourth commandment appears to be inoperative in Italy. The clericals participated freely in the elections, for the first time since the liberation under Garibaldi in 1870. This change in the attitude of the church party was brought about largely through the influence of the Pope. The clericals have hitherto abstained on account of the temporal power of the Pope having been taken away in Garibaldi's time. The late election resulted in the Giolitti government, which is secular and strongly anti-clerical, being sustained. We do not, of course, hold the Pope or the clericals responsible for the Sunday desecration. They probably were not consulted as to the date of the elections.

If the Dominion Parliament was dissolved a year earlier than was necessary it is gratifying to know that the character of the House has been improved by the appeal to the people. At least, that is the opinion of the habitue of the press gallery, who writes to the Christian Guardian. He states that many, who have watched the progress of events in Canada for years, declare that the present Parliament is the best since confederation. The number of young men is remarked, and the exceptional ability of the members from the west is commented upon. It is to be hoped the present Parliament will sustain its good reputation throughout its term. Some Parliaments have degenerated.

HOME RELIGION.

There is apparently no end to the ecclesiastico-political controversy as to religious teaching in the public schools. On that question wise and good men differ, as do others who can scarcely be so classified. They continue to wrangle and pay controversial compliments to each other. Perhaps good may yet come out of the contention, but it is hardly visible at present. There are matters pertaining to the religious education of the young about which Christians of all denominations are practically at one. It is never for a moment questioned that every child should receive religious instruction. That duty is clearly laid down in the Word of God, which is the only rule of faith and practice. Professing Christians generally recognize that the child should be taught, for its own sake, and for the sake of society that moral and religious training is essential for the safety of the individual and for the well-being of the commonwealth. Neither is it doubted that the Christian Church should devote special attention to the religious instruction of the young.

Within the last century the Church has accomplished a great work in this most promising sphere. Attention is constantly directed to the consideration of methods by which this important and pressing work may be still more efficiency promoted, and never before was there a greater consecration of Christian effort to the service of God in the training of the young than at the present time. Much real and lasting good has resulted from the faithful and systematic labors of the Sabbath school. Greater results still ought to be looked for and prayed for from this universally recognized Christian agency.

Another point equally clear, concerning which there is no controversy, is that it is the primary duty of Christian parents to see that their children are faithfully instructed in the truth of Christ. In the administration of the sacred ordinance of baptism they acknowledged this obligation. Exhortations to the discharge of their duty, which cannot be delegated, are frequent, and plain as they are frequent, in the pages of Scripture. How is the duty generally discharged? Is there systematic and regular Christian instruction in the family? When duty to be done is irksome, it is not difficult to invent excuses for its neglect. In this particular it is easy to allege that, what wit htheir week-day lessons, attendance at Church and Sabbath school, the children are too exhausted to give their attention to Scripture teaching in the quiet seclusion of the family circle. It is sufficient to give them a distate for religion altogether. Let them read their Sunday school library books, or whatever comes handy. No one with a modicum of common sense would for a moment insist on making home instruction in religious truth burdensome to the children.

Home teaching need not be conducted with all the rigidity of method and