

Our Contributors.

TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO BE WRESTLED WITH.

BY KNOXONIAN.

The General Assembly appointed a large and influential committee to examine the working of the Augmentation scheme, and another to find out and suggest some remedy for the evils that arise out of our system of supplying vacancies and settling ministers. The committees are good ones and if they cannot do something useful nothing useful can be done.

The Augmentation problem is largely though not exclusively a financial one. A revival in business, a good harvest followed by a dearer on the part of wheat, would help the committee very much in their work. There is, however, another and perhaps more difficult question behind the question of dollars. Is there enough of the principle of unity in the church to induce large and wealthy congregations to help the weak and smaller congregations, and keep on doing so year after year for an indefinite period of time. Have we enough of what our Methodist friends call the "Connexional" spirit to make it reasonably certain that the strong will help the weak in congregational finance. Perhaps time alone can solve the problem. A committee can change the machinery if it needs changing, but we fail to see how a committee can estimate the strength of our connexional spirit. On that point the committee can have no data that is not before every intelligent man in the church. Perhaps the committee may say what number and amount of annual deficits should in their opinion be considered reasonably conclusive evidence that there is not unity enough in the church to maintain an Augmentation fund.

There is no use in disguising the fact that this Augmentation fund is a crucial test of our right to be called Presbyterians. Our theory of the church will be determined by the ultimate fate of the Augmentation scheme. Is the church a unit, or is it an aggregation of little churches usually called congregations. Should the church work as a unit or should every little congregation a tub stand upon its own bottom, and if it cannot stand fall. The Presbyterian theory has always been that the church is a unit. That theory has been the strength of Presbyterianism the world over. Whether we are Presbyterians enough to live up to the right theory in the matter of Augmentation, is the question we are now trying to solve. Some good judges think we are, others equally good think we are not.

Two things are quite clear. Some of our city and town congregations are thoroughly sound on the vital question of church unity. They believe the church is one and they back up their opinion by generous contributions to the Augmentation Fund.

A second thing is equally clear. Some congregations that plume themselves on their sound Presbyterianism; that look with suspicion on people who sing hymns, or use instruments in public worship; that talk very loudly about their loyalty to the church of our fathers, don't give up a brass farthing to support the scheme that is a better test of our loyalty to the church of our fathers than any other we are called upon to support.

There is nothing distinctive about Foreign Mission work. Every church has Foreign Missions. All churches in new countries have Home Missions. They must have them or die. Everything above the Plymouth Brethren has a theological college of some kind. There is something distinctive, however, in the Augmentation scheme. It is an outward and visible proof that we believe in the church is one, and that being one the strong should support the weak.

If the church has lapsed from her own doctrine, it is as well to know the fact. If the Professors teach one theory of the church, and many of the congregations practice another, there is nothing to be gained by ignoring the difference between our theory and our practice.

We should do one of two things: either stop talking about our distinctive principles,

to try to live up to them. If we believe the church is one, let its unity be preserved by the strong helping the weak. If we believe it is merely an aggregation of congregations not vitally connected, each one of which must do for itself or die, let us say so and be done with it. We get large sums annually from the Irish and Scotch Presbyterians, on the understanding that ours is a Presbyterian church. If we proclaim by the failure of the Augmentation scheme that we have given up one of the fundamental doctrines of Presbyterianism, we should take no more money as Presbyterians.

THE Y. M. C. A. JUBILEE.

REV. A. H. SCOTT, PERTH

The services which began the jubilee so auspiciously in Westminster Abbey on the first day of the month were succeeded by an eventful series terminating on the seventh. Twice before a world's Young Men's Christian Association Conference was held in the British Metropolis, in 1862, and in 1881. The present occasion has been marked by features of such exceptional interest that the jubilee conference of 1894 will go down on record as one of the great religious gatherings of the century.

Howsoever the organization upon which these sentences bear may be regarded in certain portions of the religious world, it is a fact that the foundation principles of the Y. M. C. A., are such as may draw towards it the Young Men's Christian Associations of Christ. The Young Men's Christian Associations proclaim, in printed form and from the public platform, that they recognize the churches of God which are in Christ Jesus as existing by divine appointment for the maintenance of the institutions of public worship, and for the ministry of the word of God, and earnestly disavow any intention or desire to enter upon functions proper to the churches. The associations seek to be and desire to be regarded as helpers to the churches in effort and service directed towards a class of persons not easily reached by ordinary church agencies, and consider it to be alike their privilege and their duty to lead young men into the fellowship of the churches and under the influence of the Christian ministry.

Fifty years ago, on the 6th day of June, the first Young Men's Christian Association was formed in an upper room of the building known as No. 72 St. Paul's Church Yard, London. The founder, Geo. Williams, was then a clerk in the establishment of which he is now the honored business head. At the time of the formation of the Y. M. C. A., a designation, by the way which was proposed by a warm Christian man by the name of James Smith, a friend of George Williams, it was contemplated to introduce religious meetings, such as Bible classes and prayer meetings, in the houses of business in the centre of the British Metropolis. But branch and corresponding associations adopting the same title soon spread themselves over London and through the country, each separate branch adapting its agencies to the varying circumstances and necessities of young men, more especially those of the commercial class. From these humble but well founded beginnings the organization has expanded until now at the jubilee conference the delegates from all parts of the world testify to the existence of at least five thousand associations and half a million of members.

Dr. Cuyler has well said, "a mighty work has the association wrought; but it is only the beginning of what it will yet accomplish if it only sticks to dear Mr. George Williams' original purpose—which is to save immortal souls, and to enlist the young men of all lands in the active service of the Lord Jesus Christ." The *if* is an important word. The Y. M. C. A. has been in danger many a time in days gone by of going aground because this condition was unloading. Little ships belonging to the great craft have gone down, but if the writer can judge by the things that are taking place on this jubilee occasion the institution is abiding by unperished essentials.

With no uncertain sound does George Williams speak out on this point. Let it never be forgotten, he tells the associations of the world, that the chief characteristics of our

work is that it is a spiritual work. This is its distinguishing glory. For while the Young Men's Christian Association makes provision for the social, physical, and intellectual needs of young men, and seeks to qualify them to honorably and usefully fill whatever position they may be called to occupy, our supreme concern is to bring them under our influence to exercise saving faith in Christ as their personal Saviour, and to give practical embodiment to His teaching in their daily life. These are the lines upon which we would follow. To our first principles we would tenaciously cling; for while ever prepared to adapt our methods to the constantly changing requirements of the times, we would ever remember that it is for spiritual results we are working and that these can only be accomplished by spiritual means and divine equipment. Hence the absolute need of abiding dependence upon God and the necessity of seeking that power from on high which is the source and secret of this and permanent spiritual usefulness.

A man from whom his sovereign was honored in honoring. Upon no man in England does knighthood in its best sense rest more becomingly than upon George Williams the hero of the hour. He would have lost his head this week amid the plaudits of the jubilee were he not the man he is. But he is a grand good man, a man indeed, who keeps companionship with John the Baptist, and is ever saying with him in act, if not in word,—"He must increase, but I must decrease."

By reason of the multiplicity of tongues a conference such as this one is not hurriedly nor easily handled. If the steps of the conference were feasting, or sight-seeing, or civic demonstration, or unveiling of busts, or visitations to royal quarters, then emphasis should be laid upon the viands offered and done away with in the temporary hotel on the Thames Embankment, upon the new things witnessed by the delegates in great London, upon the reception extended by the Lord Mayor and the venerable corporation of the City of London in the Guild Hall, upon the unveiling of the statue of George Williams in the Albert Memorial hall, and upon the excursion to Windsor, where Her Majesty threw open the royal quarters for the benefit of the visitors from all lands. If there is temptation thrown in the way of a delegate to a conference in any city of the world to pay undue attention to externals, I think it meets the visitor for the first time to London. But the delegates kept to the essentials fairly well.

The Established Church of England showed great kindness to the conference and placed its two great centres, Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's, at the disposal of the jubilee. Some of its noted men lent a hand cheerfully and acceptably. The Nonconformists did all in their power to make the gathering what it was—a pronounced success. On the evening of the first of June, Exeter Hall was opened for a reception to the delegates and their friends from seven to eight o'clock. Then from eight to nine the official welcome took place. The second day was begun with a following devotional service at 9.30 a.m., followed by certain routine at appointment. Then came the subject which was treated in English, French and German—the necessity of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the associations and in their work. The central international committee and the national committees of the different countries occupied three hours on Saturday with reports to the conference. Then at seven in the evening tidings were brought by a number of delegates upon the work for young men in Mohammedan and heathen countries.

Sunday was a well filled day. Over two thousand pulpits in Britain had proclamations bearing upon the conference work and the work of the association throughout the world. The Bible readings in Exeter Hall, conducted by Rev. F. B. Meyer, were a notable feature of the Sabbath day.

The general secretary of the American International Committee on Monday morning read a paper on "The Work of the Y. M. C. A.," which was followed by the Y. M. C. A., the discussions are somewhat unsatisfactory, inasmuch as a considerable proportion of the delegates on account of lingual difficulties

are debarred from understanding, to say nothing about taking part. Conferences and discussions by countries are more satisfactory. The other subject for the day was—how to secure throughout the associations a more thorough application of the two fundamental principles embodied in the international basis viz. (1) to unite those young men who regard the Lord Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures and desire to be His disciples in their doctrine and in their life, (2) to associate their efforts for the extension of His kingdom amongst young men. On the same day there was a conversazione, and a mass meeting of men in Exeter Hall.

On the following day three-quarters of an hour was given to each of the following topics, the constitution and election of Foreign Missions, the association as related to the governing body of the association, the duty of members of the governing body in matters of association finance, higher Biblical instruction amongst young men in the work of the association. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon none but the official delegates were admitted for a strictly business session. The Central International Committee reported, and matters arising out of their report, as well as kindred matters, occupied the time until 5 o'clock, the hour of adjournment. At 7.30 p.m. a public thanksgiving service was held in St. Paul's Cathedral, the Bishop of Ripon being chief speaker.

Wednesday was Jubilee Day and was marked by different meetings in the morning and afternoon in the central gathering place in the Strand. These were followed in the evening by a reception in the South Kensington Royal Albert Hall, where a bust of George Williams was unveiled and the festivities were participated in by a vast multitude.

The early portion of the closing day was devoted to excursions and sight-seeing. The visit to the Royal Palace at Windsor was, of course, the great event of the excursion hour. The later portion of the day was marked by the farewell. The American and his brother Canadian, the Scandinavian with his German and Dutch relations, Swiss and Frenchman, oriental, mid-continent man and occidental joined heart, voice and hand in a pledge to God for a new endeavor to make the young men population of the world an element for furthering the cause of Christ.

London, England, June, 1894.

HOW BEST TO PROMOTE PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONS IN THE CITY.*

BY GEORGE W. ARMSTRONG, LONDON.

The title of my paper implies that our city needs missionary work and one at all acquainted with the moral condition of some, in fact, all sections of the city (for vice exists in the highest as well as in the lowest walks of life, and it may be the highest, so called, is not one whit better than the lowest) can for one moment doubt. When we see immorality in its multitudinous forms and varied degrees—profanity, lying, dishonesty, drunkenness, idleness, impurity, (both in word and act), unchastity, frivolity, irreligion, unbelief, scepticism in its diverse forms, we must conclude that there is a large field for Evangelical Christian effort. The fields are white unto harvest.

The great command of the Master, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," ranks among His words that "shall not pass away until all be fulfilled," and His valedictory words, as He was about to ascend into heaven, re-affirm and confirm them, and His disciples were not slow in beginning to give effect to them. Our Saviour told His apostles that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem." But though Jerusalem was to be their starting point the principle of development and enlargement was to be adopted as we read Acts 1: 8. "And ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts

* A paper read before the Presbyterian Council, London, Ont.