

is strongly in its favour, and there is no doubt that sentiment is a great strength to any cause.

This Temperance discussion is now expected every year, and on the whole is rather interesting, even to parties who are not so far weeded to either side. The arguments in many cases are stale, and not unfrequently frivolous, and passages of Scripture introduced which the sacred writers never intended should be used in such a connection. But whilst some of the speakers on both sides probably go too far, still it is always pleasant to hear such men as Dr. Burns, Dr. Grant and the always acceptable speaker, Rev. D. J. Macdonnell. Dr. Burns' arguments and conclusions may be questioned, but he is incapable of misplacing Scripture texts, or of perverting any passage from its true meaning. Whilst it may be thought a forlorn hope to continue their opposition to the opinions of the majority, still, as Mr. Macdonnell says, it is a duty and, that while God gives him voice and strength, he will protest.

He feelingly referred to a stained-glass window behind his pulpit, put there in honour of a man who was engaged in the business, and he only wished the "majority" were as worthy as he. The reference, I fancy, was to the late Mr. James Michie, whose labours of love, works of charity and blameless life were the pride not only of St. Andrew's Church, but of the citizens of Toronto, and whatever may have been the "spirit" which prompted such benevolent acts as those of Mr. Michie, it could hardly be called an "evil spirit."

Principal Grant made a timely and judicious suggestion to the effect that the Assembly's Committee should be enlarged, that men should be placed on it who are not extremists, and that a number of elders from the various sections of the Church should be added to it.

The proceedings of the Assembly on the whole were interesting and harmonious, but on some occasions the rulings of the Moderator did not give entire satisfaction. This, of course, could hardly be expected. He spoke often, and sometimes his words, although probably not intended, were calculated to provoke discussion.

The Deceased Wife's Sister question was up, and so was Dr. Gregg, who is as valiant for the truth as the day he left Ireland. Time works no change on him, and in ringing words he said that he would protest against the ruling of the Moderator.

The Assembly's preachers were the Rev. Dr. Thompson, of Sarnia, and Rev. Thomas Sedgwick, of Nova Scotia, both thoroughly representative men. In St. Andrew's Church the services were conducted by the Rev. D. M. Gordon, of Halifax, and Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, of Toronto. The Rev. John Gallagher, of the Kingston Presbytery, preached in the Dominion Methodist Church. As a preacher and lecturer Mr. Gallagher occupies a high place in the Church. Dr. Cochrane also was the acceptable occupant of Baptist and Methodist pulpits on Assembly Sabbath. The services of these brethren were all highly spoken of, and fully sustained the reputation the ministers of our Church have for pulpit oratory.

Fortunately no burning questions came up for settlement, and if at any time a ripple appeared on the surface, it soon passed away, and, as in former years, the Assembly has come and gone, and the world is just moving on in the same way. If any city in the Dominion required the hallowed influences of a religious conference, it was Ottawa, for, in spite of all that Christian workers are doing, Sabbath breaking and other vices are openly indulged in, and this to such an extent that an Ottawa minister threatened to complain about the conduct of the Duke of Connaught "to his mother." "God save the Queen."

MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY UNION.

In these days when missionary work among the heathen has come to command the interested attention of all the churches, and in many instances the grateful recognition of statesmen as well, who are interested in the uplifting of the peoples committed to their charge, a brief account of the recent sessions of the "International Missionary Union," held at Clifton Springs, N. Y., may not be without interest to many readers of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN. This "Union," to use the words of their circular, "is an association composed of returned missionaries of all evangelical churches (whether their return be temporary or final). Its object is to promote mutual sympathy and co-operation of missionaries in their work, and to hold annual meetings, both for the discussion of important questions connected with Christian work abroad, and for the diffusion of missionary intelligence. Most of the evangelical churches of this continent are represented in its membership; Canada, by representatives from the Presbyterian, Moravian, Methodist and Baptist Churches. The only qualification for membership in the Union is actual service on the foreign field. This is made essential, and to the present time no person has been invited to speak who has not seen more or less of such service. On this occasion Canada was represented by Miss Cartmell, of Hamilton, of the Methodist Church; the Rev. Mr. Hartman, of the Moravian Church, and from the Presbyterian Church, by your correspondent. Our esteemed missionary, Mr. Wilkie, of Indore, was also on the programme for a paper, but was not expected till the week after the writer left. Such, then, was the composition of the convention which met at Clifton Springs last week; a gathering of between fifty and sixty, who either are now or have been missionaries on the foreign field. The number of these in itself was not great, but it represented not only nearly every evangelical church, but about every part of the habitable world.

First among the distinctive features of the meetings one must note the manifest spirit of prayer and dependence upon God. The topic of the opening devotional meeting, conducted by the present writer, was the gift of the Holy Spirit in relation to missionary work. A very deep sense of the imperative need of this endowment showed itself in every session. This found fitting expression in the hearty endorsement of a motion by the Rev. Dr. Herrick, of Marsovan, Asiatic Turkey. It was resolved that prayer should be offered in connection with every subject of address or discussion; a resolution which was faithfully carried out.

Among the subjects discussed were the heathen religions, missionary policy, women's work, educational preparation for the foreign field, not to mention others no less important, which had not come up before we left. Thursday evening was given up to two addresses on "Taoism" and "Buddhism," the former by the Rev. Dr. Baldwin, Secretary of the Foreign Mission work of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States; the latter by your correspondent. He may perhaps be pardoned for referring to the answer to a question which after his address he put to the missionaries present from Buddhist countries, as to the correctness of the judgment expressed by him in his published work upon the subject, that according to the orthodox Buddhism "Nirvana" means absolute extinction of existence. Denied, as this often is, it was nevertheless unanimously declared to be the truth by those present from Buddhist lands. The question is of evident consequence in its bearing on the fine theories of those who would perforce have it that Buddhism as a religion may even be held to compare most favourably with Christianity.

Strong statements were made by many of the missionaries present, men whose devotion and success none could doubt, as to the rising cry for "cheap missionaries," who shall "live like the natives," and so on. The judgment of the large number present from all parts of the field was unanimous to the effect that the attempt to go into a country like India or China and conform in everything—food, residence, etc., to the habits of the average native of such countries—was a great mistake; most likely in too many cases to injure in the end the health of the missionary, and little likely to advance the Gospel. In particular, the manner in which delicate girls and young ladies of refinement sent out by the Salvation Army, attempt to live in India, was condemned in the strongest terms, and by brethren who have seen for themselves, as nothing less than suicidal. Things were told us of such which might well make the heart bleed. However devoutly intended by those who have the management of the "Army," "inhuman" is not too harsh a word to apply to the policy which not only permits but requires a life from its labourers in India, which, from what we are told by eye-witnesses, can be little less for many than a living death; the more pitiful that if we may trust that most devoted man, George Bowen, of Bombay, who followed this course of life till his death, nothing more is thus accomplished for winning the heathen to Christ.

Another question which occupied the attention of the Convention was the education of those intending to enter the Foreign Missionary service. The subject was opened by the present writer in an address, in which he insisted that while especially in countries like Africa, there is a field for the work of consecrated laymen, especially mechanics, who have only an ordinary education, yet such cases should be regarded as exceptional; and that the rule should be to require from all who enter the field a standard of education such as is represented by the B.A. degree. This was argued from the difficult and complicated nature of the problems which confront the missionary in the organization of churches, and the preparation and education of the native Christians who shall take charge of these, and also be missionaries to their countrymen; as also from the remarkable advance in education which is seen in all the great heathen fields, increasing familiarity with the anti-Christian philosophy and science of Christendom, and other considerations which cannot here be named. While one or two, as Dr. Baldwin, of the American Methodist Episcopal Church (U.S.), were inclined to allow more latitude, the remarks of the opening speaker were urgently enforced by others, especially by the Rev. Dr. Herrick, President of the College of the A. B. C. F. M. at Marsovan, Asiatic Turkey; and the sense of the Conference in general was evidently in full accord with the view of the first speaker, that it was of great importance that the standard of educational qualification for foreign missionary service should be maintained at a high point.

One would like to speak of the most interesting session which was given to the consideration of work for heathen women, which occupied one afternoon; but time will only allow one to record the impression which was left of the remarkably high standard of character and ability which was presented by the various married and unmarried missionary ladies present. The Women's Boards of the various churches have reason to be proud of such representatives as were found in the Missionary Union. If anything else calls for special note in connection with the exercises of those most enjoyable and profitable days, it was certainly the able and brilliant address of the Rev. Dr. Herrick, of the college in Marsovan, Asiatic Turkey, on "The Kingdom of God in the Land of its Origin." The writer has rarely listened to as instructive and inspiring a missionary address, and he shares the often-expressed wish of many who heard it that it might in some way be published and extensively circulated. It would adorn the pages of our ablest reviews on either side of the Atlantic.

We venture to throw out the suggestion to the young men of our Inter-Collegiate Missionary Alliance that if Dr. Herrick should remain so long in America, they could not easily do better than secure his help for the next meeting of the Alliance.

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SHOULD ART STUDENTS BE SENT TO THE MISSION FIELDS?

MR. EDITOR,—This subject, I am glad to see, is occupying the attention of some of our Church courts. It is quite time it received attention ere evils irreparable result. I speak what I know and testify what I have seen. Not, let it be distinctly understood, that all the art students I have known in the mission fields were, or are, unfit. I have known a few, but then they were not mere lads, who did good work and understood the responsibility of their work, and more and better than even that, they knew their Bibles. And this is just one of the things which I have found wanting in many of the young lads I have known out in this great "lone land," as well as elsewhere.

Many of them do not know the "Three R's." and to save their lives could not prove them from the Word of God. It seems little less than an insult to men and women who have travelled many years in the Christian road to have these sent to be their teachers. I do not by any means mean either to say or insinuate that most of them, the majority of them, will not make good preachers in time, with increased knowledge of themselves, and with a knowledge also how to handle the sword of the Spirit.

It is not their lack of general education that I find fault with, for many of them are pretty well advanced in secular studies. Besides, I am well aware that some of our most successful preachers of the Gospel, both in the old country and on this continent, never had what is known as a regular training. What I do feel bound to speak of is their want of decided Christian principles and Bible knowledge.

The study of Latin and Greek for a session at one of our colleges does not give them this. Sometimes it gives a very poor substitute in an unbounded self-conceit. I have known some of these striplings very ready and willing to dictate to, counsel and direct men who have been over twenty years in the work, and who had not worked in vain, nor spent their strength for naught, but who can look with gratitude and thankfulness to some souls won for Christ. I have known at least two ministers whose good work and home happiness was hindered by these fledglings leaving their own field of labour and interfering in pastures where they were not sent nor paid for working, or in some other way giving the enemy a handle against the good cause, and settled pastorates have been unsettled through these causes.

I feel it would be a pity to keep some young men out of mission work during the summer months, who have grown old enough and wise enough to know and bear in mind, always and everywhere, what grave responsibility they have incurred by professing to be on the Lord's side; who ever remember the Master they serve, the Saviour who has redeemed them, and who look to Him constantly for the wisdom which is profitable to direct. Such young men I have seen and know, but it is not of them I speak; it is rather of the raw, self-satisfied and self-conceited youth, whose head and heart are more full of mere fun and frolic than love to Christ and love to souls.

No human training can give them that, but it can direct them in the way to find it. I am not deprecating human learning; far from it; I am satisfied that, other things being equal, and head and heart right with God, the man who has the best education will be the best worker, but secular education merely does not count for much in God's harvest field. I know several mission fields which have been injured for years by some of these youngsters being sent to them for one season.

Let us have suitable men in the work, as far as human judgment can guide, under the Spirit's teaching, or leave the field vacant. I need say no more. A word to the wise is sufficient.

The Manse, Broadview.

WM. NICHOLL.

ABOUT TALE-BEARING.

It is much easier to start an evil report than to stop it. Even after a rumour has been proven false, the harm it has done cannot always be undone. Before repeating a bit of gossip, it would be well for us to ask ourselves three questions. First, "Is it true?" Second, "Is it kind?" Third, "Is it necessary?" This practice would be sure to save us from many bitter memories and regrets.

The pious Philip of Neri was once visited by a lady, who accused herself of slander. He bade her go to the market, buy a chicken just killed and still covered with feathers, and walk a certain distance, plucking the bird as she went.

The woman did as she was directed, returned, anxious to know the meaning of the injunction.

"Retrace your steps," said Philip, "and gather up, one by one, all the feathers you have scattered."

"I cast the feathers carelessly away," said the woman, "and the wind carried them in all directions."

"Well, my child," replied Philip, "so is it with slander; like the feathers which the wind has scattered, they have been wafted in many directions. Call them back now, if you can. Go, sin no more."