

ANNIVERSARY MISSIONARY MEETINGS, MONTREAL.

The third evening was devoted to Foreign Missions, when the platform of Erskine Church was again well filled by the leading laymen and ministers of our Church in the city. The audience was large and appreciative. The Chair was occupied by Principal Dawson, LL.D.

Mr. JAMES CROFT said as Major Malan, who was connected with the mission work of the Mother Church, was to follow him, he would do very little more than give the names of the missionaries of the Church in Canada, and an idea of the solid mass of heathenism the Churches of Christ were endeavoring to penetrate. The population of the globe is estimated at 1,375,000,000 of human beings. Nine hundred millions were heathens, three hundred and forty-eight millions were Christian in name, and one hundred and twenty millions were Mohammedans, so that there is four-fifths of the population of the globe that do not recognize that Name by which we expect to be saved. The work was not a hopeless one. In 1820 the American Board of Missions sent out its first missionary to the Sandwich Islands. If he was properly informed, the Sandwich Islands are as much Christian to day as the United States. Only a very few years ago, a young native of Rarotonga, one of the Navigator's Islands visited the British Museum, and was shown a Rarotongan idol, which he examined with the greatest interest, and stated that it was the first time he had seen an idol. And yet in John Williams' time there were thousands of such idols in that island. At Erromanga, one of the New Hebrides, where John Williams and the Gordons, from Nova Scotia, were martyred, and where the population is now gradually dying out, there are 3,000 Christians. At another island a marble slab is erected, which states that thirty years ago, when Rev. John Geddes landed there, there was not a single Christian, and when he left there was not a single heathen. He proceeded to review the "foreign" mission fields of the Church in Canada. In the first, Trinidad, S. A., there are 10,000 people, including 15,000 or 20,000 coolies. The missionaries are Revs. Grant, Martin, and Christie. Ten or twelve years ago Rev. Mr. Martin was sent there to establish a mission. At the present time there are four Indian catechists, all educated Brahmins, and fifteen schools with five hundred scholars, and Mr. Grant, the missionary, while in this country, stated that fifteen of the scholars could repeat the whole of the Westminster catechism from beginning to end. In the Island of Formosa, Revs. McKay, McGregor, and Fraser laboured, and another missionary was going there. Messrs. McKay and Fraser, at the close of five years' labour, could count ten chapels with five hundred native attendants. They had admitted seventy-five into the Church after the closest possible examination. He also had eleven native students of theology, who travelled and studied with him wherever he went, and assisted him in his labours. In India there were two ordained missionaries, Rev. James Campbell, and Douglas, formerly of Cobourg, who has been there but a short time; also five ladies, Misses Blackader, Fairweather, Rogers, Forester, and McGregor, who, together with native assistants, constitute a staff of about fifty.

He wished to say a few words about one hindrance only to the work, and that the principal one. It was not the hardness of the heathens' hearts; for he believed theirs were as soft as ours. It was not because we did not send good men, but it was because of the unaccountable selfishness of the people in Christian lands. He must say, for this the ministers were a great deal to blame. Water would not rise higher than its own level, and the missionary spirit of the people would not rise above the pulpit. The people must have information. Missionary sermons should be preached oftener than once a year, and the Church would not be right on this question until such sermons were delivered oftener, and made a regular institution of the church.

Major Malan, the next speaker, now travelling on this continent for the purpose of giving information respecting the missions of the Presbyterian Church, said he had for twenty years known what heathenism is—in India, China, and Africa. His desire in speaking was to strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Ghost. He testified to the fact that a missionary's wife was equal to a missionary in the amount of work she assisted her husband to perform. He spoke of the necessity existing for the church at large to believe in the power of the Holy Ghost, otherwise they could not expect very great results to follow their labours. Sometimes the fruits of a missionary's labour were a long time coming. A German missionary laboured for thirty years without apparently making one convert, yet he was the means of awakening the conscience of one heathen, who became a Christian and who had been seen by the speaker teaching his coolies on the Sabbath. His greatest wish in life was that his friends might give up idolatry. He next spoke at some considerable length on the power of Jesus Christ to save, and urged his audience to lay hold of that power.

The missionary hymn, "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," was next sung.

Rev. Mr. Farries, of Ottawa, next spoke of the objects of the Missionary Board, two of which had already been dealt with, viz.: Home Missions and French Evangelization. The sphere of the first two were within the bounds of the Dominion, the third recognized no boundaries and distinguished only between those who had and those who had not the Word of Life. There was a certain class of people who thought that Foreign Missions could be neglected without affecting their relationship to Christ. The aid coming from those who thought so would be spasmodic and vary according to the moods of the giver. But there was a number whose name was legion who dared not leave it alone, but who were compelled to prosecute it from very love for it. He held they were bound to prosecute it. He then dwelt upon the means by which increased faith in the Church would tend to develop, also by organization among congregations and Sabbath schools.

The Rev. Principal Grant was next introduced, and addressed the meeting as follows:

I spoke last night of the prime obligation on us as patriots

to prosecute Home Missions vigorously. To-night I would speak of the prime obligation on us as Christians to undertake Foreign Missions.

1. The object for which the Church was established by Christ was the conversion of the world. There is no doubt of this fact. The words of Christ have a calmness and,—I may say the word without irreverence—a statesmanlike breadth, as unlike as words possibly can be to the heated outpourings of the visionary, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and disciple all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the world, Amen." Mark the four *alls*. The instruments for effecting the great object, and the power by which they were to effect it, and their method of procedure were just as clearly pointed out in the last words uttered by Him before He rose into the deep blue of Judean skies from the brow of Olivet. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." There is no doubt about all this. The instrumentality seemed ridiculously disproportioned to the work that was to be done. Suppose, for example, that there were no Christians in the world now but this congregation, and that the work were imposed on us. No help from the other congregations of our Church, no help from other denominations in Canada, no help from the United States, no help from Great Britain and Ireland, or Australia, no help from Christian Europe. We would think that the task imposed not only asked that we should be martyrs, but martyrs to the extent of absurdity. Yet our resources are infinitely greater than theirs were to whom Christ addressed the commission.

Thus, then, was the object for which the Church was established! Who would think it to judge by the ordinary language, thoughts, manner, expenditure, style of life in one of our congregations! Suppose that an angel were to enter one of our Montreal Churches on a Sunday forenoon, and sought for information from some of the elders as to the sincerity of the worshippers. Angels, remember, are very practical beings. They fly very swiftly; they delight to do His commandments. He asks them, the elders, are all these Christians? Not a doubt of it! They love Christ? Yes. They believe His word? Yes. They are carrying out His commands? Yes, as well as you can expect from imperfect human beings. Well, he would probably say, let me bring this matter to two practical tests: (1) How much do these people annually spend on themselves for necessities, comforts, luxuries, or to add to their capital? Without going into details it would be safe to say, that there are a hundred families in the congregation who spend an average of \$3,000 each, or in all, \$300,000. How much do they give to carry out their Master's great command? Probably they give half as much as they spend on themselves, or \$150,000 a year! Our six hundred congregations do not make up one-fifth of that amount. (2) Well, continues the angel, I will apply another test. There is something that men love more than their money. They love their children. They must believe there can be no such honor on earth, as to wear the livery and bear the commission of Him on whose head are many crowns. Doubtless there is not a family in this congregation that does not educate one son and one daughter for these lofty posts! Oh, not at all. They give their sons to trade, to law, to professions that promise gain. If they are very rich they don't bring them up to anything in particular. The youths then learn to smoke, play, loiter elegantly about the Club, shoot pigeons, pheasants and such warlike animals; to drive tandem or unicorn, and all that sort of thing. As for their daughters, they dress well, read four or five novels a week, dance charmingly, and do other things of the kind. And then all meet on Sundays and sing, or listen to the choir singing "Onward Christian Soldiers," etc. Why, this congregation has not given one missionary, male or female, to the Church of Christ in the whole course of its history. It has not given one minister to the Church. It has given thousands to the service of the State, to the world's hard work in one way or another, to fashion, to fortune, to fame; yea it has sold them under bondage to gold, to lust, to drunkenness. It has seen them join hand in hand with the devil, but it has not spared one for the direct service of Him they call Master! And then we wonder that there should be skeptics and infidels, and materialists. We think it hard that they should call us hypocrites, and modern Christianity a varnished heathenism!

2. Such was the object for which the Church was established. Tho' the Church has been to an awful extent unfaithful, still if we view its history from a point sufficiently high to see its whole course and the direction of its main current it will be clear enough ever to a superficial observer that it is in this direction it has ever been tending, and that it has never wholly lost the inspiration of this great commission. There have been two periods in which the Church as a whole threw its strength into this great work, and a third period is, we think, commencing. The first period begins with Pentecost and extends over the first two or three centuries. Its fruit was the nominal conversion of the Roman Empire: of races that had lost their old vigour with the decay of their old faiths; of the lands which enclose the Mediterranean. Many people speak as if this were all that Christianity had accomplished. If it had been so there would now be no such thing as Christianity in the world. Those races were incapable of receiving the religion of Christ in its purity and simplicity. They were corrupted by wealth, enervated by nameless vices. Those lands needed the scourge and flood, and scourge and flood were sent. The eighth or ninth century found North Africa, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, all Eastern Asia, Mahometan, yielding to a purer faith and a nobler life than could be found in the boasted Christianity they had made for themselves. The rest of Christendom repeatedly submerged by wave after wave of barbarians from Central Asia, and Northern and Central Europe, until scarcely a remnant of the old glories remained. Those lands in Europe that are now the centre of Christendom, were vast wildernesses peopled by rude, untameable

barbarians. Then commenced the second period, and it ended about the fourteenth century, with all Europe, except Turkey, acknowledging one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, in one language, under one ritual and one head. How was that accomplished? By miracles of faith and prayer, of Missionary devotion and sacrifice,—Missionaries going out into the wilds of heathenism, not by twos and threes, but by scores and hundreds at a time, not only men but women banding themselves together to convey, regardless of peril, the light of the Gospel and the light of such Christian civilization as was then enjoyed to Central, Northern, and Western Europe. Until we really know something of the "dark ages," the less we sneer at them the better.

The Protestant Reformation broke up the forced and frozen unity of the Mediæval Church. It then took the Protestant Churches three centuries to defend what they had gained; to engage sufficiently in internal quarrels, until they should at last come to understand partly themselves, their principles, and their position. Suppose that the great Protestant Churches had spent some of their immense energies during those three hundred years on heathenism! What would the results have been?

(1) At home less schism and less negative theology; fewer schisms about trifling differences in doctrine and ritual; and less of negative theology, either in the form of a dead rationalism or of a dead Confession.

(2) Abroad, victories for Christ gained by the whole army such as now only the little corporal's guard, known as the Moravian Church can point to. That noble society commenced mission work 140 years ago. Then it was that Count Taugendorf told the brethren of the hard lot of the West Indian slaves. Two rose up and said "We will go." How? they were asked, "We will walk to the nearest port and work our passage out." But the masters will not let you preach to the slaves. "We will offer ourselves as slaves that working beside them we may tell them of Jesus." Is it any wonder that that Church prospered. One hundred years ago one of its first Missionaries baptized the first negro convert in Surinam. Now that Mission numbers twenty-two thousand. The Moravian Church has prospered internally. One hundred and forty years ago it numbered six hundred members. Now in the three home Provinces, of Germany, Britain, and America, it numbers twenty-seven thousand members. But much more has it prospered abroad. It counts seventy thousand members in its Foreign Mission Churches. This is the only Church whose Foreign Missionaries outnumber the ministers at home. And the Moravians have never sought easy fields of labour. They have been the chivalry of Christendom and have gone only to the weakest and most degraded of the sons and daughters of men; to races that are dying out, to nomads who are always most difficult to reach and influence, to tribes that other Churches have ignored as beyond redemption. You find them 'mid the eternal snows and ice of Greenland and in the pestilential swamps of the Tropics. They do not despair of Papuans, Hottentots or Australian aborigines. They are the outposts and advanced guards of Christendom, and they show us what may be done when the whole army is inspired, and the advance is made all along the line.

And when is that day to come? When! It is now dawning. The rosy fingers that betokened its approach began to spread over the sky more than half a century ago, and now the white light of early dawn is seen. Take a survey of the heathen world as it now is compared with what it was fifty years ago. Africa girdled with Mission Stations, its coast line lit up at almost every point with a Pharos. Its vast bulk is pierced from every side. On the West we see the Missions of Bishop Crowther, the United Presbyterian Mission under the noble Anderson and his band, and many others; on the South we hear of the fifty years labours of Moffat; we visit the Lovedale Mission where Major Malan gave such unselfish assistance to the Missionaries, and a dozen others; on the East the Universities Mission, the Lake Nyassa Missions of the Scottish Churches, well named after the lion-hearted Livingstone; on the North from Egypt, look at Madagascar, now a Christian kingdom; at the Sandwich Islands, a second Christian state redeemed from heathenism; at the Fiji Islands, a Christian colony through the labours of the Apostolic Hunt and his colleagues; at New Zealand and the South Sea Islands fragrant with the memories of Selwyn and our own Geddie, with the martyr memories of Bishop Patteson, John Williams, and our own Morrison and the Gordons. Go on to Asia, and see Mission Stations lighting up the coast of Syria and Asia Minor; Nestoria and Persia irradiated with the same light; go on to India, and find nearly a million of native Christians, including every caste from the highest Koolin Brahmin down to the Shaners of Tinnevely; and, aboriginal tribes of the Kohls honoring the memory of John Evangelist Gossner; the Santals, etc. There the memories of Schwartz, Henry Martyn, Carey, Marshman, Ward, Heber, Duff, Ogilvie, Wilson, Nisbet, the devoted bands sent out by Gossner, and scores of other honored names meet us wherever we go; while living missionaries, European, American, and thank God, Canadian too, meet us in every province and city. Eastward to Burmah, we tread in the footsteps of Adoniram Judson, as we pass from village to village of converted Karens. And now we reach Formosa where our own noble Mackay is labouring, with God's rich blessing on his labours; we cross to China, and as we mourn for Carstairs Douglas, just called to receive his crown, we hear the loud Macedonian cry from the one hundred and thirty missionaries gathered in conference at Shanghai to the whole Christian world, "Come over and help us to conquer great China for Christ in this generation."

We go on to Japan, and look in on Bishop Williams in his little one-roomed Japanese hut, his Palace, Cathedral, and Schoolhouse, and when we ask why he has no better accommodation, learn that as he had devoted his life to the cause he does not think it much also to devote two thirds of his small income to mission work.

When such men are in the field we do not wonder when we are told (1) that the membership of Foreign Mission Churches rescued from heathenism within the last sixty years is said on good authority, to be greater than the membership of the whole Christian Church at the end of the first century;