

what was said and how it was said. There was a very small congregation, the members of Assembly present not being more than could be counted on the fingers of one hand. I felt disappointed in this. On the Tuesday and Wednesday signs of impatience were manifested and given expression to. The Clerk intimated from his place that there were still seventy items of business on the docket to dispose of. A time limit was fixed for speakers, and afterwards business was rushed through double quick. On the Thursday I absented myself and left for home, but before doing so paid a visit to another Assembly in the good city of Kingston, but a very different one—the Penitentiary. Thus ended my visit to the General Assembly. Since then I have often thought and mused on matters in general. A good deal of these thoughts and musings have been occasioned by the state of matters in our Dominion in matters political and religious, and with your permission I would like to offer a few remarks on some points in connection with the Assembly's work, the duty of its members and members of the Church in general.

To my mind two things stand out prominently. One is that there is too much work for the Assembly to do in the limited time. So many being there apparently able and eager to do it tends rather to hinder than to facilitate despatch. As a consequence there is not sufficient time and leisure afforded to consider the business to be disposed of. Another is that the great bulk of our members are not sufficiently informed of the work of the Church as a whole or in its details. Many years ago there used to come to us in the *Record* a detailed statement of the finances of the Church, which was interesting and useful. For many years it has not come. Many know little about the financial and other matters as they ought to know, and if they have not the knowledge they will not likely be interested, and if not interested there will not be much progress. It would surely be a good thing to have the *Record* enlarged and published more frequently somewhat in the form of your paper, to give all necessary information in regard to the work of the Church and to have all reports and overtures published some time before the Assembly meeting, so that representatives could leisurely consider them. It should also be a medium of communication between the members of the Church, so that they could have opportunity of expressing their views on any proper question. If this were done it would certainly facilitate business and likely tend to its satisfactory disposal. There are many questions which ought to be discussed and considered by the whole Church before the Assembly should take action upon them. There are some Schemes of the Church and other work laid out which might be done satisfactorily elsewhere. It would be a relief and lessen the crowding of business. Whatever can be said in favour of continuing such schemes as the Widows and Orphans of ministers, the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Funds, many think the time has come when these matters should be discussed somewhere else than on the floor of the Assembly. These two, and, to some extent, the working of the Augmentation Scheme, are what we may call not popular with a great many of the members. They are not looked upon very favourably and not heartily supported. If this be so it is unsatisfactory, and if the people are wrong they should be enlightened. If they have good reason for their opinions, opportunity should be afforded of expressing them.

Regarding the Temperance Committee's work, I have a very decided opinion that the Assembly is not taking exactly the right position on what is called the Temperance question, especially the prohibition phase of it. There seems such impatience and furor for immediate prohibition of the liquor traffic, that the necessary conditions to satisfactory and effective prohibition are in a great measure overlooked or not complied with. Prohibition of the liquor traffic is so much a political question that the Assembly should consider carefully what its proper sphere is in its corporate capacity, and what the duty of its members as citizens.

I may be one of a small minority, but even if I should be alone it ought not to prevent me from stating in as few words as I can my views on this point and the reasons for them.

(To be continued.)

FOREIGN MISSION SECRETARY.

MR. EDITOR,—The remit of the General Assembly anent appointing a salaried Foreign Mission secretary to act for the Western Division of the Church has been the means of bringing Foreign Missions, with their executive administration, under the Presbyterian microscope, eliciting much information, and through the discussions in Presbyteries stimulating considerable interest in Foreign Missions, which cannot but result in great benefit to the Church, for which credit is due Rev. D. D. McLeod, who, in his wisdom and according to his usual methodical and business-like way of conducting ecclesiastical affairs, moved in the General Assembly that the recommendation of said appointment be referred to Presbyteries. The Foreign Mission Committee, who, it will be admitted, are the best judges of the needs of the Church in that behalf, recommended the appointing of such an agent, which recommendation has been endorsed by Presbyteries, and indeed it would have been a marvel had they done otherwise, seeing that the American Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church and other Churches whose Foreign Mission work is by no means as extensive as ours, have salaried permanent Foreign Mission secretaries. The

great wonder is that a secretary who should devote his whole time to that work has not been appointed by our Church years ago. No secular institution or corporation handling annually as much money (\$110,000) as the Foreign Mission Committee would be guilty of such folly as to neglect the appointing of a man to look after its business and devote his whole time to its interest. "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

No one will deny that the Home Mission Fund and the Fund for the Augmentation of Salaries are as economically administered as they well can be, and more economically than those of the majority of other Churches, yet it costs ten per cent. of the monies contributed to administer the former and five per cent. the latter, while only a little over two per cent. are expended in administering the Foreign Mission Fund. The Church, a few years ago, appointed, at moderate salaries, two superintendents of Home Missions, Dr. Robertson and Mr. Findlay. These men have done excellent work and are acknowledged to have saved thousands of dollars to the Home Mission Fund, in addition to systematizing the whole work in a manner which could not possibly have been done but by men devoting all their time to it, and concentrating all their energies to "this one thing." It is as possible for a corporation as for an individual to be "penny wise and pound foolish," and there is a strong probability that the Church is chargeable with such foolery in connection with the Foreign Mission work. Even should the salary (\$2,000) recommended by the Committee, which is the smallest the Church should offer, be paid a permanent secretary, the expenditure in administering the Foreign Mission Fund would be much less than that of administering the Fund for the Augmentation of Salaries, which has no paid agent, and which is not half the percentage expended in administering the Home Mission Fund. It takes ten per cent. to administer the Home Mission Fund and five per cent. the Augmentation Fund, when the fields are under the very eye and hand of the Church. Surely the Foreign Mission work does not receive that attention which it should when only about two per cent. are expended in administering the Fund, while the fields are in India, China and the uttermost parts of the earth. The Foreign Mission Committee has done all that any committee under similar circumstances could do, and devoted more time to the work than the Church could reasonably expect them to do, but the work has so developed and the labour in connection with the Committee's work is now so great that a committee cannot efficiently carry it on, for it can be done by one whose duty it will be, under a committee, to devote his whole time to it, so that it is not a matter of choice, but of necessity on the part of the Church to appoint such an agent, and that agent must be a competent man and one of considerable experience in the *modus operandi* of the Foreign Mission Committee, extensive knowledge of our fields and missionaries, and of good executive ability. Such a man is Rev. D. D. McLeod, of Barrie. He has been for many years an active member of the Foreign Mission Committee, is at present its secretary, and as to executive ability there are few his superior in the Church. Let the General Assembly at its meeting in June next appoint him permanently to the office to which the Committee has appointed him *pro tempore*, and a long-felt want will be supplied, and the Foreign Mission Committee shall be relieved of much of its labours, and mission work will receive an impetus which the whole Church shall feel.

PRESBYTER.

THE DANGER OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

MR. EDITOR,—The blessed Bible in this changeable and wicked world is the only light we have to guide us into eternal life—a lamp to our souls—and with all its alleged imperfections is really a lamp to our feet and light in the dark ways of earth. We require this light even when young and in the heyday of life, much more when old—when tottering on the brink of the grave—from the cold precincts of which we can look up, our souls looking with joy to that home, those mansions promised in the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel by our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, when He was about to suffer cruel tortures on the Cross and the indignities of Roman soldiers and malicious Jews. His promises were bright and consoling. In very dark times thousands upon thousands have since felt the gracious words, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am there ye may be also." What would we do without such a promise? How could the poor widows, forsaken orphans, dying martyrs, the strong man in his dying throes, weak as an infant, but yet looking up to God in his soul, and thus strong, do without this light, or the Christian's hopes of immortal life beyond the grave's dark brink? Many a soldier on the battle field, expiring, or sailor on the sinking ocean ship, have turned for consolation to this promise. Yet this is one of the Bible's promises! And how many more do we find in the Old and New Testaments!! Look at the Psalms (so sublime), the sayings of Isaiah and the prophets, the Proverbs, so wise and consolatory. Remember the wise advice of Moses to the children of Israel, the noble words of Joshua: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," the beautiful, filial and brotherly love of Joseph to his wicked brothers in Egypt. Are the lovely and beautiful sayings, this bright history, to be set aside, criticized, sneered at and disbelieved to suit the tastes of the higher critics or the German sophists, full of

fanciful theories, selfish vanity and egotism? Is the soul to be cheated out of its anchors of hope, the bright sunshine of future life, where we expect to see the loved faces of departed friends, be welcomed by the angels who sang their triumphant hymns on the birth of Jesus, or pointed to the blessed abodes of heaven when He took His last farewell to earth, to please the higher critics who have no deep spiritual life in them? Are those men ready, like Isaiah, to say, "God touched my spirit with a live coal from His heavenly spiritual altar, and then I saw and spoke, but not before (Isaiah vi. 6, 7). No, before we attempt to misinterpret or criticize such books as the prophecies of Isaiah—so beautiful and angelic—we must at least have wisdom from on high, which will never be given to the Scripture manglers. Heavenly light will not be given to men who tear to pieces immortal jewels. I advise all who criticize Isaiah to try to be like he was. What does it matter whether the whole book was written by him or not? Do we not see in it the footprints of God's great Spirit? We even hear some critics question whether Christ ever spoke as the beloved apostle John says He did in the Gospel of John. Who spoke such words, then? They are the words of eternal life, unapproachable in beauty and grandeur. Was there some other secret author of these great words?

If so, there is a Christ to come not yet disclosed. Who could talk as Christ talked to Nicodemus, or the woman of Samaria? Who could speak the words I have quoted in John xiv. or Isaiah vi.? Who could raise a Lazarus from the dead, or speak such touching words as He spoke then to Martha and Mary, but a Christ such as true spiritual people worship?

Critics of the lovely books of the Bible—so precious to true spirits—are seemingly touched with the slime of the old serpent, who is ever ready to tempt men to sin as he tempted Eve, poor Peter, the miserable Judas Iscariot, and so many others who have listened to his hellish tricks and blandishments. What do we hear, even in our own city, now? Why, some minister from a pulpit, for vanity sake, denying the precious blood of Jesus as necessary for our salvation! Another (I once heard in the Pavilion in this city) denying the atonement, the fact of original sin, that man is sinful in his nature. If not so—can anyone tell me—why such horrid deeds are done in the world which one daily reads of? If Jesus died on the cruel Cross, why did He do so but as a propitiation for the sins of the world? Is this doctrine, too, to be attacked? Why the sacrifice of so great and almighty a Spirit, if not for sin? Sin! the whole history of man from Cain down to the horrid wretch, Deeming, now about to suffer in Australia for the murder of his poor wives, with a voice of thunder, proves man is sinful—dreadfully sinful! Why is it so, critics may say? We know it is so; and in deep humility let us thank God that through Jesus Christ, by the shedding of His precious blood, with sorry and broken hearts, we can get rid of this sin by the kind mercy of a blessed, loving God.

The folly of so-called learned men in this high criticism of the Books of the Bible, denying that Moses wrote the Books ascribed to him, that he did not promulgate the laws ascribed to him, that the Book of Job is comparatively a modern Book, after Solomon's day; that the Psalms are wrongly ascribed to the authorship of David; that the Books of the New Testament, at least some of them, were not written by the four evangelists—has done more to make men infidels than all the Ingersolls, Huxleys, Tyndals and Spencers could ever do. They pull out the under-pins of the Old and New Testaments and seem to care little whether the upper fabric falls or not. The late Mr. Beecher, of New York, undermined the views of learned men there. How many true, spiritual Christians was he ever instrumental in making? He it was who denied at the Toronto Pavilion the doctrine of original sin in man, and necessarily, in consequence, the atonement for sin by the shed blood of Jesus on the cross. I see a Mr. Frank Smith has, in a letter in the *World*, publicly denounced the doctrines lately preached at the Euclid Avenue Methodist Church by Mr. Phillips. He is right, too, for if Mr. Phillips preaches against the atonement for our sins by Christ's shed blood on the Cross, he cuts from under the Christian Church one of its essential principles. I am not here condemning Mr. Phillips' doctrines—for they have not been fully examined by me—but I condemn all who preach against the atonement of Christ, or who hold that man is not in his nature sinful. We cannot come to any other conclusion from the Scriptures, or even from worldly experience, of past and present events occurring around us. We also cannot be too careful in meddling with the present arrangement of the Books of the Scriptures. We can only understand them when light is shed upon them by the Holy Spirit in our souls.

Toronto, April 14, 1892.

CHARLES DURAND.

SUNSET THOUGHTS.

Sacrifice is the indispensable condition of success. We must renounce in order to prevail. He that seeks his life loses it; he that loses his life finds it. One must sow in tears if he would reap in joy. Master and scholar have the same experience—that suffering is required in order to fruitfulness and victory. It is the furnace that purifies and renders efficacious; the spices must be bruised to bring forth their fragrance. Happy they who recognize this law of the divine economy, and are content to suffer if only they may be made to bear much fruit.—William M. Taylor, D.D.