

The Presbyterian Conference in London.

[The following is the remainder of the report of the proceedings at the public meeting held in Marylebone Presbyterian Church on Thursday evening in connection with the Conference on Presbyterianism.]

After a reference to a conference of Presbyterians attending the Evangelical Alliance in 1874, where the subject was mentioned, Dr. McCosh went on to describe the harmonious and pleasant character of the correspondence that had been held in all these Churches, and the agreement amongst both Irish and Scotch Presbyterians that the Conference that was projected in order to consider the matter should be held in London. He spoke of the obligation under which they lay to friends in London, and then proceeded to say that the Conference had met on Wednesday at ten o'clock. They employed a considerable portion of time in prayer that they might be guided from taking a false step. Then they proceeded to business. They received commissions from upwards of twenty Churches, and examined them; then they were employed for anxious hours in framing a constitution. That was a formidable matter, but in the course of a very short time they came to a substantial agreement, except with regard to the preamble, which had not been quite decided upon. There would be no difficulty about this preamble being settled before they adjourned. They had passed a series of resolutions composing the constitution, and in doing this they had been unanimous. There had not been a single dissent or protest from one member of the Conference. They had agreed to take as their standard the consensus of the Reformation Churches, and taking that as their creed, to enter into no other details which were not necessary. They had agreed to engage in practical work, so that they might not be called a mere talking body, but a body that, mainly through the Churches, were to proceed to practical action. He read a few passages of the resolutions agreed upon—"The council shall consider questions of general interest to the Presbyterian community. It shall seek the welfare of the Churches, especially such as are weak and persecuted; it shall gather and disseminate information regarding the kingdom of Christ throughout the world; it shall recommend the Presbyterian system as scriptural, and as combining simplicity, efficiency, and adaptation to all times and conditions; and it shall also entertain all subjects directly connected with the work of evangelization, such as the relation of the Christian Church to the evangelization of the world; the distribution of mission work; the combination of Church energies, especially in the great cities and destitute districts; the training of ministers; the use to be made of the press and colportage; the religious instruction of the young; the sanctification of the Sabbath; the counteracting of infidelity and Romanism; and the suppression of intemperance and other vices." This union-to-day which had been formed was not an organic union; it left every Church free, and did not interfere with its internal order or external relations. Every Church had the same liberty as before, but by moral means they meant to promote the practical efficiency of the Churches. In forming this alliance they clearly indicated that they did not mean to separate from their present relations with Christians who might not hold to the same form of Church government. It was being put in their preamble that they, in thus uniting, should continue to hold fellowship with all other Churches that held by Christ the Head. Dr. McCosh went on to refer to the visit of the members to Westminster Abbey, where the Standards of the Church—the Confession of Faith, the Shorter Catechism, and so forth—were drawn up, and which made the chamber one of immense historical importance. He deliberately said that, so far as Presbyterianism was concerned, they had taken a step at this Conference that in time would equal in importance the transactions in the Jerusalem Chamber, that this union of the Irish and Scotch Presbyterians throughout the world would rank as next to the great event in Presbyterian history which took place at Westminster. (Applause.)

The Rev. Dr. Stewart Robinson, the representative of the Southern Presbyterian Church in America, moved the following resolution—"That in the opinion of this meeting it is highly desirable that means may be devised by which the Presbyterian Churches distributed over the world which hold by reformed views may come into formal and stated intercourse with one another." He believed that this movement was the result of no mere regard for expediency, no mere suggestion in the mind because of its consonance with the progress of the age and increased faculty of intercourse, but was the direct leading of the Spirit of God. This Council was to him the stepping-stone to the General Assembly of the Church of the whole world.

Dr. Andrew Thomson seconded the motion. He reiterated the statement that they did not mean by this Presbyterian alliance to begin to build walls of exclusion of separation between themselves and other Christian Churches. But they came together declaring their conviction that the Presbyterian form of Church government was founded on, and agreeable to, the Word of God, and that it afforded security for Church order, and the liberty of the Christian people. Moreover, they believed that the Presbyterian form of Church government afforded opportunity for united and efficient action against the common enemies of the Church of God. He enlarged upon the thought that it was the Gospel of Christ enshrined by and affirmed in their Presbyterianism that united them. It was not so much the fact of a common polity as the greater fact of a common faith and common Christian life, that brought them together. They expected the alliance to bring about a ready means of intercourse between Presbyterian Churches that afforded them means of comparing notes and giving suggestions to one another. It would be a convenient platform on which all the evangelized Presbyterians of the world might unite for great ends and for the resistance of great evils. He expressed

his surprise that such an alliance had not been earlier thought of, and said the preparation of the Church for it was evident. He thought it likely to be the occasion of very useful and extensive Christian action over the world. He rejoiced at the immense amount of good this alliance would be able to do on behalf of the struggling Presbyterian Church on the Continent of Europe by moral means, by the means of the public press, and by influence with the Government of our country. (Applause.) The strong Presbyterian Churches of Britain and America would be able to shield the Continental brethren until they were able to protect themselves. After stating his belief that the divisions to which the Presbyterian Church had been given were often the fruit of honest conscientiousness, he went on to say that he believed they had carried division too far. They must change their course. Let them be done with hair-splitting and trifling discussion. Some of the disputed questions might well stand till the millennium. Let them go on converting the world, and when that was done their children's children might sit down and settle these comparatively unimportant questions.

Pastor de Coppit (of the Reformed Church of France) moved—"That this meeting has learned with much satisfaction that it has been resolved to form a Presbyterian alliance, meeting from time to time in general council, and cordially desires that the divine blessing may rest on the scheme which has been so happily begun."

Dr. Topp (Toronto), seconded the motion, which was supported by Dr. Robertson, New Greyfriars, Edinburgh, and passed unanimously.

Dr. Duff, Edinburgh, moved the third resolution—"That, notwithstanding the aggressive attitude of Romanism and the widespread prevalence of infidelity and other evils, this meeting looks, in perfect confidence, to the coming of the time when, according to the sure word of Scripture prophecy, the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea."

Dr. Rogers (of the Reformed Dutch Church) seconded the motion which, after a few words from Dr. Wilson, New York, was passed most cordially.

The meeting closed with devotional exercises.

The Conference finished yesterday the consideration of the constitution for the Council, which is now as follows:—

GENERAL PRESBYTERIAN COUNCIL.

Preamble.

Whereas, Churches holding the Reformed faith and organized on Presbyterian principles are found, though under a variety of names, in different parts of the world; whereas, many of those have long wanted to maintain close relations, but are at present united by no visible bond, whether of fellowship or of work; and whereas, in the providence of God, the time seems to have come when they may all more fully manifest their essential oneness, have closer communion with each other, and promote great causes by joint action—it is agreed to form a Presbyterian Alliance, to meet in general council from time to time in order to confer upon matters of common interest, and to further the ends for which the Church has been constituted by her Divine Lord and only King.

In forming this alliance the Presbyterian Churches do not mean to change their fraternal relations with other Churches, but will be ready, as heretofore, to join with them in Christian fellowship, and in advancing the cause of the Redeemer on the general principles maintained and taught in the Reformed confessions, that the Church of God on earth, though composed of many members, is the one body in the communion of the Holy Ghost, of which body Christ is the supreme head, and the Scriptures alone the infallible law.

Articles.

1. Designation.—This Alliance shall be known as the "Alliance of the Reformed Churches throughout the world holding the Presbyterian system."

2. Membership.—Any Church organized on Presbyterian principles which holds the supreme authority of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament in matters of faith and morals, and whose creed is in harmony with the consensus of the Reformed confessions, shall be eligible for admission into the Alliance.

3. The Council.—(1.) Its meetings.—The Alliance shall meet in general council ordinarily once in three years. (2.) Its constituency.—The council shall consist of delegates, being ministers and ruling elders appointed by the Churches forming the Alliance, the number from each Church being regulated by a plan sanctioned by the council, regard being had generally to the number of congregations in the several Churches. The delegates, as far as practicable, to consist of an equal number of ministers and ruling elders. The council may, on the recommendation of a committee on business, invite Presbyterian brethren not delegates to offer suggestions, to deliver addresses, and to read papers. (3.) Its powers.—The council shall have power to decide upon the application of Churches desiring to join the Alliance; it shall have the power to entertain and consider topics which may be brought before it by any church represented in the council, or by any member of the council, on their being transmitted in the manner hereinafter provided, but it shall not interfere with the existing creed or constitution of any church in its Alliance, or with its internal or external relations. (4.) Its objects.—The council shall consider questions of general interest to the Presbyterian Committee; it shall seek the welfare of Churches, especially such as are weak or persecuted; it shall gather and disseminate information concerning the kingdom of Christ throughout the world; it shall commend the Presbyterian system as scriptural, and as combining simplicity, efficiency, and adaptation to all times and conditions; it shall also entertain all subjects directly connected with the work of evangelization, such as the relation of the Christian Church to the evangelization of the world, the distribution of mission work, the combination of Church energies, especially in reference to great cities and destitute districts; the

training of ministers, the use of the press, colportage, the religious instruction of the young, the sanctification of the Sabbath, systematic benevolence, the suppression of intemperance and other prevailing vices, and the best methods of opposing infidelity and Romanism. (5.) Its methods.—The council shall seek to guide and stimulate public sentiment by papers read, by addresses delivered and published, by the circulation of information respecting the allied Churches and their missions, by the exposition of scriptural principles and defence of the truth, by communicating the minutes of its proceedings to the supreme courts of the Churches forming the Alliance, and by such other action as is in accordance with its constitution and objects. (6.) Committee on Business.—The council at each general meeting shall appoint a committee on business, through which all communications and notices of subjects proposed to be discussed shall pass. The committee appointed at one general meeting shall act provisionally so far as is necessary in preparing for the following meeting.

4. Change of Constitution.—No change shall be made in this constitution, except on a motion made at one general meeting of council not objected to by a majority of the Churches, and carried by a two-thirds vote at the next general meeting.

It was resolved to print the minutes with an introduction and appendix, to circulate them among the Presbyterian Churches, and to get the constitution translated into various languages. The proper time for the meeting of council was again considered. In opposition to a motion to put it off another year, it was agreed that it be held in 1876, and after many endeavours to find a time that would be suitable for all, it was finally resolved to meet on the first Tuesday of July. A large general committee, consisting of the delegates and others, was then named to make arrangements for the meeting of council.—D. Blaikie, of Edinburgh, to be convener. Many matters of business were settled, and the Conference broke up at six o'clock. The spirit that has prevailed has been most excellent. While everything has been fully discussed, and many votes taken, not a single dissent has been entered on the minutes. The attendance continued good throughout, and at the end many members expressed the delight the meetings had given them, and their greatly increased confidence in the movement. Very cordial votes of thanks were given to the London Committee of Arrangements, who have acted most vigorously, handsomely defraying all the ordinary expenses, and providing for the entertainment of the delegates. Some members who had come three or even four thousand miles to attend the Conference expressed their great satisfaction with the result.

Pastor and People.

"Of An Evening."

BY REV. JOHN HALL, D.D., N. Y.

"Of an evening." Never mind how the colloquial solecism came in. It can be explained without any grave imputation on the intelligence or morality on the English-speaking race. When a good mother mentions that a friend of her children came in "of an evening," she has an ellipsis in her own mind. It was not by formal invitation; not on the occasion of a party; not a sojourn at the house; it was an easy, friendly, unceremonious visit of one who knew he so stood to the family that he could drop in "of an evening," without talking, or making, much trouble. And a good deal of the grave business of life is done "of an evening."

The Browns have a little box of a place near the Thompsons, and there are no other neighbors. That led to their coming "of an evening;" and Brown, who was in the "broker business," talked so hopefully of his domes, that years after, Thompson, getting tired of the slow and uncertain gains in "stuffs and prints," got out of them and turned broker. It led to more than that. Little Charlie Thompson thought Minnie Brown an angel in wisdom and beauty; he carried her image to boarding-school; he decided matters by her own opinions; he enjoyed his holidays the most when she was around, and could run over "of an evening;" they were dull when she was not at home; and after many ups and downs of feeling, some coolness and quarrels, and some waiting on one another, Minnie will decide, years hence, to take "old Charlie" for better or for worse.

A few young men from the same neighborhood and school are in business in the same city. They are occupied during the day, but they go together "of an evening." The leading spirit among them is a lawyer, rising in politics. They all look up to him. He is quick, smart, and dashing. He introduces cards, wine, and "friends of his" of doubtful character. He is proud to show "the fellows" something of life. Now please to read the following letter and comments:

CHARITY HOSPITAL.

"REV. SIR,—The bearer of this is a poor man, who has been in this hospital for treatment, and I am sorry to say, without getting any good. He is a sound Presbyterian, and as he is without friends or money, and wants to go to Baltimore, perhaps you can aid him. Yours truly,

CITAS. P. BOWAN."

The bearer represents the writer as an Episcopal clergyman. But there is no such "Charity Hospital" in this city, and no such P. E. clergyman as Chas. P. Bowan. The "poor man," in fact, wrote the letter himself. It was one of several, with slight variations, by the same hand. Indeed, he lives, or rather exists, by such devices. He used to be the companion "of an evening" of that rising lawyer. The lawyer has little practice, but he has made money. He also made the broken-down writer of the foregoing the wreck he is—and he did it "of an evening."

"But what can people do. The evenings are unoccupied. They want rest; they have social feeling, and must come together." Exactly; and that brings up the very point for the sake of which these paragraphs are written, how to be innocent and happy "of

an evening." There should be a department for this special education in public schools. Chairs for the purpose should be endowed in the leading colleges. A national university—open to both sexes—would be well worth endeavoring, if a solution of this question should be gained. After all, however, the art cannot be taught separately any more than the art of getting on or the art of pleasing. Yet parents and others having the care of the young, when their attention is called to it, may move in the direction.

They can give the young ones the best accommodation the house affords, the best light, and the most cheerful surroundings. To have nice rooms, swept and garnished, into which the visitors are ushered, while the sons and daughters of the home, like moles and bats, creep into dark and comfortable alcoves, is wicked. They crave for something more cheerful. Let them have it at home, and if their friends come in, let them be welcome. "My boys have a printing-press," said a wise mother, "and I let them and their friends have a whole floor." "But is not your stair-carpet ruined?" said her friend. "Well, better that than my boy," was the wise reply.

Give the young ones prints, books, music, innocent games, and such material comforts as the circumstances admit and make proper. Healthy young people do not destroy a bit of delicacy out of the routine of meals, and when a kind motherly hand arranges and offers it, the temptation is destroyed to smuggle "refreshments" into their rooms, or steal out to places where they are available. If a little group of young people get "fun" out of even a jaw's harp; if one of them can but whistle so as to entertain the rest; if a boy can give one of his school recitations; if they talk of object rather than of person; if the old folks can mingle with them with laugh and story, and cheery sympathy; if at the right time (and if unexpectedly all the better) the fruit, or cake, or ice-cream is informally introduced, and the party breaks up with a general sense of that home being bright, happy, artless, simple, and its inmates sincere, great good is done—preventive and positive.

"But," says Mr. Johnson, who sleeps in his chair "of an evening" after a heavy meal, "I work hard all day, and I am too tired in the evening to make sport for these young Philistines." My dear sir, you are working for "these young Philistines," and much good the fortune you are rolling up will do them, if they get corrupted and destroyed through the further quest of lawless pleasures in lieu of the simple enjoyments you ought to have given them at home.

"Ah! but," says Adam, "the expense of these little suppers, you do not take account of." Oh yes! we do. Expense the plainness, but you could have twenty-five of them for less than the cost of one of your heavy entertainments, where you gather a crowd, to many of whom it is a bore to go, and of which the only pleasant reminiscences remain to the gentleman who contracted for the ornamental and indigestible victuals. Oliver Goldsmith was often poetically clothed; but once when he was in funds he got a brilliant suit of blue velvet and a sword, and the wags described him as like a blue-bottle fly with a pin stuck through it. Decent garments all the year round would have been better than an exceptional display. The application, madam, you can see.

This subject is homely, but it is important. "Of an evening" the strong drink is sometimes consumed secretly in the rooms of boys and young men, and it is a surprise when they suddenly become unsteady. "Of an evening" in our great cities the garish lamps are lit that like the false lights of the wreckers lure to destruction. "Of an evening" the bad of both sexes watch about the corners, like beasts of prey, for their victims, who ought to be in the safe shelter of cheerful homes. "Of an evening" the money-making "entertainment"—more or less cheap—is provided, that decks vice in gay trappings, that suggests and inspires lust, and gives to awkward and shame-faced fledglings in sin a language they could not have invented, that familiarizes with crime, and facilitates impurity. "Of an evening" therefore, homes should be bright and happy, intercourse in them simple, easy and cheerful, and the atmosphere so full of truth, love, and purity, that the memory of it, when the head—now young and fair—shall be gray, would be a joy, a strength, and a prophecy and image of heaven.

Beating the Devil.

It is the second blow that makes the quarrel; one cannot quarrel alone. Hence the Bible, in prohibiting strife and violence on the part of Christians, prevents it on the part of their enemies. So the apostle says: "As much as hath in you," that is so far as you are concerned, "live peaceably with all men." Do not fight or quarrel yourselves, but keep entirely aloof from it; and if others choose to do so, let them have it all to themselves.

Some one relates a story of a convert in New Hampshire, who afterwards became a preacher of the gospel. "When he first obtained religion, many years ago, his temper, which formerly was violent, came into subjection to his new spirit. At the very time of his conversion, he had an unsettled dispute with a fellow-sinner, who, on hearing of his change of feeling, hastened to his house and began to abuse him in a violent manner. Not an angry word was spoken in reply to it, and the man, incensed beyond all bounds at his coolness, raised the stick he held in his hand, and struck the Christian a blow on the head. This event did not ruffle his temper, when his assailant, overcome with astonishment, cried, 'You beat the devil!'" "Yes," replied the good man, coolly, "I mean to beat the devil, and this is just the way I am going to do it."

This is a good, practical commentary on the passage quoted. It put, in this case, an end at once to the quarrel, and made the parties fast friends. If every Christian would thus carry into practice this interpretation of this passage, he could never get into a quarrel with anybody. It takes two for that. In almost all cases peace lies within our own power. Ruling ourselves, we rule others. When our ways please God, he makes our enemies to be at peace with us.

Our Daily Habits.

"How doth one breed a habit in a man?"—Shakspeare.

It seems to me to be best to be most strict in regard to our daily habits. As we approach the middle life, each habit, be it good or bad, gradually becomes fixed, and less easily changed, while in old age scarcely any change can be effected without much uneasiness. If we form good habits in our youth, we shall enjoy them not only from the time that they are first formed, but forever afterwards, and gradually grow stronger in them if we will. Religion, if adopted in youth, will remain with us as years roll on, and continually grow more perfect. He who does not regard religion in youth, is like a ship slowly drifting from the protection of a safe harbor towards the peril of a tempestuous sea; on the other hand, he who regards it as like a ship sailing from the sea to a safe harbor, and will soon enjoy an overabundant peace. Let us therefore not neglect the subject of our daily habits. Let us strive to reform them where they need it, and we shall never have cause to regret, but live a purer, nobler, and happier life.—J. W. D., in N. Y. Christian Intelligencer.

Random Readings.

A HOLY silence hath its influence upon all other graces; it causes the rose buds of grace to blossom and bud forth.

How miserable is the condition of those men who spend their time as if it were given them, not lent!—Bishop Hall.

To a heart that is full of joy, all it sees is joyful; but to a sad heart all is sad, Change of heart is the greatest change.

THERE are some inns which are never empty, but as fast as one guest goes out another comes in. Such is the heart of an unregenerate man.

THE consummation of madness is to do what, at the time of doing it, we intend to be afterward sorry for; the deliberate and intentional making of work for repentance.

A PIOUS cottager residing in the midst of a lone and dreary heath was asked by a visitor—"Are you not sometimes afraid in your lonely situation, especially in the winter?" He replied, "O, no? for faith shuts the door at night, and mercy opens it in the morning."

If thou desire the love of God and man, be humble; for the proud heart, as it loves none but itself, so it is beloved of none but itself; the voice of humility is God's music, and the silence of humility is God's rhetoric. Humility enforces where neither virtue nor strength can prevail.

ALL our murmurings are so many arrows shot at God himself, and they will return upon our own hearts; they reach not him, but they will wound us; they hurt not him, but they will wound us; therefore it is better to be mute than to murmur; it is dangerous to provoke a consuming fire.

WHEN all is over, and our feet will run no more, and our hands are helpless, and we have scarcely strength to murmur a last prayer, when we shall see that, instead of needing a larger field, we have left untilled many corners of our acre—and that none of it is fit for our Master's eye, were it not for the softening shadows of the cross.

LOOK into the life and temper of Christ, described and illustrated in the gospel, and search whether you can find anything like it in your own life. Have you anything of his humility, meekness, and benevolence to men? "Anything of his purity and wisdom, his contempt of the world, his patience, his fortitude, his zeal?"—Dodderidge.

A SOUL cannot have a good look, nor hear a good word; from heaven, but Satan murmurs at it; he murmurs and mutters at every act of pitying grace, of preventing grace, of supporting grace, of strengthening grace, and of comforting grace, that God exercises toward poor souls; he murmurs at every sip, at every drop, at every crumb of mercy that God bestows.

EVERY day a little life; and our whole life is but a day repeated. And hence it is that old Jacob numbers his life by days, and Moses desires to be taught this point of holy arithmetic, "to number not his years, his days, and these so as to apply his heart unto wisdom." Those, therefore, that dare lose a day, are dangerously prodigal; and those that dare mispend it, desperate.

To do good to men is the great work of life; to make them true Christians, is the greatest good we can do them. Every investigation brings us round to this point. Begin here, and you are like one who strikes water from a rock on the summit of the mountains; it flows down all the intervening tracks to the very base. If we could make each man love his neighbor, we should make a happy world. The true method is to begin with ourselves and so extend the circle around us. It should be perpetually in our minds.—J. W. Alexander.

THERE is room in the church, and need, for all manner of workers. The poorest and least recognized are as much needed as any. Open your watch, your eye falls on jewels there. But the sparkling jewels can not say to the modest coil of steel, beside them, "We have no need of thee," for that is the main spring. And the main spring cannot say to the finest cog-wheel, "We have no need of thee," for without it the works stand still. It is just so in the Church of Christ. One little worker can mar the whole by failing to fulfil his office. There is a place for each.

RUSKIN thus speaks of a thoughtless youth: "A youth thoughtless! when all the happiness of his home forever depends on the chances or the passions of an hour! A youth thoughtless! when the career of all his days depends on the opportunity of a moment! A youth thoughtless! when his every act is a foundation-stone of future conduct, and every imagination a fountain of life or death! Be thoughtless in any after years, rather than now—though, indeed, there is only one place where a man may be nobly thoughtless—his death-bed. Nothing should ever be left to be done there."