

tion in his cabin, yet the captain of a slave ship. This is the progress we are to expect. This is the glorious development of Christianity which we are to look for. Well did the wise preacher say, "Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this." The latter days are the better days. The cause of truth, of righteousness, of God is ever advancing. The time is approaching when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the whole earth, and when believers shall come, in the "unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Happy they who help forward this glorious consummation! Happy they who in their own persons are tending to it. Happy they who are in the advance in this mighty progress, which nothing can finally stop, nor even the gates of hell prevail against it! Happy they who cherish in their hearts, and manifest in their lives, that holy charity which shall one day bind the whole race of man into one family of love, over which Christ shall reign, and God rejoice as of old, when He looked on the six days' work, and beheld it was good. Meanwhile, brethren, we, if we be Christians at all, will, following the instinct, if we may so term it, of the new and spiritual life, which prompts us to seek after advancement and perfection—we will be endeavouring to apply for ourselves and our people, and according to the best lights we enjoy, and with prayer, to that God who is both light and love, for more light and more love. We, I say, will be endeavouring to apply the principles of Christianity more thoroughly, more wisely, more constantly, to our own circumstances and condition, so that we may have more enlarged and accurate apprehensions of our own special duty. The question of the Christian is ever that of Paul at his conversion, "What wilt Thou have me to do?" The prayer of the Christian is that of David of old, "Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God. Thy spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness." The temper of the Christian is that of the speech which Eli put into the mouth of the youthful Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." And having this temper, there will and must be progress both in knowledge and in grace—in light, and love, and happiness. "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord. His going forth is prepared as the morning. And He shall come to us as the rain, as the former and the latter rain to the earth."

Dr. Cook then offered prayer, the 30th Paraphrase was sung, and the benediction was pronounced.

ELECTION OF MODERATOR.

On motion of Rev. Mr. Wardrope, of Guelph, seconded by Rev. T. McPherson, of Stratford, Dr. Topp was appointed Moderator.

EVENING SESSION.

At the evening's session of the General Assembly,

Rev. Thos. Wardrope read the report of the Committee on the state of religion. The reports received shows that the subject had engaged the attention of three Synods, twenty-eight Presbyteries, and 250 Kirk Synods, and there were hopeful signs of great spiritual life in many localities. The Committee recommended that the subject of the state of religion should still more prominently engage the attention of Presbyteries and Synods, and that a special day be appointed on which the subject would be presented from the pulpit, and find place in the public as well as the private prayers of the congregations.

On motion of the Rev. John McTavish, the report was adopted.

Some discussion followed with reference to the status of missionaries and retired ministers on the Presbytery rolls. Applications were read from Presbyteries to receive the following gentlemen as ministers in the Church:—Messrs. D. W. Cameron, T. Johnson, Best, Trissel, J. R. King, Jos. Vassant, Daniel Mann, J. Roquo, C. Brunette, John Nichols, Ross, W. F. Clarke, W. Hawthorne, Ballantyne, and Stephenson.

The Assembly then adjourned till the following morning.

MORNING SESSION.—FRIDAY, JUNE 9TH.

The Moderator took the chair this morning at ten o'clock, and the Assembly was commenced with prayer.

COMMUNICATIONS.

The Moderator read communications from the Rev. B. B. Usher, extending on behalf of the Reformed Episcopal Churches in this city, a welcome to the members of the Assembly, and stating that their pulpits would be open to them on Sunday next; and from Miss Maggie Smith, Secretary of the Toronto Women's Christian Temperance Union, in advocacy of the claims of total abstinence upon the members of the Assembly, and suggesting the formation of congregational temperance societies.

ADDRESS TO THE QUEEN.

The Moderator nominated the Rev. Dr. Cook, the Rev. Mr. McLennan, and the Hon. John McMurich, a committee to prepare an address to the Queen. His nomination was agreed to.

Applications were read from various Presbyteries, asking leave to take on probation students with a view to licensing them to preach. The applications were referred to a Committee named by the Moderator, with the Rev. Principal Caven as the Convener.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH OTHER CHURCHES.

Rev. Principal Snodgrass presented the report of the Committee on Correspondence with other Churches, which stated that the Committee had appointed the Rev. Geo. M. Grant, of Halifax, the Rev. John Jenkins, D.D., of Montreal, the Rev. Prof. Gregg, of Toronto, and Mr. John S. McLean, of Halifax, to be delegates to the Supreme Courts of the Presbyterian Churches in Great Britain and Ireland at their annual meetings for the present year. The committee also appointed the Rev. John Laing, of Dundee, Mr. James Croft, of Montreal, and subsequently, with special reference to the work of French evangelization in the Province of Quebec, and elsewhere, the Rev. Principal MacVicar, of Montreal, to represent the Church at the annual meeting of the Presbyterian Church in the United

States, recently held at Brooklyn, and at such annual meetings of the Supreme Courts of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States as they might be able to attend.

The report was received.

RECEPTION OF DELEGATES.

The Moderator appointed the Rev. Drs. Cochran and Bell, and the Rev. J. M. King a committee for the reception of delegates from other churches.

PRESBYTERIAN ALLIANCE.

Rev. Principal Snodgrass presented the report of the delegates to the Conference held at London, Eng., last summer, of the Reformed Churches throughout the world, holding the Presbyterian doctrine. The following were the delegates present:—The Rev. Michael Willis, D.D., LL.D., the Rev. Dr. Topp, the Rev. Principal Snodgrass, the Rev. Patrick Gray, and Mr. Henry D. Webster. There were sixty-four delegates altogether in attendance. The result of the Conference was the formation of a general alliance of the Presbyterian Churches throughout the world, to meet in Council every three years. The Council had decided to hold the first meeting at Edinburgh, on the 4th of July next, but that was afterwards found impracticable, and the meeting was deferred till next year.

The Rev. Principal Snodgrass and the Moderator spoke of the pleasure they experienced in attending the Conference.

The report was then received and reported to a committee.

THE ORGAN QUESTION.

An extract minute was read from the Presbytery of Wallace, Nova Scotia, stating that the Presbytery had received an application from the congregation of Amherst for leave to use an organ in public worship. From the second article of the basis of union the Presbytery thought they had no power to grant the request, and they therefore referred it to the Assembly.

Rev. Thos. Sedgwick spoke in reference to the application, and expressed the opinion that the article relating to modes of worship in the basis of union was ambiguous, and intentionally so. The Presbytery were therefore precluded from taking action in such a matter, and could only ask the advice of the Assembly.

This matter gave rise to a prolonged discussion, with reference to the legislation which the Assembly had adopted, and the best means of dealing with the matter.

It was ultimately agreed to request the Presbytery of Wallace to give the congregation of Amherst leave to introduce instrumental music, provided the harmony of the congregation be not disturbed thereby.

The Assembly then adjourned for recess.

EVENING SEDERUNT.

The Assembly resumed at 7.30 p.m.

After devotional exercises and the reading of the minutes of the former sederunt, CORRESPONDING MEMBERS.

Rev. K. J. Grant, a missionary to Trinidad; Rev. Wm. Stuart, of the Presbytery of Hamilton; Rev. John F. Campbell, and Rev. Mr. Ballantyne were, on motion, invited to sit in the Assembly as corresponding members.

HOME MISSIONS.

Rev. Dr. Cochran, Chairman of the Committee on Home Missions, read the report of the Western District Committee, from which the following extracts are made:—

"The Home Mission Committee for the Western District, in presenting their first report since the union, desire to express their thankfulness to the Great Head of the Church for the unity that has characterized their deliberations, and the large measure of success that has attended their efforts. Certain difficulties, arising out of the different methods of conducting Home Mission Work in the Churches now forming the 'Presbyterian Church in Canada' were to be expected, but these have neither been so numerous nor so formidable as to present any barriers to a successful prosecution of the work. The Free Church and the Irish Church have this year again sent us tangible evidence of their interest in our work, the former by a grant of £500, the latter by a grant of £150. It is also worthy of mention that the Irish Church has contributed \$60 for the past four years towards the support of a missionary in Manitoba. According to the instructions of the Colonial Committee of the Free Church, £100 of their grant was sent to the Lower Provinces. Your Committee anticipate in the future valuable aid from these Churches, and also from the Church of Scotland, not simply in grants of money, but what is perhaps of more importance, in selecting for us able young ministers to supply the many fields we cannot as yet overtake of ourselves. Two young ministers have just been designated to us by the Irish Church, and are expected to arrive during this meeting of Assembly. Mr. Balfour, the convener of the Colonial Committee of the Free Church, in addressing the Assembly last year, states that the committee have arranged a series of meetings with the students of the different Theological Halls, with a view to enlisting their sympathies in behalf of the colonial field. 'I anticipate,' he says, 'as the result of such friendly conversation with the young men attending the college, that we shall find some of them saying, 'We are satisfied we have a better opening for doing God's work in these great colonies than we have in this comparatively little country of Scotland; and though it may cost us a pang to cut ourselves off from our native land and go abroad, we are prepared to do this for the Lord's sake.' We propose, with the concurrence of the Colonial Churches, to send out a few selected men for the period of three years. They will get work there for that time, and when it has elapsed they can, if they please, come home. No doubt it will cost a little money. The expense is proposed to divide between the Colonial Church and the committee at home. But we are satisfied this plan is so admirably adapted to the circumstances of a certain class of congregations in these colonies, that it would be worth the expenditure on our side, and still better worth the expenditure on theirs.' Your committee cordially commend this

proposal to the favourable consideration of the Assembly.

"BRITISH COLUMBIA.—Your Committee reported to last Assembly the appointment of the Rev. Alexander Stewart as missionary to Nanaimo. Prior to the time of his leaving, however, intelligence reached them that the Rev. Mr. McGregor, the representative of the Church of Scotland in Victoria, had secured additional labours from his church, with a grant of £1,000 per annum towards their support, and that one of these would occupy Nanaimo. In those circumstances the appointment was cancelled and Mr. Stewart appointed to Fort Polly, in the North-west Territory, where he has since laboured most faithfully. Since last Assembly another Presbyterian clergyman, from England, has accepted a call to the second Church in Victoria, so that there are now six Presbyterian ministers in the Province, in addition to the Principal of the High School, who is also a minister of the Presbyterian Church.

"Our own missionary, Mr. Jamieson, continues his labours in New Westminster. In view of the very high rate of living in New Westminster, your Committee recommend the General Assembly that the grant from the Home Mission Fund towards Mr. Jamieson's salary be hereafter \$1,200 per annum, provided the congregation contribute to his support at least \$800 per annum, so as to make the stipend \$2,000 a year. In a letter received since the meeting of the Committee, Mr. Jamieson refers to the advisability of his being allowed to join with his congregation the new Presbytery, just formed, in connection with the Church of Scotland, and that the Church in Canada should make an annual grant in the interest of Presbyterianism in the Province, subject to the control of said Presbytery.

"MANITOBA.—The ecclesiastical year, which has lately closed, has been one in which the Presbytery of Manitoba has had great reasons for thankfulness, on account of the interest and liberality manifested by the Church at large, through its Assembly's Committee, toward North-western Canada. The number of missionaries being so considerably increased, the Presbytery has been able to take up a large number of fields and to occupy the stations to considerable advantage. Exclusive of the two settled congregations of Kildonan and Winnipeg (Knox Church), some thirty-two stations have been supplied; some every Sabbath, some fortnightly, some monthly. Twelve new stations have been opened or regularly occupied during the year.

"Your Committee have as yet been unable to supply the vacancies caused by the return of Mr. Glendinning on account of ill-health, and of Mr. Fraser, whose term of service has expired. The Presbytery of Manitoba are very anxious that at least three ministers should be sent without delay. Your Committee call the attention of the Assembly to the fact that the drafts sent from Manitoba for the past year include the sum of \$500 for a tutor in the College. Of the appointment of such an official by the Assembly your Committee know nothing, nor do the minutes of the Home Mission Committee contain any notice of such an appointment. It is claimed by the authorities of the College, that at a meeting of the Home Mission Committee, held during some previous meeting of Assembly, they were allowed to employ a tutor if required, and that such assistance is indispensable to the efficient working of the College. Your Committee have paid the amount claimed under protest, until the Assembly decide in the matter. It is desirable also that the Assembly should take into consideration the whole question of salaries to be paid in future to the Professors in the College. At the last meeting of the Committee, the following resolution was adopted and ordered to be laid before the Assembly:—'That it is not desirable that the Manitoba College should any longer be a charge on the Home Mission Fund.' It was also agreed to make Professor Bryce a grant of \$200, to reimburse him for travelling expenses incurred in connection with mission work in Manitoba.

"The Lake Superior Stations have been regularly supplied during the year.

"The Braebridge Mission is progressing favourably under Mr. Findlay. The Rev. R. Scott is doing a good work in Penetanguishine and adjoining stations. The other stations within the bounds are not making much progress. As yet we have only one church in the whole district of Muskoka, and one in contemplation at Gravenhurst.

"The Convener of the Home Mission Committee of the Ottawa Presbytery says:—'At our first meeting after the union of our Presbyterian Churches, we found ourselves in possession of seventeen mission fields. Of this number, two have risen to the dignity of self-supporting charges. Notwithstanding the changes effected in our mission fields, through settlement and otherwise, we have still under our care twelve mission fields, of which eight are to be supplied by student missionaries during the present summer.

"Your Committee notice with great satisfaction the formation of Associations in Toronto and Montreal for the purpose of seeking out destitute localities where Presbyterian Churches may be erected. It is only in this way that we can hope satisfactorily to provide religious instruction for the large numbers which are as yet outside the pale of the Christian Church, and at the same time extend our influence as a denomination. The city of Toronto itself gives abundant evidence of what can be accomplished in the planting of territorial churches. By the fostering care of the Home Mission Fund for a very short period, these have become vigorous, self-supporting congregations.

"Your Committee desire to express their gratitude to the students of Knox and Montreal Colleges, for the valuable aid afforded us in supplying remote stations, that could not otherwise be overtaken.

"CONTRIBUTIONS AND DISBURSEMENTS FOR 1875-76.—The following shows the state of the fund at the close of the financial year, 30th April, 1876:—From 1st May, 1875, to 30th June, 1875.—Canada Presbyterian Church—Balance against fund at 1st May, 1875, \$2,050; paid, \$3,478; received, \$1,444; leaving balance against fund on 30th June, 1875, of \$3,081.90.

"PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA, 1875-76.—Receipts, \$24,513; payments, \$25,401;

leaving balance against fund on 30th April, 1875, of \$883.

"In addition to this indebtedness of the fund on 30th April, of \$883, there remains unpaid the claims of Presbyteries for work done between 1st October, 1875, and 1st April, 1876, amounting to \$8,211. The balance due against the fund is thus, in all, \$9,121.

"In order, to some extent, to relieve our missionaries and ministers, who necessarily suffer great hardship from the non-payment of these claims, the sub-committee instructed your Convener to arrange for a loan of \$1,000, which has been divided *pro rata* according to the amounts due the several Presbyteries.

"Total contributions for Home Missions, 1875-76:—From Presbyteries, \$22,770; from Foreign Churches, \$4,101; from Students' Missionary Societies, \$2,435. Total, \$29,306.

Rev. Dr. Cochran said that since the preparation of the report of the Committee he had received a report from the Presbytery of Montreal, showing that their contributions to the Home Mission Fund were in all \$872. He referred to the good feeling displayed by members of the Committee in working together, remarking that there had never appeared the slightest sign among them that they had not belonged all their lives to one and the same church. (Applause.) The report showed most conclusively the kindly feelings of the Old Country Churches towards the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and certainly proved that the statement often made that the Free Church of Scotland was opposed to the union was entirely untrue. (Hear, hear, and applause.) He thought that the various congregations having missionary societies, instead of keeping their contributions in the banks for six, eight, or nine months, should forward them as soon as received. It had also been suggested that Presbyteries, at the beginning of the year, should be informed how much they were expected to raise for the Home Mission Fund, and that at their first meeting the total amount should be divided among the congregations. (Hear, hear.) He thought that Home Mission work formed an excellent mode of training young ministers, and was better for them than sending them at once to large city congregations. He had found his duties as Convener of the Committee, along with his congregational and other work, exceeding laborious, though many of them were very pleasant, and in justice to his congregation and to his own health, he would be obliged to ask the Assembly to select a man who had not so many other duties to attend to.

Rev. Dr. McGregor read the report of the Home Mission Committee of the Eastern or Maritime section. This section, the report stated, embraced the five Colonies of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, and the Island of Bermuda. After referring in general terms to the progress of mission work, the report stated that three classes of labourers were employed, viz.:—1. Ordained ministers and licentiates, who were employed almost exclusively in supplying vacant churches, under the direction of the several Presbyteries, and the total number of whom was twenty-two. 2. Theological students, who devoted the summer to the work, acting as catechists, supplying new stations, organizing Sabbath Schools, and conducting prayer meetings and Bible classes; total number twenty-three. 3. Gaelic catechists, of whom there were eight, and who performed similar work to the second class. The report then referred to the labours under the direction of various Presbyteries, the general results and prospects being of the most encouraging character, though there was a great lack of young men to engage in mission labour. From the financial statements appended to the report it appeared that the receipts were \$6,779.06; expenditure, \$6,978.69; expenditure over receipts, \$208; balance on hand on May 20th, 1875, \$1,481.66; balance on hand May 1st, 1876, \$1,481.88. Receipts from the Church of Scotland, \$1,688.

Rev. Dr. Waters moved, "That the reports of the Home Mission Committees be received, and that the thanks of the General Assembly be given to the Presbyterian Churches of Ireland and Scotland for their liberal contributions to the Committees, and especially to their conveners and secretaries; and that the reports be remitted to a committee, with instructions to report to a future sederunt of the General Assembly." He pointed out the great importance of home mission work in consolidating the the congregations and Presbyteries of the Church, and in view of the personality of the Church to its Master, and to those who settled in the outlying districts of the Dominion. Great progress has been made during the past year, and this success was due, first to the Home Mission Committees, and especially to those who were, distinctively, the working members of these Committees; to the ministers in the pulpits, and to those divinity students who went in the summer time to labour in the mission field. He appealed to young men to ignore the prospects of large salaries, of large social and political influence, which might be held out to them by other callings in life, and to devote themselves to the work of the ministry, in which there were so many opportunities for doing good. A deep debt of gratitude was owed by this Church to its Irish and Scotch friends for their great liberality, and especially for the kindly feeling by which it had been prompted.

Rev. J. K. Smith (Galt), said that the success of the Home Mission work was very largely due to the conveners of the Committees, whose services would, he hoped, be retained to them in that capacity. He desired also to mention the name of Rev. George M. Grant, who was deserving of their gratitude, for his zeal in the Home Mission field. He thought it would be a good thing for pastors of city and other churches to spend a term of eight or ten weeks in the summer season in mission work, thus doing themselves good, and enabling them to speak of what they knew to their congregations. (Applause.) He thought they should endeavour, in their Presbyteries and congregations, to still further increase their efforts in behalf of Mission work.

Rev. Mr. Cameron pointed out, in reference to the contributions of that portion of the Church which had been in connection with the Church of Scotland, that that part had contributed very largely to the Sustentation Fund and other purposes, which had had an effect upon the amount given for Home Mission work.

The motion was unanimously carried. The Assembly then adjourned until ten o'clock on Saturday.

Dull Sermons, and a Remedy for Them.

We very often hear it said that many sermons which congregations have to listen to are fitted rather for putting them to sleep, than for making them wakeful. We are often assured that the majority of ordinary sermons are only old commonplace and ancient platitudes monotonously droned out for the thousandth time. We hear it said that the pulpit is not abreast of modern thought, and that clergymen often display an ignorance of recent research, which places them outside the sympathy of the cultivated members of their congregations.

We are not going at present to defend the pulpit from any of these, or similar charges. We desire simply to point out that even supposing them to be true, there is a remedy at hand very easy of application. When a remedy for any evil exists, those who have not tried it shut themselves out from any right of complaint.

Where there is any ground for these charges, we apprehend that in most cases it would be found on enquiry that the clergyman makes very few additions to his library. The contents of his shelves are possibly much the same as they were some years before when he began his ministry and his housekeeping.

It would not do to infer that this fact is an index of his tastes, or that he is of an unintellectual turn of mind. We must first ascertain whether it has been in his power to purchase books. From what we know of parsonages, (and we have seen something of a good many which may be taken as fair specimens of the average of all,) we know that even with the practice of an economy which keeps the parson's wife patching and mending, the difficulty has been to keep out of debt, though little else than simple necessities, and few comforts and no luxuries were procured. Standard theological books or books of science are necessarily expensive. How the clergy are to buy these books when they are constantly in doubt as to how Brown the grocer, Jones the baker, and Robinson the butcher will be paid, and when their wives deny themselves servants in order that the wages-money may pay for something else, is a problem in domestic economy that we have no desire to be obliged to work out personally.

In the meanwhile, it is sure of course that the clerical mind suffers; and that sermons must necessarily—except in the case of men of rare power—fail to display that familiarity with the cause of recent thought in regard to morals and religion, and the relation of both to modern science, which only the study of recent publications can produce.

It could not be otherwise. It would be the same in other professions under similar circumstances. Suppose the case of a lawyer who had passed an excellent examination in the prescribed standard works when he was admitted to practice. Suppose that he were not to acquaint himself with changes in legislation, or to make himself familiar with recent law treatises. Who would be surprised at his failure in court, or at his bad management of any cases which might be entrusted to him? Could a medical man expect to retain his practice if he allowed other doctors to acquire the latest results of medical investigation, while he contented himself with what he knew when he first gained his diploma?

The clergyman should read everything of value which is published relating to the subjects he has to handle in the pulpit. Especially should he do so in days like ours, when questions of theology are made matters of common reading by many of the cultivated laymen of every parish. But how will it be possible for him to do so?

The matter is very easy. If laymen who are given to reading are really desirous that traces of modern research and thought should be evident in the discourses of their parish clergy, there is no desire that they can more readily gratify. Let them be careful when ordering any recent book to order two copies, and let one be sent to the minister of the parish. There could be no more acceptable present to a clergyman; and at the same time none which in comparison with its cost would afford so large a return—1st, in the promotion of kindly feeling between pastor and donor; 2nd, in benefit to the clerical studies; and 3rd, in the return which the parish would receive from the increased fruitfulness of the pastor's mind. We have known a parish in which this is to some extent done; and its success there justifies our recommending the experiment for trial everywhere.

THE forgiveness that is of God flows out of His own goodness, and is the fruit of His own love. "He delighteth in mercy."—T. H. Ross.