

careful in the formation of his opinions. He will not advance a step until he is sure of his ground, but having, with all the force of conviction, taken a firm stand, it would be no easy task to dislodge him. He does not assume a tone of dogmatism, but speaks with a sense of profound respect for the views entertained by others. The positions taken by him on the elder ship will commend themselves both by their scripturalness and reasonableness, while concerning his remarks on the value and functions of the office there will be no diversity of opinion. They were both just and valuable.

Principal Grant's contribution to the Conference was on a somewhat delicate subject, "Conditions of Ministerial Success," which he treated with his accustomed masterly discretion. In the main line of his argument at all events he carried his hearers fully along with him. The brief paper breathed an excellent spirit. It was telling, terse and occasionally brilliant. His classification of qualities requisite to success was a happy one: intellectual, spiritual and temperamental.

The tone and spirit of Rev. J. C. Smith's paper were also excellent. His treatment of his theme, as was befitting, was more hortatory than argumentative. He sought to arouse a deep sense of personal obligation to do active work for the good of men and the glory of God. The happy and timely extempore remarks of Rev. E. D. McLaren, on "How Young Children may be Brought to Confess Christ," are worthy of special mention. As a whole the Conference was very profitable and enjoyable.

#### THE TORONTO AND KINGSTON SYNOD.

THE meeting of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, held at Cobourg last week, gives rise to a few reflections. It is one of the largest and most important Synods in the Church. Its proceedings are watched with deep interest, and its decisions are influential. One thing in connection with the late meeting that occurred to most, was the comparative paucity of members in attendance. Without charging the absent with indifference, the small meeting may be accounted for by the nearness of the time appointed for the meeting of the General Assembly. Ministers can ill afford time, and do not care to undergo the fatiguing journeys and work which attendance at Synod and General Assembly entail. If comparatively few ministers met at Cobourg, the attendance of elders was smaller still. The Presbyteries near to the place of meeting were fairly well represented, while the more remote had very few delegates indeed. One good brother, a minister, claimed to be the only member of his Presbytery present. It has also been said for elders that to many of them the time of meeting is unsuited. An effort was made to change the time, but without satisfactory result.

A circumstance that occasioned favourable comment was the hearty and kindly welcome accorded the members in the town of Cobourg. Minister and people vied with each other in their endeavour to make the gathering a success, and the attendance at the evening meetings spoke well for the interest taken by the Presbyterians of the attractive town of Cobourg. The friends of other denominations also extended a generous hospitality.

There was more work to be done than could well be accomplished in the limited time at the disposal of the Synod. The various overtures bearing on important matters, and involving changes requiring grave and serious consideration, did not receive anything like exhaustive discussion. There was just sufficient to acquaint members with the purport of the proposals they embodied. A gratifying feature that deserves mention was that not a single member of the Court taxed patience by long or frequent speeches. The speaking in every case was pertinent and business-like. No brother can be accused with having made wearisome attempts to spread himself.

The most interesting part of the proceedings was the presentation of the reports of the Standing Committees. The respective Conveners in every case justified the wisdom of their selection. The report on the State of Religion presented a number of interesting facts, arranged with great care, and evidenced throughout a fine spirit. Its suggestions, as might have been anticipated, were unanimously adopted, and if faithfully followed out, cannot fail to prove conducive to the best and truest advancement of the spiritual life of the Church. The Rev. Mr. Milligan's re-

port on behalf of the Sabbath School Committee was one of the most complete and satisfactory yet presented. The information it conveyed was very full—a most important thing in such reports. There were some delinquents who failed to send in returns, and their neglect was forcibly though not unkindly commented on. In most respects, the facts presented showed that this very valuable and hopeful part of Church work is being prosecuted with faithfulness, diligence and zeal. Among the recommendations made, special importance was wisely attached to the teaching of the Shorter Catechism.

The Report on Temperance was less full, not from any fault of the Conventer, but from the inexplicable paucity of the returns. The most expert workman in our own days, no more than in former times, can make bricks without straw. Considering the difficulties with which the Conventer had to contend, his work was well done. He was able to report gratifying progress in the advancement of the Temperance cause, the valuable aid rendered by Presbyterian ministers and people, while justly and generously acknowledging the good work done by others. Though not a matter of statistics, it was not the least interesting statement in the report that an anti-Scott Act lecturer had said that he would rather meet a grizzly bear than the Rev. John Smith on a platform.

The Report on Sabbath Observance, by Principal Caven, was compact, lucid and pointed. It was a model of neatness and brevity, covering all essential points, and condemning in effective but temperate terms the attempt of certain newspapers to issue Sunday editions.

The Cooke's Church case was one of absorbing and painful interest. A solution of the grave difficulties was thought to have been found by the Presbytery of Toronto, but their decision was appealed against. Parties were heard at considerable length, although the discussion that followed was brief and by no means exhaustive. The address of the Rev. John Kirkpatrick in support of his appeal was unsparingly severe in its indiscriminate denunciation. It is to be regretted that he assailed honoured and esteemed fathers whose praise is in all the churches. It is only just to him to add that he subsequently expressed his regret for the manner in which he had spoken of them, and in extenuation explained that it was their action in his case, not their personal worth or high character, on which he reflected, and that he had been goaded by long-continued irritation. The gentlemen representing the Session also said some very severe things of the minister of Cooke's Church. Principal Caven's speech in defence of the Presbytery's decision was very forcible, but also very calm. It was obvious throughout the progress of the case that if feeling was carefully suppressed it was at the same time very intense. It is a most serious thing when the well-being of a congregation and the standing and reputation of a talented and able Christian minister are at stake. The case, however, is not yet decided and to indulge in profuse comment on an important matter *sub judice* would be manifestly improper. The earnest desire of all who love the prosperity of Zion is that a just and righteous decision may be reached.

### Books and Magazines.

**BIBLICAL EXPOSITOR AND PEOPLE'S COMMENTARY.** By Jacob M. Hirschfelder. (Toronto: Rowell & Hutchison.)—Another number of this valuable work has been recently issued. The learned author is rendering important service to earnest and intelligent students of the Sacred Volume.

**WHITE CROSS SERIES.** (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.)—These neat little tracts are not published for gain, but for the express purpose of doing good. The recently formed association for the promotion of personal purity and for removing one of the saddest plague-spots that afflict humanity, makes appeals to men's hearts and consciences in this particular. The numbers before us are written with earnestness and power.

**GLEANINGS FROM OUTCROPS OF SILURIAN STRATA IN THE RED RIVER VALLEY.** By J. Hayes Panton, M.A. (Winnipeg: Walker & May.)—Professor Panton, a careful as well as enthusiastic scientist, has examined with interest the geology of the Red River Valley. He possesses the faculty of observing minutely and recording his observations

clearly and concisely. This compact little monograph will be read with interest by the geological student.

**THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.** (New York: Funk & Wagnalls; Toronto: William Briggs.)—Some publications have a distinct sphere for which they are specially fitted, others try to create a sphere for themselves, being more or less successful. This magazine has a sphere of its own and it is steadily becoming better fitted for the field it so ably occupies. The present is an admirable number. Space forbids the specification of its contents, but the contributions and contributors are of the best. The subjects discussed are timely and of great practical value to the clerical reader.

**THE RUSSIANS AT THE GATES OF HERAT.** By Charles Marvin. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons; Toronto: The Standard Publishing Co.)—In every public crisis there is sure to be a plentiful crop of catch-penny publications which would have no chance of circulation but for the prevailing excitement. This book does not belong to that class. It is by an author who has enjoyed exceptional opportunities of knowing whereof he speaks. He writes with caution as well as intelligence. The book, well and carefully printed, is in paper covers and published cheaply. It gives an intelligent explanation of the present Anglo-Russian complication and the causes that led up to it.

**CANADIAN METHODIST MAGAZINE.** Edited by Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D. (Toronto: William Briggs.)—This is an ably conducted and most interesting magazine. There is much variety in its contents. Care seems to be exercised not only in what is admitted to its pages but in what is excluded. There is nothing to be found in it either wearisome or prolix. The May number opens with a graceful and graphic paper from the editorial pen, descriptive of "Venice from a Gondola." Among other noteworthy contributions may be mentioned: "Illustrations of the Harmony between Scripture and Science," "American Indian Literature," and the "Indian Problem," by Rev. Egerton Ryerson Young. The magazine is handsomely and profusely illustrated.

**THE PULPIT TREASURY.** Edited by Rev. J. Sanderson, D.D. (New York: E. B. Treat.)—This monthly—valuable to ministers, students, Christian workers generally, and admirably suited for family reading—has completed its second volume. While undenominational it is distinctively evangelical in its tone. The sermons in the present number are contributed by Rev. Frederick D. Power (of whom there is a portrait and an engraving of his church in Washington), William T. Findley, D.D., Rev. J. L. Harris and Dr. Thain Davidson, of London. The outlined sermons are on vital topics by noted divines. The other contents of the number are varied and useful. The announcements for the new volume indicate that no effort will be wanting to make the *Pulpit Treasury* still more worthy of the great success to which it has attained.

**OBSCURE CHARACTERS AND MINOR LIGHTS OF SCRIPTURE.** By Frederick Hastings. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls; Toronto: William Briggs.)—This suggestive and instructive book is an admirable illustration of the oft-repeated remark that the Sacred Scriptures are a mine of exhaustless wealth to the diligent student. Mr. Hastings has devoted close attention to those minor characters whose names appear in Scripture narrative, but are often over-looked. The heroes of Holy Writ arrest universal attention; but less conspicuous characters do not always receive the notice they deserve. The author has selected many such persons of whom we sometimes get little more than a passing glimpse. He has carefully analyzed their characters and the suggestive lessons they afford. A number of these papers were originally contributed to the *Homiletic Magazine*, of which Mr. Hastings is editor. To these in the completed volume now issued he has added others. Readers will find the book helpful in thought, feeling and duty.

THERE is some agitation in favour of a union between the English and Welsh Presbyterians. Obstacles to such union are found in a difference of language, the congregational element in Welsh Presbyterianism, differences of opinion regarding the necessity of a scholastic training for ministers, and questions regarding the Sustentation Fund. But to many the union appears by no means an impossibility.