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Notes of the Week.

It will interest the friends of the Bible to know that the National Bible Society of Scotland has struck out a new departure of the greatest interest and significance in connection with Bible circulation in China. This is the production of the Gospel of St. Mark in Chinese, with short notes calculated to make the narrative intelligible to the Chinese. This departure has received the approval of many missionaries.

A writer in the *New Zealand Presbyterian*, comparing national with denominational schools, says: Given schools with permission, if the people desire it, to have Bible lessons and religious instruction, and we venture to say that our Protestant population will take no step to build and maintain separate schools. None know the cost of efficient schools but those who have had to provide the ways and means. With the liberty to have Bible lessons, and unsectarian religious instruction in the State school, under the double shield of a time-table and a conscience clause, we do not anticipate that our Protestant denominations would desire separate schools.

The reception of Rev. Dr. J. G. Paton, in Belfast, Ireland, has been most encouraging, and his capacity for work is, at his age, something remarkable. One Sunday the aged missionary delivered four addresses, which were listened to with rapt attention. It is hoped that he may succeed in accomplishing the great object of his visit at this time, which is to obtain half-a-dozen or more missionaries for the New Hebrides, and raise an annual subscription of \$5,000 to maintain a boat indispensably necessary for mission work among the islands. Subscriptions are freely coming in and there appears to be little doubt that before the veteran missionary returns to Australia his mission will be a success.

The Chinese question is giving the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand concern, as it is doing with us in Canada. At the last meeting of the Presbytery of Westland a suitable man being available, the subject was next considered in its financial bearings and the following resolution was carried:—"That owing to the unfavorable reply of the treasurer, no steps be taken at present, but that every endeavor should be used to have the Mission put on such a footing that a missionary could be engaged." The convener further reported that very few applications came to him from the congregations of the Church for Chinese tracts and Testaments, showing, he thought, a somewhat languid interest in the spiritual welfare of the Chinese within our borders. He thought this was a pity and not right. He had a large supply on hand, and would be glad to send what might be wanted for payment of carriage.

The Rev. Dr. Robinson, of New York, chairman of a committee of the Presbytery on "the relation of the Presbytery to students of Union Theological Seminary applying for license to preach," submitted a report with two recommendations: First, that the Presbytery requires that students for the ministry who shall hereafter apply to be taken under the care of the Presbytery shall not, and advises that those now under its care should not, pursue their theological course in any seminary disapproved by the General Assembly. Second, that due notification be given students and licentiates of this action. The first resolution was divided, then on motion the word "recommends" was substituted for the word "requires;" and, by a vote of 70 to 59, carried. The rest of the first recommendation referring to students now under the care of the Presbytery, was laid on the table. The second was adopted with a slight change. There was a large attendance, and but little speaking.

The difference in opinion regarding the use and abuse of opium, which is conspicuous in the evidence being offered to the Opium Commission of the British Government, is decidedly interesting. Men of equal knowledge and experience contradict each other as to the effects of the drug on the condition of the Indian and Chinese races. So contradictory is the evidence, indeed, it would be difficult to foretell the decision of the Commissioners or its result upon the traffic. There are two aspects of the question, however, which should not be lost sight of, and which should in a large measure regulate whatever conclusion is arrived at—viz., that the drug is used mainly as a luxury, and as such might very well be disposed of without injury to aught but the revenue, which could easily be recouped from other sources. The other important aspect of the case is that missionaries are almost universally opposed to it, and none are better able to judge fairly than they are of its evil effects upon the people who use it.

The Rev. Principal Dykes, of London, some time ago proposed in his Presbytery the sending by the Synod of the English Presbyterian Church of fraternal greetings to the General Assembly of the Established Church of Scotland. This motion has called forth a good deal of comment. Writing to the *Presbyterian*, the organ of the Presbyterian Church in England, the Rev. Doctor says: "With every other Presbyterian Church of any magnitude in the three kingdoms we maintain more or less friendly relations. Among Presbyterian Churches out of Scotland we stand, so far as I know, alone in holding aloof entirely from the Established Church. No good reason can be given for this absence of the usual courtesies which sister churches of our order are accustomed to pay to one another. We are united with our brethren of the Church of Scotland in the Presbyterian Alliance. We exchange annual visits with the Synod in England which is in connection with her communion. To have no word of greeting for her General Assembly, when in spring we visit other churches in the north, appears to me to be inconsistent, unpresbyterian, and lacking in ecclesiastical comity."

Of the late Rev. Dr. Swanson, whose death we chronicled last week, the *Presbyterian* says: "Dr. Swanson was selected for our China mission in 1860, along with the Rev. H. L. Mackenzie, from a band of outstanding and devoted students of New College, Edinburgh. Proceeding to Amoy he became the colleague of the Rev. William Burns and the Rev. Carstairs Douglas, the two men who, more than any others, may be said to have founded the China Mission of our Church. He made an excellent missionary, acquired a more than usual command of the language in preaching, did noble work in the Amoy district for more than twenty years, and only abandoned the field when it became evident that if life were to be prolonged he must finally return to this country. His work since, among the congregations of our church, in pleading for the mission, his occupancy of the Moderator's chair of the Synod, his many able, stimulating, and most hopeful addresses, and his frequent and hearty appearances on behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society, for which he had a deep and loving regard, will be long remembered, and we are sure his welcome presence will be greatly missed. He has left many attached friends among us, and the deepest sympathy will be extended to the bereaved widow and family."

The Belfast Queen's College Students' Union lately asked Miss Steele, of the Victoria College, to give a lecture on behalf of the Union. Miss Steele was one of a body of representative ladies sent out to Chicago during the Exposition to see and hear all they possibly could regarding educational methods employed in the States. Rev. Dr. Hamilton, President of the College, occupied the chair. Miss Steele's subject was "Impressions of America." As regards Chicago she was struck with the roughness and unevenness of the streets and the height of

the buildings—"sky scrapers," as they were called. She then described an American reception which she attended. "There was none of the stiffness and formality that was characteristic in this country. The conversation was generally on literature and politics, while there was an utter absence of tittle-tattle. The physique of the ladies was striking, and in many senses was beautiful; their pallor was due to some extent to sharp climatic contrasts. She must say a word on the subject of the American gentlemen. They were extremely courteous, and their courtesy to their wives was most particularly noticeable. Miss Steele concluded by paying a very warm tribute to the virtues of the American people, mentioning that one of their most charming features was the deep interest which they exhibited in the old country."

We are glad to see that there is on foot an agitation among the merchants of this city for a reduction in the rate of city postage for letters. It appears absurd on the face of it and out of all proportion to charge two cents for city postage and only three cents for a letter that may have to be carried from Halifax to Vancouver. If the one charge is fair and reasonable, then the other cannot be. Why not go further and also ask at once a general reduction of postage from three to two cents for the whole Dominion? Few things contribute more to the general satisfaction of the people, to foster business and actually promote happiness, than speedy, safe and cheap means of communication by letter. No one would begrudge a deficit in his department of public service, when a felt benefit was received by all. If some of the public money squandered in many ways were better used there could be no difficulty in cheapening postage over the whole Dominion, which would be a boon to all classes. If the people of the United States are willing to bear a deficit in the postal service that they may have the advantage of cheap postage, why should not we in Canada follow in this respect their example, and also that of the mother country where a low postal rate instead of increasing the deficit of this service, has actually made it a large paying one. We cannot, of course, expect the same thing to take place in Canada owing to our sparse population and immense distances, but a cheaper postage rate is something which would be welcomed and the benefits of it enjoyed by all classes.

In New Zealand they are wrestling with the subject of religious teaching in the public schools. The *Southland Times* of that island gives the following illustration of what parental neglect and the absence of all religious teaching in the public schools can do in the way of producing religious ignorance. Upon a little child being brought into court in order to ascertain if she understood the nature and obligations of an oath the following took place:

"How old are you?" "Ten years old last birthday."

"When was your last birthday?" "Last July."

"How old are you now, then?" "Ten years and seven months."

"When will your next birthday be?" "Next July, sir."

"Do you go to school?" "Yes, sir, the State School in ——— Street."

"Been going there long?" "A little over a year, sir."

"Were you at school before that?" "Yes sir, at the State School in ——— Street, three or four years."

"Can you read?" "Yes sir."

"And write?" "Yes."

"Well, my little woman, did you ever hear anything of God?" "Beg pardon, sir."

"Did you ever hear of God?" "Of God, sir?"

"Did you ever hear anything of your heavenly Father?" "Beg pardon, sir?"

"Did you ever hear anything of your Father in heaven?" "My father is at home, sir."

"Did you ever hear anything about Christ?" "I don't know, sir."