

should be held under the direct supervision of the Sessions, and that, in humble dependence on God, from whom alone the blessing can come, the aid of our pastors, elders and members should be mainly relied on in the conducting of them.

The conditions under which the Conference thought special continuous services should be held are (1) such a desire for the quickening of spiritual life as warrants the hope of favourable results, and (2) "urgent need" in the congregation. The desire should come from responsible people, not from mere lovers of the novel and the exciting, and should be for spiritual life, not for excitement, or even for special services for their own sake. "Urgent need," spiritual destitution, is certainly a reason why any means not wrong or unwise should be tried. The Conference was no doubt of the opinion, and it is a fact, whether the Conference thought so or not, the best life is perennial life; the best growth, growth that never stops, and the best revival, a revival that lasts all the year round.

On the manner in which special continuous services are to be conducted, the Conference was clear and emphatic. Each service should be under the direct supervision of Sessions and pastors, elders and members should be mainly relied on to conduct them.

And after all has been said, if pastors, elders and members worked as they should all the year round, would special services be necessary? Would it not be better to try and make every service special? Why not make every prayer meeting as good as it can be made, and every day's work in the Sabbath school as good as it can be made? Why should not a preacher do his best every time? It is because these things are *not* done that Conferences on the State of Religion are held.

SCRIPTURAL PREACHING.

No one who had the privilege of listening to Principal Caven's lecture (appearing in the pages of this issue) at the opening of the present session of Knox College, needs to be told that it was one of exceptional ability and appropriateness. Principal King in the few remarks he made at the close of the proceedings correctly voiced the general feeling. He had, he said, never heard Dr. Caven speak without receiving pleasure and profit, but he had never heard him with greater enjoyment than in his lecture on "Scriptural Preaching." The mental and moral equipoise with which the learned Principal of Knox College is so finely endowed enables him to approach the exhaustive consideration of every subject that claims his attention with a judicial calmness and serenity that leave nothing to be desired. He is massive without being ponderous, logical without the irksome artificiality of the scholastic, and his style is clear and lucid as a crystal stream.

The important topic he selected for treatment is one to which attention needs to be directed, and Principal Caven has rendered a valuable service to the Church by the manner and spirit in which he fulfilled his task. He does not take a narrow view of any subject. The tenacity with which he clings to all that is distinctively orthodox does not arise from gazing intently in a straight line. He sees a question from all sides. He will listen with patient gentleness to all that one whose views are different from his own has to say in their defence. The strength of the Principal's attachment to evangelical truth and its modes of presentation is the result of calm, deep and clear conviction. It is this that gives definiteness and force to his teaching. There is a difference between the unbending rigour of the bigot and the steadfast demeanour of the Christian sage. Because he is able to take a large and comprehensive view of whatever comes under his consideration and from a keenly sensitive moral nature his utterances always command respectful attention, and carry great weight with them.

The principles laid down in Dr. Caven's lecture will commend themselves to the vast body of the Christian people. Most will accept without question that anything opposed to the truth taught in Scripture can have no place in evangelical preaching. Neither will the position that other than scriptural themes deserve treatment in a truly Christian ministry be seriously contested. We hear much about preaching to the times, but the lecture shows clearly that the great principles of the Christian faith, the entire teaching of the sacred Scriptures, are not local or temporal in their application. They are for every age, far-reaching and adaptive to all conditions. The absorbing

questions of the day cannot be properly solved apart from the principles laid down in the Word of God. The strong thing said regarding the kind of pulpit discourse known as sensational only gave voice to what a large portion of the Christian people in all the Churches deeply feel. It is clear that the Principal sets high store on the place that the sermon should occupy, and that it should ever be an efficient instrument for accomplishing the work it is designed to effect. The opinion that the preacher who most conscientiously devotes himself to his own proper work will thereby effect more for the general welfare of the community in which he labours than he can possibly do by meddling more directly with social or political questions will meet with a very general response.

Another important point in the lecture was the exposition of the idea that preaching ought to aim at a symmetrical and proportionate presentation of the truths relatively to the prominence they receive in Scripture. It may be questioned whether this obviously correct principle has received the attention its importance deserves. Were it more generally followed it is manifest that there would be less tendency to descant on a few favourite themes, and to indulge in profitless hobby riding. Adherence to this principle would give greater variety of theme, thereby securing freshness, and it would certainly make preaching very instructive and edifying. The hints on scriptural quotations in sermons were decidedly good. Instances will readily recur to memory of preachers who excel in the appropriateness and beauty of their introduction of the language of Scripture in their discourses as will also the unhappy effect of its infelicitous application in other instances.

The passage on irreverence was one of the most powerful in the whole lecture, and deserves most careful consideration. It is unhappily too prevalent in these days. It is said that in the circus the days of the clown are over; it would be lamentable if he should find a place in the Christian pulpit. Wit and humour have their place, and are not without value, but clearly their place is not in the public worship of the sanctuary. It is holiness, not flippancy, that becomes the habitation of God's house. Reverential worship ought to be earnestly cultivated and maintained. Certainly thoughtless levity and misplaced wit do much to lower a becomingly devotional tone. The closing portion of the lecture inculcates sympathetic preaching in such a manner as will deeply impress itself on the mind and heart of all who aim at the attainment of a powerful and impressive ministry. No one we think can rise from the perusal of this valuable and opportune lecture on scriptural preaching without feeling grateful to its author, and making the resolve to profit by its valuable hints.

Books and Magazines.

THE ENGLISH ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE. (New York: Macmillan & Co.)—This admirable monthly presents as its frontispiece a finely-engraved "Portrait Study." Swinburne pays his respects poetically "To a Seaweed." The attractive descriptive and beautifully-illustrated papers of the number are "Coaching Days and Coaching Ways" and "Summer in Somerset." Two new serials are begun this month, "The Story of Jael" and "The Meditations of Ralph Hardelet," the latter by Professor Minto. H. D. Traill writes racy under the heading "Et Cætera."

THE CENTURY MAGAZINE. (New York: The Century Co.)—The massive kindly face of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe forms the frontispiece of the October *Century*, and James Love Allen has a finely illustrated paper on "Mrs. Stowe's 'Uncle Tom' at Home in Kentucky." "Hand Car 412, C. P. R." is a thrilling piece of description by John Heard, jun. Sherman's March Through Georgia is the subject of the war series of papers, and Abraham Lincoln's Life gains in interest. As this number completes a volume the powerful serials reach their termination. Christian Union is discussed in Open Letters. Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer's "Ely Cathedral" is beautifully illustrated. The number as a whole is one of decided excellence.

RECEIVED.—THE WOMAN'S MAGAZINE (Bottleboro', Vt.: Frank E. Housh & Co.) BOOK NEWS (Philadelphia), THE SIDERAL MESSENGER (Northfield, Minn.: William W. Payne), THE SANITARIAN (New York: 113 Fulton Street).

THE MISSIONARY WORLD.

The last number of the *Church of Scotland Home and Foreign Mission Record* contains the following notes from Darjeeling:

Since the beginning of the year, notwithstanding some discouragements, the mission work in the Darjeeling division has made fair progress.

BAPTISMS.

Since the 1st of January there have been thirty-three baptisms, and on the 19th of May the membership of the division was 386. Among those who were baptized is a Bhutia, who, we trust, may supply a want long felt of a well-qualified catechist to work among the Bhutias. Mr. Turnbull thus writes of this convert. "We should have liked to have written a column about the excellences of this convert, aged twenty, did not prudence, compelled by experience of Bhutia converts in the past, counsel us to forbear. Suffice it to say in the meantime, that without exception, he is the most enlightened and promising accession to the mission since we joined it seven years ago. His knowledge, not only of the letter, but of the spirit of the Christian Scriptures, is simply wonderful, and his social position and the wealth of his worldly possessions seem to place him above all suspicion of mercenary motive. Is he at last the man we have been seeking so long?"

LOCAL EUROPEAN LIBERALITY.

The European tea-planters and other Europeans continue to subscribe liberally to our mission. For the first five months of the year they have contributed Rs. 1,364 for the support of six catechists in the Terai and two at two other places. A tea-planter, Mr. Hancock, of whose continuous interest in the mission Mr. Turnbull speaks in the warmest terms, has built at his own expense at Potanjar an excellent Kachcha church (thatch walls and roof on wooden framework), 57 x 24 feet. He has also presented to the Terai Church a small harmonium and a baptismal bowl. Miss Roby and Miss J. Roby, by their personal exertions, collect subscriptions sufficient to pay for two catechists. This personal interest and liberality on the part of the Europeans show how highly appreciated our mission is in the Darjeeling district.

NATIVE CHRISTIAN LIBERALITY.

Mr. Turnbull says that he has been frequently asked what proportion the Christian liberality of the native Christians bore to their incomes, and no doubt the supporters of missions in this country naturally desire to know whether our native converts abound in this Christian grace. Mr. Turnbull says that, taking the 127 families who constitute the membership of the Darjeeling division church, he found these facts—that their aggregate monthly income was Rs. 1,510 (the rupee just now is about 1s. 5d.); that half of these 114 families earned less than Rs. 10 per month (or about £8 10s. per annum); that there was only one family that earned Rs. 100 a month, and that the aggregate Christian liberality had been for 1885 \$530. When we bear in mind how very poor many of these native Christians are, some of them having less than 4s. a week, this comparatively large sum of Rs. 530, contributed by those who have only recently come forth from heathenism, may well put to shame many of the members of the Church of Scotland.

NATIVE HYMN TUNES.

Mr. Turnbull recognizes the truth that every nation likes best its own national music. He has welcomed the assistance of a native Christian Babu, David Isaac, who has commenced to teach the native Christians to sing native hymn tunes. The results are most encouraging. Mr. Turnbull says: "To show how much more attractive their own country's airs are in the natives' ears, it is sufficient to mention that the singing of one of them draws twice as large an audience to the Bazaar preaching house as European airs do."

UNIVERSITIES' MISSION TRAINING INSTITUTION.

The great want in our Darjeeling Mission is the want of a sufficient number of well-qualified catechists. This is the want which we trust will be supplied by the systematic instructions given at the Universities' Mission Training Institution. Five teachers, three Nepals and two Lepchas, have given up their schools, and entered themselves as students in the Training Institution to qualify themselves for catechists' work in the Darjeeling district.