

Provincial Wesleyan.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 1879.

The New York Christian Advocate a week or so ago has an editorial article in which much was said about the question, "Is Japan to be Americanized?" The Advocate, judging by the tone of that article, thought that Japan might be Americanized, and that all sorts of people in the United States ought to join hands to cause it to be Americanized. American civilization is, no doubt, in very many important respects, much in advance of Japanese civilization, and it may be the purpose of Providence to acclimate American civilization in Japan. But it strikes us that if American Methodism would devote a goodly portion of its missionary energy and resources to the noble work of Christianizing Japan, it might very well postpone the consideration of the question of Americanizing that wonderful country to an indefinitely remote period, when its task in the Mission field of the world might be everywhere accomplished. Japan and every other Mongolian country greatly more need Christianizing than Americanizing.

Some of our articles on the question of Methodist Union and that dwelling on the desirability of the public Sanctuary one and the same Hymnal attracted the notice of the Southern Methodist press. The Nashville Advocate in particular noted those articles, and appreciated the spirit in which they were written. The Nashville thought the project of a common Hymnal feasible; but regarding the Hymnology of its own body as being quite good enough as it was, and ours decidedly susceptible of improvement. It is an old adage that on matters of taste it is useless to dispute. But for our part we may aver that all the Hymn Books we ever saw have seemed to us somewhat imperfect, though we warmly admire our own, and have a good opinion of that rejected in the Nashville.

The Nashville likes the idea of an Ecumenical Methodism. It thinks there is something grand in the thought of the world's Methodism being presented to the world's gaze as one, nowhere clashing the one part with the other, everywhere characterized by the harmony pervading its different sections.

But the Nashville does not favour organic union between Southern and Northern Methodism in the United States. We are sorry for that. But we are not surprised at it. The wounds inflicted by the war are still unhealed. The memory of the terrible struggle is still fresh in the Southern heart. But the time will come when Southern and Northern Methodists will look back calmly on the contest, and draw together by the chords of a common faith, a common polity and a common love, will join hands again in a common organization, and verify in its best sense the truth of the maxim that Union is strength.

It seems evident that Lay representation will in the issue be adopted by every branch of the great Methodist Communion. It prevails already among several of the minor English Methodist communions. It has been introduced into their highest church courts by the two great branches of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States. It is a feature of the polity adopted by the Protestant Methodist Church of the same country.

The Canadian Methodist Church has declared itself willing to adopt lay representation to facilitate union with a kindred body in Ontario. The Conference of Eastern British America in full view of this fact has pronounced strongly in favor of a union on a just and judicious basis with the Canadian Conference.

The question of lay representation has two years in succession occupied the attention of the Irish Conference; and it has begun to make itself felt in the British Conference. The French Methodists look upon its introduction into their Conference as a necessity of the times; and the indications are that the period is not far distant when Australian Methodism will adopt it.

In its relation to the British and Irish Conferences, however, the question is enveloped with legal difficulties. But it is not to be doubted that the means for surmounting these will be discovered when it shall have become the general opinion in the two bodies that the hour has arrived for the full development of the lay representation principle at their Board. Upon the whole, it may be assumed that all the world over, Methodism will, at no remote day, be served in its chief councils by lay as well as clerical representatives.

We have always believed from the first moment at which the matter was forced upon our attention that sooner or later the lay representation principle would be amply developed in the polity of every branch of Methodism. The general result of such development we have also believed would be advantageous to Methodism. It is not indeed to be supposed that the administration of Methodist affairs will be specially improved by the intervention of lay representatives. Nor is it to be held that no inconveniences will ever arise from their introduction into supreme Methodist Church courts. But there are excellent reasons for concluding that the presence of the lay element in the Higher Methodist Church councils will gratify a not unworthy craving that could not be wholly ignored, to meet the demands of a necessity fast growing to be imperative, bind together more fully in support of the common cause, all classes in the church, and strengthen its position in the view of the world. But lay representation is not in our judgment a cause in behalf of which good Methodists ought to be ready either to inflict or to endure martyrdom. Nor is it a cause in behalf of which the peace of the church should be seriously disturbed.

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THE CONFERENCE.

From the Irish Evangelist.

Once more Conference has come and gone, like one of those holy convocations in which God's ancient Israel assembled, for the purpose of commemorating the Passover or Pentecost, and of blending devout and manifold voices in holy thanksgiving and prayer. And as in the days of yore, the Hebrew assemblies were not occasions of present enjoyment and profit, but subsequently a source of pure and gladsome memories, that lingered in the hearts of a people long after the sacred festival had passed, so our recent Conference has been a source of joy and gladness to those who were present, and a rich legacy of joyful remembrances, and of lofty resolves and vows, originating in an intensified sense of responsibility, a richer experience of that constraining love which is the most potent motive to religious activity, and a more ample baptism of that Divine influence which is the heritage of God what gentle and copious showers are to the parched and languishing fields, in seasons of long continued and exhausting drought.

At no previous Conference were we more forcibly reminded of the words of the Royal Singer of Israel—Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It was indeed good to behold—and what is better to feel—the spirit of fraternal and hallowing unity that, like a chain of fascinating and irresistible enchantment, surrounded and united, in the midst of our annual gathering. All—whether English or Irish, clergy or laity—were manifestly of one heart and one mind, purposing to be faithful to our common Master and to each other, and to the land of our common Father, and to the long and frequently expressed resolve to approach Scriptural holiness throughout the year.

To some of us the absence of well-known forms and voices with which we had long been familiar, both in the Committees of Review and in the Conference, was both saddening and admonitory. Some of these were detained at home, and others, and others, having finished their course, had sped onward to the goal, and secured the unmarred laurel that shall bind the resplendent brow of God's glorified ones for ever. Happy they who have thus passed from the region of shadows to the land of living light, and of everlasting repose, unchanging sunshine, and unending song. But we could not but thankfully observe that, notwithstanding the number of veterans who had reluctantly retired through infirmity, or passed to their reward, there were many of our militant ranks. Many and promising were the young and vigorous men, both among the laity and ministers, who, manifestly fired with the zeal of their fathers, gave unmistakable evidence of their high resolve to fill up the places of the fallen, and to come to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

Considering the social and ecclesiastical changes which are taking place in this country, and the conspicuous part which Ireland has already taken in the evangelizing of the world, it might be expected that special attention would just now be given to the necessities of our home work. And so it was. The circumstances by which we are just now surrounded were fully recognized by both ministers and laymen—in many audacious pretensions of Romanism, in the unscrupulous efforts of the disestablished Church, to induce our people to declare themselves of her communion, and to contribute systematically to her funds—the open infidelity and abundant worldliness which are everywhere to be confronted, with the loud cry for additional labourers from many of our most promising fields. Very wisely, therefore, did the Conference, at the request of a most influential meeting of our laity, who nobly guaranteed the necessary cost, set free from Circuit and pastoral responsibility one of its most gifted and laborious ministers, in order that he might devote his entire time and energies to the promotion of the interests of our Home Mission and Contingent fund. This fund is, as a good brother in one of the committees, observed, under God, the sheet-anchor of Methodism in Ireland; and had it been better sustained by our people in general, the Conference would have been obliged this year to grant only a few additional ministers, instead of the eleven requested; nor would many of our Circuits be deterred from asking additional ministerial help, by the consideration that their requests would be useless. We therefore wish our good brother M'Mullen the most ample success in his new undertaking, and trust he shall be amply sustained, not only by the blessing of the Great Head of the Church, but also by the prayers, the hearty co-operation, and the discriminating and generous liberality of our people.

It will, no doubt, gratify many, and especially those who have so long and nobly sustained our General Mission, that this Mission has been strengthened by an additional minister. We have now a General Missionary for each of the four provinces, from whose labors we may expect to anticipate the most cheering results. Our Sunday-school work also received an unusual amount of attention; and a very large and influential committee was appointed by the Conference to look after the interests of this most important part of our work.

The discovery that, notwithstanding the increase of our chapel accommodation, and the greatly augmented number of persons steadily attending our ministry, there had been a falling off in the number of those who attended, led to much searching prayer, and to a lengthened conversation in Conference that revealed much humiliaion of spirit, and hearty purpose to give ourselves more fully than ever to the great work of saving souls. Many, indeed, had been brought to the Lord during the year, and several Circuits had been favoured with good old Methodist revivals; but that these tokens of good had not been more general, was felt to be deeply humiliating, and led to the resolution of seeking above all things more copious effusions of the Holy Ghost, both upon our own hearts and the several spheres of our labour.

Among other subjects, that of Lay Delegation in the Conference was discussed dispassionately and freely. But it was seen that in this matter we must make haste slowly, as we can neither come into collision with English Methodism, of which we form an integral part, and to which we are united in the bond of an inviolable brotherhood; nor can we take any measures which do not legally come within the province of the Polity of our Founder. In this, as in other things, we are humbly persuaded God will guide us to the wisest and best issue; and that no difference of opinion in regard to mere ecclesiastical arrangements shall disturb our harmony of feeling and action, or for a moment

divert us from the one grand object for which God has raised us up—namely, the salvation of souls.

JAPAN ENTIRELY OPENED.

Wonders never cease. So rapid are the developments of God's providence that thoughtful Christian observers are not without surprise at the occurrence of events that would have challenged the most sanguine faith, and have been pronounced incredible by those who leave this controlling element out of the account. The diffusive power of Gospel truth is seen as never before, its heaven is penetrating the masses of society, its light is expelling the darkness that has long brooded thickly over benighted nations.

The condition of Japan has excited continual interest since the news of its seclusion was removed. Gladly, but surely, have the influences of Christian civilization made their way in that empire, undermining the inveterate prejudices of ages of idolatry and intolerance. Keen, eager, and inquiring, its leading minds have recognized the superiority of Western nations, and have desired to secure for themselves the advantages so freely enjoyed by Christian people. Its most intelligent and enlightened statesmen have seen that there is a close connection between the faith and prosperity of a people, and have quietly allowed Christian teachers to introduce their principles, intolerant laws, and tacitly regarding them as a dead letter. The missionaries have pursued their course with encouraging success, and the Christian work has rejoiced at the results already gained.

The late visit of the Emperor to the island of the Cross as it is forbidden and trampled out, if need be, by bloody persecution. The fact that they remain unrepelled, and that some of its Roman Catholic subjects have been tortured and executed on account of their faith, has awakened serious apprehensions. When the large and influential embassy left Japan to exchange greetings with and to investigate the civilization of the Western nations, the Evangelical Alliance proposed to improve the opportunity of calling its attention to the desirability of removing the legal restrictions against Christianity, and of securing to all the subjects of the empire entire freedom of conscience and entire religious liberty, which only advanced nations have hitherto recognized.

A brighter day is evidently opening for Japan. Even the great calamity that visited Yedo in May will be productive of good to that city. A destructive fire, second only in its extent and disaster to that in Chicago, sweeping over a space of two miles by way, has destroyed an immense amount of property, and leaving thirty thousand people homeless, led the government to lease the land to foreigners. Instead of following the oriental plan, and erecting a new city, the government has resolved to build a new city, transforming and greatly improving that portion of the city.

Still another agency is preparing for diffusing truth throughout Japan. The American Baptist Mission Union, at its recent anniversary in New York, resolved to adopt and reinforce the mission in that country, which has been under the direction of the Baptist Free Mission. That society, feeling that all the districts were not secured, which it was engaged and to co-operate hereafter with the Missionary Union. They also hope to secure the services of Dr. Nathan Brown, formerly a successful missionary in the East, and by his labors to establish a mission in the language, to provide as soon as possible a complete translation of the Bible. A legacy of \$10,000 has recently been bequeathed to the society for this purpose.

Thus, with the improvements of modern civilization, with religious liberty as the first, with the empire and the Bible in the hands of the people, Japan seems to be entering on a career of hopeful promise, such as could not have been imagined a generation ago.

From the Presbyterian Witness.

DEATH OF THE REV. JAMES D. GORDON.

Mr. Gordon—It is common with ourselves, I observed, that of the murder of the Rev. James D. Gordon of Erromanga, until to-day, when the San Francisco mail brought a confirmation of the melancholy report, in a letter from the Rev. Dr. Steel of Sydney. The fact is now too authentic to be doubted, and the following particulars are for your service, being furnished by Dr. Steel, and published in the Sydney Morning Herald of June 5. From the subjoined statement it appears that Mr. Gordon was engaged in a mission of mercy at the very moment when a delirious, misguided heathen, raised his murderous weapon for the destruction of his kind benefactor; and also, succeeded in carrying his wicked purpose into execution.

The Christian public who read this sad record, will fully enter into the spirit of the following closing words of Dr. Steel's letter:—

"May God support by His grace and comforting Spirit, those who lament another dear relative fallen in the high places of the field,—in the high places, in the cause of the Gospel. They have at least, in this, a man of faith, a devoted Christian, and though a martyr on earth, rests in Jesus now."

P. G. MCGREGOR,
Sec'y., B. F. M. P. C. L. P.
Halifax, August 14, 1872.
(Sydney Morning Herald June 3.)

ANOTHER MISSIONARY MURDERED.—The Rev. Dr. Steel, as agent for the New Hebrides Mission, has received intelligence by way of Tanna and Queensland, that the Rev. James D. Gordon, of Erromanga, had been murdered on the 25th of February last. No particulars are given, and the tidings are contained in a very brief postscript to a letter from the Rev. Wm. Watt, of Tanna, dated 14th of May, to this effect:—"P. S. Poor Gordon has been murdered on Erromanga, 25th of February." It is feared that the tidings are too true, but further intelligence may be expected by a vessel daily looked for in Sydney, from Havannah

harbor. Mr. Gordon was a native of Prince Edward Island, British North America; he was brother of the Rev. G. N. Gordon, along with his wife, who was barbarously murdered by the natives of Erromanga, in 1861. Mr. J. D. Gordon devoted himself to the missionary work, and took up the standard of the Cross on the very spot where his brother had fallen, resolved to devote himself to the welfare of savage people who were idolaters. He was a man of singular piety, somewhat eccentric in his way, self-denying to an extreme, and always ready in some forbidding, to be nobly exposed. He has labored on Erromanga for eight years, and translated the gospel of St. Matthew, the Book of Genesis, and other portions into the language of the people, besides preparing primers and hymns for their use. He also acquired a knowledge of the language of the island of Espiritu Santa, and spent a winter there teaching the people. He prepared a phonetic primer in that language, but which, owing to the diversity of dialects cannot be used on that island since the death of Rev. James McNeill in 1870. He was unmarried, and trusted himself unreservedly among the natives. He acted for the first four years as missionary to the Presbyterian Church of the Lovonians, two years of British North America, and two years as representative of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales. He resigned his connection with the Church in the end of 1870. Since that time he withdrew from his brethren. He had a very enterprising missionary spirit, and had always a longing to proceed to regions beyond. He even thought he might lay his bones in New Guinea. His sad end, though it doubtless took him in great pain, will be regretted by many in New South Wales, whose acquaintance he made on his visits to the colony, and who loved him for his fervent piety and for his Master's sake. The late Captain Rosengren, of the Lytton, 21st inst., was on board the ship, and he is reported to the Rockhampton Bulletin, that he arrived in Portina Bay, Erromanga, on the 9th of May. A native on board explained the circumstances connected with the murder of the Rev. Mr. Gordon. He states that a native of Portina Bay came down to the missionary station, and asked Mr. Gordon to come and see his children, who were lying sick; he went, and on arrival found the children were dead. The man charged him with witchcraft, and immediately took him to his tribe, and he was against the other tribe. The missionary's boat was on the beach in Cook's Bay. Captain Rosengren met and boarded the Day Spring missionary vessel at Tanna, on the 11th May, and she then bound for Erromanga. Full particulars may be expected after the visit of the Day Spring.

From the Windsor Mail.

THE LATE MR. JOHN SMITH.

Among the events which have occurred during our recent past, the most painful to our minds, was the death of our respected citizen Mr. John Smith. We heard of his lamented death in St. John on our way homeward, and the first thought which arose in our mind, concerning the sad event, was—How much he would be missed in the Church of which he was a member. His name, his open hand which gave so liberally, and his kind words uttering words of friendliness and sympathy. He was always present at the services of his Church on the Sabbath, and he was a diligent student of the Bible. Truly he delighted to be in the land of the living. He was a man of prayer, and his meetings were constantly attended by him, and it was on his way to a prayer meeting in the company of his only daughter on the evening of Friday, the 28th of June, that after complaining of not feeling well, he fell to the ground. Being conveyed into the house of Mr. John Scott, he in a few minutes breathed his last. In one of the beautiful prayers of the Liturgy of the Church of England the minister prays for the souls of the departed, and as Mr. Smith was a member of the Church, and as he was a man of prayer, and his meetings were constantly attended by him, and it was on his way to a prayer meeting in the company of his only daughter on the evening of Friday, the 28th of June, that after complaining of not feeling well, he fell to the ground. Being conveyed into the house of Mr. John Scott, he in a few minutes breathed his last. In one of the beautiful prayers of the Liturgy of the Church of England the minister prays for the souls of the departed, and as Mr. Smith was a member of the Church, and as he was a man of prayer, and his meetings were constantly attended by him, and it was on his way to a prayer meeting in the company of his only daughter on the evening of Friday, the 28th of June, that after complaining of not feeling well, he fell to the ground. 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