

that familiar voice, left that his family might gather around and bid him a last and long farewell.

A little later word came that his spirit fled—had gone forever. Entering the house again and looking on that couch—silence reigned there, but around was weeping and wailing. On the 13th, at two p.m., Mr. and Mrs. Jamieson, Mrs. Mackay and children, preachers and wives, students and converts, followed his remains to their resting-place near by in the Tamsui burying ground. Thus Lién Hô, who from baptism till death remained an honest, humble and faithful worker in North Formosa, passed from here to those halls of Zion.

Brief life is here our portion,
Brief sorrow, short-lived care;
The life that knows no ending,
The tearless life is there.

Ever yours sincerely

G. L. MACKAY.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—From January 1 till June 30 I have been mostly here at Tamsui teaching in Oxford College—reviewing in the girls' school and attending the hospital with six students during operating and dispensing hours. In the school were about thirty children from various places, thirty women from numerous stations; and in the college fifty preachers and students from all parts of the field. As Rev. Tan He and family live in college apartments he was always at hand and kept the whole establishment in thoroughly good order. The influence exerted by him over those studying was very marked. Iap Sün, one of our ablest young men, assisted in the supervision thereof. I was thus relieved above measure, and enabled to give my entire strength to the instruction of those in attendance. I either addressed or drilled the students from two to five times every day. The subjects under discussion were various, but the lively oracles, the Holy Scriptures, engaged our attention far above all else. Because John Locke's advice to a young gentleman is as good now as ever in the past or ever will be in the future. "Let him study the Holy Scripture. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter."

Two matrons had charge over the children. Mrs. Mackay gave her whole time to the work, and was not absent more than a few times during the six months. Mrs. Jamieson attended a short time; then dental operations interfered. For several months in succession a dozen preachers went with me to assist those busy in the girls' school. The women asked and obtained permission to attend my addresses during the daytime in Oxford College. Our gatherings every night at seven p.m. in the Hall surpassed anything yet in North Formosa. At the ringing of our clear-sounding bell, women anxious and bright, children cheerful and happy, students active and intelligent, filed into their respective seats. The former read, wrote and recited, etc., Bible truths. Then all swelled the songs of Zion in lofty praises to Jehovah Jesus. Sabbaths during the past half year here were refreshing and grand!

I addressed all in the college—forenoon, two p.m. and evening. Besides we held four meetings the same hour. Children came (for convenience) to my study-room for Sunday school. Women met in the girls' school for prayer-meeting. One student preached the Heavenly Physician in the hospital. Another told of our Heavenly Saviour in the chapel. Rev. Giam Chheng Hoa was seldom present, on account of building and itinerating. Rev. J. Jamieson also was engaged visiting chapels on Sabbaths. Ever yours sincerely,

G. L. MACKAY.

PLAN OF UNION PROPOSED AT THE SHANGHAI CONFERENCE.

A Conference on Union, composed of the representatives of seven Presbyterian Churches labouring in China, was convened in Shanghai, China, May 12, 1890. At this conference it was found that on account of the diversity of language and the difficulties of travel, the representatives of two Churches believed organic union impracticable. After the adjournment of this conference an informal meeting of delegates, representing five different Presbyterian missions was held, at which were present: Rev. A. P. Happer, D.D., Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. (North); Rev. John Ross, U.P. Church of Scotland; Rev. T. C. Fulton, Irish Presbyterian Church; Rev. John L. Stuart, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. (South); Rev. D. McGillivray, Canadian Presbyterian Church (in Honan).

Dr. Happer was called to the chair. It was recommended that steps be taken to form an organic union between the Churches here represented and any others who may desire to join them. A plan of union, similar in some respects to the one adopted by the Presbyterian Churches in India, was proposed, and at a subsequent meeting of the full delegations unanimously approved. Following is the plan:—

1.—That a constitution be drafted for the Presbyterian Church in China, based upon the constitutions of the Presbyterian Churches in Europe and America. (a) That if foreign missionaries and ministers retain their connection with their Home Church Courts, they shall have no vote in the China Church Courts, but only the right to counsel and advise; but if they sever their ecclesiastical connection with the Home Churches and submit to the discipline of the ecclesiastical Courts in China, they shall be full members of these; in all cases it shall be left to each individual foreign missionary or minister to choose for himself one or other of these two relations. But during a temporary sojourn at home he may resume full connection with his former Church Court.

2.—The doctrinal basis of organic union shall be: (a) The Apostles' Creed. (b) The Nicene Creed. (c) The Westminster Confession and Catechisms.

3.—Presbyteries shall be composed of the missionaries, the pastors and the churches occupying the same territory. These Presbyteries shall, for the present, constitute one Synod, which shall meet once in five years.

At a meeting of the full delegations held in Shanghai, May 14, it was resolved:—

That Rev. Dr. Happer, Rev. J. Goforth, Rev. J. Ross, Rev. John L. Stuart and Rev. T. C. Fulton be requested to present this basis of union to their respective bodies for their approval, with a view to bringing the matter fully before the Assemblies of 1891. That these delegates intercommunicate the action of the respective bodies as soon as practicable.

That these resolutions, with the whole action in the matter of organic union, be printed for distribution among the delegates.

S. I. WOODBRIDGE,

Secretary.

A. P. HAPPER, D.D.,

President.

THE INFINITE IN MAGNITUDES AND IN MINIMUMS.

How wonderful is the power of nature—how great in magnitudes and distances—yet how equally wonderful in small things—infinitely small—showing to the intelligence of man how great is that God who secretly governs all. I speak of matter great and small. But if so great over matter and its life and modifications, yet how infinitely grander must be the moral powers, the powers of love, thought and beautiful sentiments of the mind of Almighty God!

Some years ago I bought a few prunes to eat; they were apparently free from any decay; the naked eye could discern nothing living on them. They might, I thought, be eaten with safety, but I applied a magnifying glass of only one hundred magnifying power, and there I saw living creatures crawling in delight on the prunes. One looked as big as a house-fly. It had legs, eyes, wings in perfect shape, and moved and seemed enjoying life. So a single sparkling point of water, barely capable of being seen on a flower bright in look, the sunlight shining through it, under a powerful magnifying glass is like a little pond of fish. There hundreds, perhaps thousands, of diminutive animals, seemingly enjoying life, are seen gamboling, darting hither and thither, as full of enjoyment as the fishes in a large water globe before you. The insects seem to discern each other—have eyes—for their brief moment of life enjoy it. They live for a moment and die. So in fact the darkness of all matter seems full of the light of life. Silence to us is not silence to them. I could have eaten my prunes and crushed, or at least swallowed, hundreds of organized—perfectly organized—beings, who, like the house-flies, were full of joy and life. Secretly hidden nature is like mighty displayed nature—wondrous and beautiful. Supposing this world of ours is a million years old—since it was in a state of chaos—there are suns and systems of worlds like ours whose light, travelling at the rate of a cannon ball from the cannon's mouth for millions of years towards this world, has never yet reached us. The sizes of Sirius, the great Sun-Star, is supposed to be as much greater than the sun as the sun is greater than our earth.

But whilst the human mind is overwhelmed by magnitudes of matter and distances, and minitudes of animal life invisible to the naked eye, it is yet still more astonished at the power of itself, and at the beauty of moral power, the elevating, delighting (spiritually I mean) influences of love, charity, benevolence, adoration, humility, forgiveness. We can suppose what are the qualities of angels—what is the atmosphere of a pure, glorious heaven, devoid of all sin, where all are striving to see who can make the other the most happy, where we see even as we are seen—guiltless, and know even as we are known. Whilst matter stands out in infinite variety and grandeur, and the aim of nature seems to be to make everything beautiful and happy in organized matter, yet behind it stands an unseen world of spirits, over whom God—Him whom we call God—that loving Father, whom Christ addressed in such loving words, presides more immediately in Spirit, and whom He loves to make happy as He does all organized matter.

How beautiful must be those mansions of bliss which Jesus has gone to prepare for those that love Him and follow Him to the death! Would they come again—those dear ones of ours who have left us? Those dear eyelids which we have pressed in death, those bodies whom we have decorated with choicest flowers: would they open again on this life or mingle in earthly strife again? Ah no! Once in heaven, or in a glorious spirit upper life, no more of earth for them. The higher, the more beautiful, will not descend to the lower;—we all go to them, they not to us, as David said of his son:—

There is a land of pure delight, where saints immortal reign,
Eternal day obscures the night and pleasures banish pain.
There everlasting spring abides, and never-withering flowers,
Death, like a narrow stream, divides that lovely land from ours.

St. Paul has said at the end of the eighth chapter of the Romans what the love of God is—verses 38, 39—and in another place he says: "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the glory God hath prepared for those who love Him."

If God can so clothe infinitude of matter with such glory and the secrets of unseen matter with such wonders, why cannot He much more clothe the invisible world of angelic spirits and saved men and women with a glory and spiritual enjoyment inconceivable to us in our present state. Nature in this world is wonderful. Look, for instance, at the grub changed to the beautiful-winged painted butterfly. Look at the deadness of nature all around us in winter and the marvellous beauty of spring and summer in May and June. Look at the grassy fields, the variety of flowers, the mild skies of June and the songs of birds—their affections around their young—the whisperings of passing winds, the fleecy or gol-

den clouds lit up by the sun, the heavenly sunsets, the happy buzzing insects—delighted with existence—the beautiful landscapes of quiet glittering waters, undulating lands or majestic mountains. This is our world, given to us by God, a God of love, who only wishes it to be a passing scene, not of long continuance. He wishes it to be one of a sinless nature where we may all strive to make each other happy and good. Cannot we do so? Do we try to do so? I fear not as we should. What a noble example we have to do so in the Lord Jesus, who spoke so kindly to Martha and Mary, who looked gently on sinning Peter, who allowed the loving John to lean on His bosom the night before He suffered, who girt Himself with a towel and washed His disciples' feet, who said: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing," whilst His hands were nailed to the cross.

I was speaking a few days ago to a young lady at my table of the prevalent wickedness of many around us in Toronto—how liable they were to sin, how selfish, how unkind to each other—and she remarked, "God made them so." "No," said I, "God made us all free agents, as He did the angels who fell, and as no doubt the angels in heaven are. But He gave us the power to abstain from sin. Would you wish to be a machine—not having power to do what you can?" She seemed to think God did not exhibit love in all His works, and I think the same objection was once taken to God's works by the philosopher, Mills. How unjust is this! Infinite space, as does the present world in which we live, shows God (or nature, whose author is God) made everything apparently to give pleasure to sentient creatures. He made the light of the sun to suit the eye, the green foliage and grass to soothe it, the beauty of flowers to delight it. He made the eye to gaze on beauties, the birds to sing sweetly, sleep to revive the spirits and body, the gentle moon to light the darkness of night, the rings of Saturn to cheer its people. He studded the heavens with countless stars, when all might have been darkness. No, God is good. Oh how lovable, how holy, and in Jesus we see what God is. CHARLES DURAND.

Toronto, August 20, 1890.

THE PROBATIONERS' SCHEME.

MR. EDITOR,—It appears from the reports of the last Assembly that what is known as the Probationers' Scheme has at last been run into the ground. Considering the way in which it has been managed, the wonder is that it was not landed there long before. The Assembly that adopted it, in 1886, was very anxious to better the financial condition of probationers and ministers without charge, and made it one of the regulations of the Scheme that when a vacancy occurred the Presbytery of the bounds shall consider the circumstances thereof and decide what remuneration they should give for the supply rendered; but in no case shall it be less than \$10 and board. But one of the first things the committee into whose hands this Scheme was entrusted did was to take it out of the hands of Presbyteries, and decide and publish abroad in their circular: "The remuneration is \$10 and board." By this the Presbyteries were relieved of all concern in the matter, and the labourers have suffered less. Some time after the Scheme came into force a minister without charge supplied a vacancy within the bounds of the Sarnia Presbytery for two Sabbaths, and when his work was done the treasurer came to him and said: "I believe it is to be \$10 a Sabbath in the future, but we have not been notified," and paid him at the rate of \$8 per Sabbath. So, by the blundering or action of this committee, and the neglect of the Presbytery of the bounds, caused in all likelihood by the former's conduct, the poor man was made to suffer at least to the extent of \$4, if not more. It is true the committee in time tried to correct their own blundering after it had been pointed out to them in public prints. But it was then too late, and so \$10 came to be looked upon as the right sum to give by both large and small, rich and poor congregations. Thus the well-meant design of the Assembly was frustrated. How much better it would have been if the Assembly had decided directly and positively that the remuneration shall be at the rate of a certain proportion, say seventy-five or eighty per cent. of the salary of the last pastor. This would have settled the matter at once and made the remuneration in proportion to the ability of each congregation.

Again, this considerate committee classed all ministers without charge under the common head of probationers, and in such a way as that no one could tell from their list who were ministers and who were not. Every one at all acquainted with the Presbyterian Church knows that a probationer is one who is licensed to exercise his gifts by way of preaching with a view to the office of the ministry. They thus degrade ministers to the status of probationers, and at first they had not the courtesy to place before their names the usual Rev., while those with whom they were directed to correspond had not only this prefix to their names, but also not a few affixes from D.D. down to Ph.D., which a learned professor of one of our colleges many years ago told me just meant fiddle-dee. Indeed the whole course of this committee tended to degrade ministers rather than conserve their rights and privileges and promote their happy settlement in pastoral charges.

Once more, at their own recommendation a few years ago the Assembly gave them absolute power to remove from their roll, when two years thereon, any name they pleased without any previous notice, or even after notice that this was done, or assigning any reason why or affording any opportunity of appeal. If the poor unfortunate minister had been a labouring man he would have been entitled to at least a month's notice, but being an ambassador of Christ, such courtesy and fairness were not thought necessary by this mighty committee clothed with absolute authority. Any minister, however excellent he might be, who has had any experience under this committee, knows to his sorrow, from various causes that could be mentioned, might be on their roll for two years and see very few vacancies at all desirable or in a position to call and have the opportunity of labouring within the bounds of very few Presbyteries. To clothe this committee, at their own recommendation, with absolute power was one of the most foolish things the Assembly ever did. It went far, however, to kill both it and the Scheme. In framing another scheme I hope the lessons which past experience is well fitted to teach will not be unheeded. With your permission I may at some future time give an outline of a scheme to promote the settlement of vacancies which has been in my mind for some time and which experience has suggested.

A. WILSON.

August 9, 1890.