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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22nd, 1888.

THE suggestions made by the Pan-Presbyterian Council in regard to deaconesses will do much good whether the Churches represented take action or not. A vigorous discussion of the question is sure to come. Before that discussion is long carried on, several things will be made sufficiently clear. It will be shown, we feel reasonably certain, that no small part of the work of the Church is now done by women. It will be made painfully clear that were it not for the women, the prayer meeting in most Churches would not reach double figures, and but for them, many Churches would have no prayer meetings at all. It may also be shown that we, in Canada, are on the high-road to the condition of many American Churches, in which the membership is mainly made up of women. The step from a prayer meeting mainly attended by women to a communion table mainly surrounded by women, is not a long one. A vigorous discussion of the whole question in the press will do much good.

THE visit of the Hon. Wilfred Laurier to the West produced a slight flutter in political and literary circles. The Opposition leader seems to be a kindly, genial gentleman, and he certainly has a polished, refined manner. His oratory displays quite as much polish as power. His elocution is, perhaps rather in advance of his ability to freshen up and throw new light on old topics. It has often been said that we have no speaker in Ontario equal to Mr. Laurier. In all that goes to make a graceful, polished delivery we have perhaps few equals and certainly no superior; but we have a number of public men who have a stronger grip than he seems to have, and who are possessed of more power if they have less polish. Mr. Laurier is a very pleasant and profitable speaker to listen to even when you do not agree with all he says. The platform is an educational force, and every first-class speaker on every question and on both sides of politics contributes something to the education of the people. Should the orator be a Frenchman he is all the better educator for he is sure to have a style unlike anything we are accustomed to in the West.

THE *Christian-at-Work* admits we are right in thinking that it believes Sam Jones says a great many things the people are the better for hearing.

The *Christian at Work* has long recognized the value of Mr. Jones' sermons, and Mr. Small's as well. It is true, religion suffers from the preaching of sensationalism—of that there can be no question. But she suffers infinitely more from the preaching of dreary, ethical, abstract, commonplace. Where one building—churches included—is destroyed from lightning stroke, fifty are perishing from dry rot. Fact.

Sensationalism is a vague term and may mean something good or something not good. A sensation produced by preaching the *truth* is a good thing. A sensation produced by error, or by half-truths—the worst form of error—or by the tricks of oratory, is not a good thing. Some people think that any kind of preaching they are not accustomed to is sensational. Some are of the opinion that a preacher who does not allow them to go comfortably asleep is sensational. The right question is, What causes the sensation? If God's truth, then welcome the sensation. We all need a sensation of that kind badly enough. Whether Mr. Jones, or any other alleged sensationalist does his work by honest use of truth is a question that people must decide for themselves.

At a meeting celebrating the fifty-third anniversary of his ordination and the thirty-fourth of his present pastorate, Dr. Newman Hall made the following suggestive allusion to Mrs. Hall

I must express no, I cannot express it, I can only hint at it—my gratitude to God for giving me as partner of heart and home and work for Christ, one to whose unceasing care and sympathy I am so much indebted for the loving discharge of the first duty of a minister's wife—which is not the doing of his work for him, but by good care of him enabling him to do it himself.

Presbyterian congregations in Canada are not, as a rule, cruelly exacting in their treatment of the minister's wife, but it will not hurt any of them to be reminded by so high an authority as Newman Hall that the first duty of a minister's wife is to take good care of her home and husband. Across the lines, we believe, a minister's wife is often considered a kind of co-pastor—without salary of course—who is expected to run a number of societies, visit the sick, call upon strangers and attend to numerous other matters. If a minister's wife can find time to attend to such things, over and above the time needed in her home, good and well. If she cannot, it is the very climax of cruelty to compel her to do so. She is under no stronger obligations to work for the congregation than the elder's wife, or the deacon's wife, or the manager's wife, or any other Christian man's wife or daughter. The best woman is the one that can so manage her household affairs that she has time left for Church work. Happy is the minister or other man who has a wife of that kind.

THE Pan-Presbyterian Council distinctly committed itself to the principle of setting apart deaconesses as official workers in the Churches represented in that body. The Council, of course, cannot legislate, not being a Church court but it can suggest and here are the suggestions, condensed by the *Interior*, in regard to deaconesses:

In our opinion, the time has fully come for the organization of women's work by Churches on some definite principle. We suggest (a) that in every congregation all women should be enrolled who are engaged in the service of Christ in connection with the Church, and also all who desire to be taught and trained to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the young and the mature, the ignorant and the experienced, servants and mistresses, would be brought into well-understood relations with each other as members of the same congregation, for friendly intercourse, leading to the giving and receiving of help.

We suggest further (b) that such as have had successful experience in work should be enrolled by the Kirk Session, as those to whom others might naturally look and apply for help. This enrollment would include experienced Sabbath school teachers and visitors and nurses and teachers of Bible classes and heads of temperance associations, workers in the service of song, makers of clothing for the poor, those who bring up friendless children, and the senior members who have taken an active part in befriending the younger or less experienced female members or adherents of the congregation.

We suggest (c) that after several years of experience or training, those women workers who are willing to devote their lives to Christian work in connection with the Church should be set apart and enrolled under the sanction of the courts of the Church as deaconesses. They might be set apart by the Presbytery or by the Kirk Session. The former is more in accordance with the custom of the early Church; the latter is more easy in operation, especially at the outset.

Does "set apart" mean to ordain? Women are now doing in many congregations the kind of work described, without any official recognition. Whether formally setting them apart by Session or Presbytery would help them in their work is a question which will stand discussion. The Council, however, has declared the order of deaconesses to be Scriptural and not an innovation. Now for a discussion of details. There is room and work on this question for some ecclesiastical reformer who wishes to make his mark.

## A GRAVE REPROACH.

THE last meeting of the Missionary Conference in London was devoted to the denunciation of three great evils that disgrace Christian nations and impede the progress of the Gospel in foreign lands. It was not one of the regular sessions of the Conference, but an extra meeting, which evoked a strong enthusiasm, and was the best attended of any that was held. It was called for the purpose of entering an energetic protest against the opium trade in China, the drink traffic in Africa, and the military recognition of vice in India. When such legalized forms of iniquity are permitted to continue for years without earnest effort for their extinction, is it any wonder that nations who tolerate their existence become the objects of unmiti-

gated scorn and reproach? The Christian people of Great Britain are strenuously endeavouring to give the Gospel to the inhabitants of China, Africa and India, but how can they meet the taunts of the heathen people of those lands when they call attention to the fact that the opium traffic was forced upon the Chinese against express remonstrance, and has been suffered to continue for nearly half a century? The explorer and the missionary penetrate the interior of Africa, and the representatives of British and German commerce, as the vanguard of civilization, follow their footsteps with soul and body-destroying liquor. In military cantonments in India degraded native women are kept under authoritative regulations. These are very dark blots on the fair fame of Great Britain. If the heathen of foreign lands can be made to understand that in that Christian nation there is a strong desire for their moral and spiritual advancement, they cannot fail to be convinced by what they see that there also exists a greed of gain that is not deterred by the fact that the methods it pursues are certain to be destructive to vast numbers of its victims. But heathens, like some others, are not in the habit of drawing fine distinctions. They are only too ready to conclude that the effort to give them the Gospel is insincere, or that it is only a round-about method of more thoroughly making merchandise of them.

At the meeting held for the purpose of protesting against the continuance of these evils, Sir Arthur Blackwood presided, and struck the key-note in a speech of much energy and directness. He showed clearly that much of the blame for the continuance of the evils deplored lay at the door of the Christian Church, because, by its apathy and silence, it was virtually tolerating a state of things that was not only a reproach to Christianity, but a disgrace to civilized nations. "The practices," he said, "carried out by Christian nations, and authorized and enforced by so-called Christian governments, have much to bear of the blame for our want of success. It is our business to lift up our voices, and that with no bated breath, and in no indistinct manner, to declare, in the name of the Lord, and on the ground of every obligation that we owe to Him who has redeemed us by His blood, that, so far as lies in our power, so far as our protests and prayers can effect it, these deadly evils shall be stayed, and by God's help, be impossible for the future." A strongly-worded resolution condemnatory of the China opium trade was moved by Mr. Hudson Taylor, of the China Inland Mission, it was ably supported and unanimously carried.

The destructive effects of the drink traffic among the native races in Africa was eloquently denounced by Dr. William M. Taylor, of New York. He clearly showed that national complicity with this demoralizing form of trade, paying for the natural products of Africa with gin would not only be injurious to commerce, but would in time be visited by retribution, quoting the saying, "the government of God is real; the government of God is moral; the government of God is retributive," and cited the Indian Mutiny, and the American civil war as impressive illustrations that national tolerance of great evils leads to terrible calamities. The resolution dealing with the subject was carried with enthusiasm.

Mr. Alfred S. Dyer, who had recently returned from India, and who had devoted earnest and persistent effort to arouse attention to the scandalous course of the Indian Government in its direct sanction of vice, was the chief speaker in favour of the resolution, bearing on a question that has given rise to energetic and indignant remonstrance. Because of his efforts in seeking the suppression of this iniquity, Mr. Dyer had been subjected to bitter onslaught, and malignant criticism. The warmth of his reception in Exeter Hall showed that he was fervently loved "for the enemies he had made." He made a powerful plea for the discontinuance of an evil that disgraces humanity. Dr. G. M. Post ably seconded the resolution which, while condemning the course of the Indian government, acknowledged the prompt action of the British House of Commons in condemning the government sanction of vice in India. "All honour," he said, "to those noble men who have stood up and vindicated the right. I repudiate and never will believe the accusation that the medical profession stands behind these acts. I have been a member of that profession for twenty-seven years. I say that when you press this matter on your legislative bodies, you may rely upon the medical profession being with you."