

adoption carried, apparently shutting off any chance of debate.

The Rev. Dr. J. Leonard Corning, of Terre Haute, Ind., got liberty to present a brief paper on the same subject. His address was as a little bombshell in the council. He thought it would be most decidedly proper and judicious to relax the customary tests of admission to church membership. Some of them might remember when only on the lower steps of their teens, standing up to declare their belief in metaphysical postulates that had puzzled theological minds for many ages. Could a full view be had of the skepticism resulting from this dogmatic dictation it would present a pitiable sight; the instances of decay of faith that could be traced to this dogmatism, if collected, would be appalling. Childhood's appeal for relaxation was most pathetic and urgent. On the point of practical tests he thought candidates should not be terrified at the doors of the church and their entrance made as a celebration of a conquest. The slackening growth of church membership challenged attention. He prayed that they would be guided by a spirit which would enable them to draw the proper line between an extreme conservatism and the liberty that knows no law.

Prof. Wright, of Oberlin, Ohio, Dr. Pentecost, of Brooklyn, Dr. Ward, of New York, the Rev. J. B. Gregg, of Colorado Springs, Colo., and Dr. Quint, of Dover, N. H., took part in the debate which followed. The drift of their remarks was generally against relaxation.

The Council was entertained by the Chicago Congregational Club on Friday evening. The bountiful collation was furnished by the ladies of the First Church in their ample parlors. Dr. Little, president of the Club, presided, and Dr. Lawrie invoked the Divine blessing. After doing full justice to the supper the Council adjourned to the church auditorium; "My country, 'tis of thee," was sung, and Dr. Eddy led in prayer. A number of most interesting speeches were made sparkling with life, and instinct with the spirit of love. Prof. Egbert C. Smyth, of Andover, one of the advocates of the "Andover Theology," took the opportunity of referring to this alleged heresy, and endeavored to remove misapprehension in regard to it and its propagators. If he did not succeed in doing this, he certainly left a very favorable impression on the minds of his hearers in regard to his own sincerity and earnestness. At a later stage of the proceedings, when reporting the condition of Andover Theological Seminary, Prof. Smyth took occasion to refer to the subject again, vindicating the institution from the aspersions which had been thrown upon it by the champions of an unyielding and persecuting orthodoxy. It was manifest that these utterances awakened the sympathy of a large proportion of the Council.

It would fill two or three numbers of the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT to give even a bare outline of the subjects brought before the body, and the discussions to which they gave rise. The impression made upon the mind was that of an ecclesiastical athlete wrestling with gigantic foes and herculean tasks. What problems of difficulty and duty stare our American brethren in the face! The New West commission grappling with the Mormon question; the Educational Board seeking to plant and sustain Colleges and Theological Seminaries all over the U. S.; the church-building scheme, for which \$300,000 are wanted "right away," the work of evangelization, especially among the foreign population which is coming in teeming myriads to "the land of the free," bringing popery, infidelity and anarchism along with them;—one stands appalled at the magnitude of these and other kindred tasks. Why, as Dr. Noble stated, thrilling the vast audience while he spoke the startling words: "Chicago alone has a city of thirty-five thousand souls brought to it for religious instruction and influence every year." In this great work Congregational Chicago, with its seventeen churches, and nearly six thousand members is manfully striving to do its part.

To one accustomed to behold such small gatherings as the Congregational Union and association meetings that convene in Canada, it was a soul-inspiring sight to see that vast throng of pastors and delegates which assembled day after day for eight successive days and evenings, with very slowly diminishing numbers to the last, the second Wednesday witnessing an attendance of about *five hundred*. The roll of Council comprised over five hundred names, and the attendance from the city and various parts of the land easily swelled the number so that there was an average attendance during the earlier days of the session of a thousand or more. The impression made upon the mind was that these people were intensely in earnest. They had not come to see a great city, with its multiplicity of interesting objects, but to do a great work.

It has often been said of American Congregationalism that it is "ring-straked, speckled and spotted" like Jacob's cattle, through mixing with Presbyterianism, and in some parts of the land the mongrel ecclesiastical product has been called "Presbygationalism." This is true to some extent of New England and a few other localities, but the young west is coming out strong in the principles of time-honored historic, New Testament Congregationalism, and of the older states it will doubtless prove true in time that "a little child shall lead them" back to the old land marks.

I think one cannot go through the varied scenes of such a meeting, so conducted, and so full of matters fitted to stir the heart to prayerful sympathy, without