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Contributors and Correspondents.

ENGLAND.

MILDMAY CONFERENCE—ITS PROCEEDINGS—ITS SUBJECTIVE PHASE—AN INTERESTING CASE.

Your readers may be interested and instructed by some account of Mildmay Conference, one of these now celebrated conferences which it has just been my privilege to attend. They were begun seventeen years ago by the late Rev. W. Pennefather, at Barnet, a few miles north of London. He desired in compliance with Christ's injunctions to give to the world practical and manifest testimony of the oneness of His spiritual body, as well as to that sadly ignored article of the creed, "the Communion of Saints." He issued invitations to a number of earnest Christians of various sections of the Church to meet in his Church for Communion around the table of their common Lord, and for mutual prayer and counsels. The good man was soon after transferred to the incumbency of St. Jude's, Mildmay, in the north of London, and here abounded in Christ-like labors of most varied and arduous nature till gathered to his rest since this year began. Amongst his last efforts was the erection of a spacious and beautiful Conference Hall, not only for the accommodation of these annual gatherings, but for evangelistic meetings every Sabbath, and many other kindred gatherings. On the same ground, and in the immediate neighborhood are Deaconesses' homes, Orphanages, schools, etc., all built, equipped and overseen by himself and wife as, under God's good providence, the means, unsought except in prayer, flowed in upon him. People asked what would become of all these in case of his removal, but God has given courage and strength to his noble widow, with the help of trustees and friends to carry on these good works. So at the usual time the conference was called, and now instead of the hundred and twenty who on the first occasion gathered at Barnet, over three thousand assembled to share the blessings of such an occasion. On arriving in town I was delighted to find that the lodgings a friend had procured for us were within five minutes walk of the Conference Hall, and hence, with little loss of time I was able to be present at many of the meetings during the three days it lasted. I shall not attempt to give a record of proceedings, but rather a few general impressions illustrated by brief details. First, its Catholicity was very striking, especially in view of the peculiarity of the spiritual atmosphere, and uniformity of the type of Christian character. One might have thought them all members of one denomination, and that of marked individuality—highly evangelical, spiritually minded, enthusiastic, and for the most part practical. The psalms and hymns that were sung, and the prayers that were offered would not have helped you, only the well-known faces, and better known names, told you there were Presbyterians from the north, "Churchmen" (English), and a few Methodists, Independents, and Baptists from the south, with specimens of the more liberal "Brethren" from Plymouth, Bristol, Dublin, &c., laymen and clergymen, Christian workers, male and female. The principal meetings, at 11 a.m. and 7:30 p.m., were occupied with the subject:—"God able to raise up life out of death." (Heb. ii. 19; 1 Sam. ii. 6; Jno. xii. 24; Acts xxvi. 8; Jno. xi. 48, 44.) and to make up all loss (2 Chron. xxxv. 9; Jer. xxxii. 17, 27; Jno. xi. 23) and to make grace abound to his Church (2 Cor. ix. 8; 2 Cor. xii. 9; Jno. xi. 40). These meetings were generally presided over by one of the Trustees, Stevenson Blackwood, Esq., a tall and fine-looking man, once a west-end beau, who married the dowager Duchess of Manchester, and has for many years been an evangelistic worker of much power, especially among the upper classes. Most admirable addresses were given by Dr. Horace Bonar, of Edinburgh, Dr. Paterson, formerly of Glasgow, now London, Rev. E. Bickersteth, author of "Yesterday, To-day, and Forever," Rev. Marcus Rainford, of Belgrave Chapel, Mr. Varley, of Nottingham, Tabernacle—not long since a butcher, and a worldly man, now a most powerful and successful preacher of Christian truth—and others.

Throughout the day at frequent intervals prayer meetings were held, and in the afternoon a variety of smaller meetings of specific character in different parts of the building and grounds, such as those upon "Consecration" addressed by Revs. Savage and Marston, Messrs. Blackwood, Varley, &c.; Hebrew Christian Conference, by Rev. Dr. Rosenthal and Macgibbon, Adolphus Street; and Evangelization among the masses, by Dr. Barnardo, a young medical man

doing a noble work in the east end of London, and his fellow labourers, Geo. Holland, John Ashworth, of the "Strange Tales," &c.; Work and prayer for the sick, addressed by Mrs. Meredith, of the "Discharged Prisoners Mission" fame; Evangelistic services for Children, Christian work in the Army and Navy in China, in Indian, Zenanas, &c., &c. Many of these meetings, as may easily be imagined, were most interesting, instructive, and profitable.

With all this anxious deliberation about work there pervaded the Conference even more strongly an intense desire after personal blessing, which always made the "Consecration" meetings overflow. Perhaps this interest was increased by the fact that the subject of the "Higher Christian Life," or as its special exponents prefer to call it "Holiness through Faith," meaning, as I understand it, freedom, not only from guilt, but the power of sin, through faith in Christ, is just now brought very prominently before the minds of Christians in the Metropolis and out of it, by the visit and addresses of an American gentleman at present in the city, Mr. Pearsall Smith, together with the letters and articles upon the subject which have appeared in *The Christian*. Many, whose names and lives are well known, profess to have experienced something like the second conversion recorded of Merle D'Aubigne. Mr. Varley, for example, within the last few weeks, testifies to a realization of the power of Christ to give peace and freedom such as he had before scarcely deemed possible. They repudiate what is commonly called "perfectionism," and simply urge that every true believer should and may realize Christ to be made unto him or her "wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption," by faith in Him. "According to thy faith be it unto thee"—bounded only by scriptural promises, (and they are large)—certainly is our Saviour's rule, and we should not be surprised to hear as its result of any spiritual experience short of perfect sinlessness, which the Scripture does not promise, but when it comes to such physical results as the following, one cannot but feel startled and hesitate. Speaking of the treatment of the sick, an elderly military gentleman, known to many in Canada, Major Webber Smith, said that once when suffering great pain from a large carbuncle, he was led to much searching of heart, prayer and humiliation before God, resulting in perfect submission to His will, and in a few hours the carbuncle entirely disappeared. Again, amongst the many requests for unmet thanksgiving and prayer, which, by the way, were a marked feature of all the meetings, was one from a family where a dear child of three years of age had been completely cured of curvature of the spine through the pleading in faith of Jas. v. 14, 15. It occurred to me that this was a case capable of simple verification, and I applied for the address of the family, and Mr. Blackwood told me it was a daughter of Lord Radstock, who till ten days before had suffered much pain, was unable to take exercise, scarcely indeed to walk at all. A gentleman from New York, who had had many such in hand before, at the parents' request anointed the child, while all joined in fervent prayer. In twelve hours the child was cured, and has since been taking four hours a day of open air exercise. Knowing that Mr. B. was an intimate friend of Lord Radstock, further inquiry was needless.

CANADIAN ABROAD.

London, July, 1873.

[P.S.—The above letter has been mislaid for some weeks.]

SCOTLAND.

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN HALL AND PROCEEDINGS.

DEAR SIR,—I had thought that when I got to Edinburgh I would be able to give you something in the way of "first impressions," but unfortunately my first impressions were those of a solitary passenger at Princes-st. station, at 11 p.m., with a pouring rain to welcome me—a rain of that species euphonically termed a "Scotch mist." Daylight, however, showed me a very different spectacle. Opposite my window rose ten stories of solid stone, but from the parlor of the hotel I looked down on one of the most beautiful city scenes that could be imagined. To the right, Calton Hill; in front, Scott's Monument and Princes-st.; to the left, the National Gallery and the beautiful Princes-st. gardens. A continued residence has only confirmed that morning's opinion, that Scotchmen are justly proud of their fine old city.

Edinburgh is taking its holidays just now, and all who can afford it are away to

the Highlands or the sea side. I suppose everyone goes because it is fashionable. I am sure that the heat cannot cause the exodus. Ever since I arrived I have worn November clothing, and even with the some days were really cold. Scarcely a cloud passes over Edinburgh without discharging some of its contents. It would be impossible for Canadian students to continue their work in Toronto all summer, but no obstacle, so far as climate is concerned, exists here, consequently the students of the U. P. Church, who are mostly scattered in rural districts all the rest of the year, come up here in the months of August and September to attend the divinity lectures in Queen-st. Hall. They say that they have literally come to spend their holidays, and, comparing the amount of study done by them with that done in Knox College, Toronto, I should think they did not at all overwork themselves. Indeed, a comparison of the two institutions would go far to show Toronto "Theologians" that their *alma mater* is not to be reckoned inferior to older and more famed institutions.

The Hall of the U. P. Church is divided into two sections—the junior and the senior—the former consisting of the first two years, under Drs. Cairns and Eadie, and the latter of the last three years, under Drs. Harper and McMichael. Lectures last each day from 9 to 1:15, and the time spent with each professor is two hours. The first of these hours is generally spent in lecturing, and the last in catechising upon previous lectures. Very frequently, however, one of these hours is spent in hearing discourses, two of which are disposed of in that time. Comparisons are very often "odious," but I cannot resist the temptation to say that my opinion of the professors of Knox College and their method (the latter especially) has risen very much since I came here. They are not so erudite, probably, as Dr. Harper or Dr. McMichael, and it is not invidious to say that Dr. Cairns surpassed them in philosophic grasp of his subject, and Dr. Eadie in accurate and extensive scholarship, but it must be remembered that erudition may be very dry sometimes, and lectures that are closely read and received in silence by the students are hardly calculated to kindle enthusiasm and provoke study. It is not in the class-room that professors have won distinction. Still very great benefit is to be derived from associating with such a man as Dr. Cairns, in whom one sees the humility and kindness of a true Christian, united to a mind which handles with ease the most subtle scepticism; even when laying bare the root error of a false system he does it with a tenderness that shows how thoroughly he sympathizes with every effort, however wayward, to discover truth.

On Monday, a week ago, the Students' Missionary society had their annual meeting at which the scheme to be advocated during the coming year was chosen. The plan adopted is to give the whole sum raised each year to some scheme which stands in need of special and temporary assistance. This year three schemes were proposed—the evangelization of Bohemia, the Medical Mission under Dr. Thomson in Madagascar, and the Evangelical Church of Armenia. The latter scheme is represented here just now by Pastor Alexander Djeljiz, Moderator of the Synod, who is soliciting aid in the establishment of a Theological Seminary in Adabazar, Bithynia. This scheme was almost unanimously adopted, and pastor Alexander has the happiness of knowing that all and more than he asked for will be supplied. It is another of the many surprises in the history of religion that the country into which the Spirit suffered not the Apostle to enter should now be calling upon British Churches for sympathy and aid.

CANADIAN STUDENT ABROAD.

Edinburgh, Sep. 8th, 1873.

The Galt Conference.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—A short time ago it was announced in your paper that a conference was about to be held at Galt, to last four days, the object being "to discuss the higher aspects of Divine truth, and bring together in closer friendship Christians of different denominations." It was also stated that some distinguished clergymen from the United States and Britain would take an active part in the work of the conference.

This was rather a promising announcement. It looked like an effort to do in behalf of the Church what is proposed to be done in behalf of the State, at Brussels, where a number of distinguished priests from various countries are about to meet for the purpose of exchanging views, to see if they can agree on some leading principles on which to establish an International Board of Arbitration. The effort might be on a smaller scale, still, in that direction, as intimated by its purpose "to bring together in closer friendship Christians of

different denominations." For this purpose, it was fair to expect the conference would look at the causes that keep the denominations apart, see what concessions could mutually be made, and what compromises might be effected without surrender of principle. It was also natural to expect that some notice would be taken of the education question, and the position which the Churches—or a united Christian Church—should take in reference thereto. It would also come fairly within the province of such a convention, to look at the relative positions of evangelical and rationalist parties, and give some indication whether these are to be regarded as allies in the common crusade against evil, or as belonging to hostile ranks. There is a newspaper published in New York called the *Christian Union*, and whose object is expressed in its name, which claims to have a circulation of 180,000, and must therefore be wielding an enormous influence. This paper gives quotations from the organs of all denominations, Catholic and Episcopal, Baptist and Methodist, Unitarian and Universalist, Independent and Presbyterian, and notices approvingly any movement by any of them that seems to tend toward the resurrection of the world. Was the conference about to follow its example and endeavour to rise to the platform, "exceeding broad," of the Master himself, "He that is not against us is for us?"

Such were the thoughts and anticipations the notice suggested to my mind, and on the arrival of this week I cut short a visit to the Guelph fair on purpose to devote two days to the convention.

Thursday morning, the meeting was in the Town Hall. It commenced with a prayer-meeting, which I did not attend, followed at 10 a.m. by a discourse on the *Two Natures*—the flesh and the spirit—by Professor Maury, of Washington. He gave, in my judgment, a masterly exposition of the subject. He was perhaps a little diffuse. He spoke an hour and a half, and the audience manifested some impatience, at which I was surprised, as every word was well worth hearing. In the afternoon Mr. Baker, of Camden, N. J., so I understood, gave a short discourse on the *Coming of the Lord*. This topic had been assigned to another speaker, who did not come. Mr. Baker had therefore to claim indulgence for treating a subject on which he had not had opportunity to make suitable preparation. This was followed by short platform addresses on the same subject, or rather on one phase of it, viz., "Will the Lord's personal coming be pre-millennial or post-millennial?"—addresses which were as uninteresting as the subject is obscure. At the close of the meeting it was announced that the evening meeting would be in the new church—Knox's Church I think it was called—the trustees having granted the use of it, on account of the large numbers attending the evening meetings, and the exercises would consist of several addresses. I was a little late in getting there, but was in time to hear two of them, delivered, as I understood, by two of the so-called clergymen from Britain. If they were, I would ask, in the name of common decency and common honesty, what churches they belong to or represent? The addresses were—well, I shall not attempt to characterize them. I would not say anything to hurt feelings, nor seem to oppose any sort of effort that was well meant, but as to filling in any measure the announced purpose of the Conference, or meeting the reasonable expectations of people who had incurred trouble and expense to attend—they were a downright failure, and if I do not mistake, the people of Galt in general, and the trustees of the church in particular, must feel ashamed of that meeting.

What topics were discussed on Tuesday and Wednesday I do not know; you will likely learn from other sources. The discourses of Thursday forenoon and afternoon indicated that none of the subjects I had surmised were likely to be touched. The evening meeting disgusted me, and I did not stay for Friday's proceedings.

Yours truly,
A LAYMAN.

[We give the above insertion not because we endorse its sentiments, but simply on the principle that public meetings are open to criticism, and because we were the means of bringing the meetings in question under the writer's notice. Perhaps others were differently and more favorably impressed.—Ed. B. A. P.]

It is stated that more than one million copies of the penny edition of the *Pilgrim's Progress* have been sold.

As to education in China, only about one in eight are able to read the writings of Confucius. None of the women can read. All Christians converts however are taught to read.

Woman's devotion and capacity finds a rare example in Mrs. Watson, now of Shemlan, Mount Lebanon. From the *Female Missionary Intelligencer* we learn that she is one of the earliest and most successful laborers for woman's education in the Levant. For more than thirty years this English lady has devoted herself and her fortune to the service of her Master, and has conducted schools in Athens, Candia, Valparaiso, Smyrna, Beyrout, Sidon, and the Lebanon. At the latter place she has established a number of schools for the natives, including Roman and Greek Catholics, Druses, Maronites, &c. She has also built a church at Shemlan. Recently three girls' schools have been opened by Mrs. Watson, in Lebanon villages, which are taught by native teachers, trained by herself. The greater part of the expenses in all her enterprises are borne by herself. Her last move was to buy land for the site of a boys' school.

The Union Question.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—You write sensibly in your issue of last week, when to those who are dissatisfied with the terms of Union now before the Church, you say, in substance, "speak now." And it is well that while declaring yourself to be "favourable to Union," you allow others who differ from you to express themselves in your paper. It is also well that in all our church courts the liberty referred to is not interfered with, and I hope never will. Give me therefore, a little space, not only to avow myself on the side of the dissatisfied, but also to say why I belong to them. I am not prepared to say that I would oppose the Union on the grounds alluded to in the earlier part of Mr. Middlemiss's letter; these are very delicate points, which, as you say, "it is all but impossible to introduce into a discussion." Besides I am not so acquainted with the discipline, &c., of one of the negotiating churches as to pronounce on the unavailability, or otherwise, of the contemplated Union. Statements, however, have been made to me—and it seems they are correct—which apart from another ground, make me at least cold-hearted in regard to the negotiations. But my principal ground of dissatisfaction is the absence of any article on the Basis of Union in regard to the Headship of Christ. How many of our office-bearers and members are dissatisfied on this account I do not know. But this I do know, and it is a noteworthy fact, that at last meeting of the General Assembly 45 members recorded their dissatisfaction. And it ought to be borne in mind that the Assembly is composed of only one third of the representative office-bearers, so that if all the official representatives had been present, the number of the dissatisfied would have been considerably larger. Would it then be wise in these circumstances to push on the Union without the promise which it withheld and prayed for? You yourself, Sir, put the question, and many will thank you for doing so. But as to the proposal you make, viz., of "framing one of the questions to be put at ordination or induction in the United Church," to secure a determination on the Headship of Christ, I am not so sure that it would be the best thing. For myself I would prefer an Article in the proposed Basis. It is true that this proposal has been repeatedly made, and as often failed. But failed, I think, from very insufficient reasons. We are told that years ago the Church of Scotland in Canada proposed an Act of Independence which all their ministers are required to assent to. Very true. But in consequence of the passing of that Act, it would be all the easier to secure from the same Church a similar article on the proposed Basis. I say so the more freely because anterior to the Union of 1861 I was not a Free Churchman, and have no desire to give to any of the Articles a retrospective look. But is there no risk of cases coming up in the future which would call in question the Headship of Christ? If not, the deliverances of the Confession and the Catechisms might be taken as enough. But without aducing the Colenso case, which was brought up in the Established Church, it is fair to ask, What of the Cardross case, which was brought up in an un-established Church; and from which it is obvious that even in this country a minister might invoke State interference when excommunicated from his own church courts; and that therefore it is well to have admissible evidence that said minister promises to repudiate such interference, so that even on his own promise he would have no footing to make the appeal in question. I am quite aware that in present circumstances an article on the Headship has been said to be unnecessary. In the Assembly's Minutes, page 46, sec. 2, it is said there is no greater necessity at the present time to testify on behalf of Christ's Headship, than on behalf of other doctrines such as that of the Atonement as a real substitutionary sacrifice; and as all such fundamental doctrines of the Word of God are set forth in the Confession of Faith, and catechisms adopted in the new basis, it is not necessary to make special mention of the Headship of Christ rather than of the doctrine of the Atonement, or other fundamental doctrines now called in question. Now, perhaps, Sir, I have no right to speak of this as merely plausible. But I have a right to say that to me it is unsatisfactory. If there is no special necessity at the present time to testify on behalf of Christ's Headship, is there any special necessity at the present time to testify on behalf of the "Westminster Confession of Faith," and "the Larger and Shorter Catechisms," as proposed in the 2nd article of the Basis? Then again, if to testify for the Headship is unnecessary at the present time, where was the necessity for it in 1788, or in 1848, or in 1861? Are we wiser than our own fathers who unfurled the flag of spiritual independence even after they were unconnected with the State; and if that flag is to be rolled up now, shall we not in effect be saying that our fathers might have spared their wind? But once more, it appears to me too presuming even "at the present time," to suppose it is impossible that in this country another Cardross case may ever arise, it is not impossible, there are some men who can go to the magistrato for strange purposes; and if over the question should be raised in Canada, whether a minister may appeal from a church to a civil court, in connection with matters of belief or character, let us have plain unmistakable words to fall back upon wherewith we may show that with us at least, such an appeal cannot be allowed. "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; but unto God the things that are God's." In the hope that your temperate suggestion of last week and the remonstrances made by the minority of the Church, may not be entirely without avail,

I remain, dear Sir,
Yours truly,
G. A.