

THE INTERCOLONIAL CONFERENCE.

THE Intercolonial Conference, which a few days ago was opened at Ottawa with imposing ceremonies and under the most auspicious circumstances was an occasion of more than ordinary importance, and may leave its mark deep in the history of our time. The bare fact of such a body of men drawn from the ends of the earth, yet all members of one great empire, meeting at a place which in the memory of men still living was a wilderness, is of itself most suggestive. What progress has been made in Canada which could provide in such a city a fit meeting place for so august an assemblage, and what progress has been made in modes of transport, that the members composing it could gather there in such comfort, in so short a time from the utmost ends of the earth; and what must be the strength of that common bond of kinship, and that common desire for closer intercourse which could bring them across oceans and continents to meet to confer together on matters of common interest? The opening of the Conference by the representative of royalty in person, in language so cordial, and expressing only peace and goodwill; the presence of a delegate from the Home Government to show its sympathy and render assistance; the distinguished men who were there to represent their governments in colonies which girdle the globe, every one of them empires in embryo; the great array of influential men of all classes and representatives of public bodies who composed the audience, made up such a gathering as one who sees or takes part in it is not likely ever to forget. In the speeches which were made, there evidently lay upon the minds of all a deep sense of the importance of the occasion, of responsibility resting upon the delegates, and of very possibly such far-reaching and momentous results which might follow their deliberations and conclusions, as might make the Conference one memorable in the history of the whole empire, and mark an epoch in her upward and onward progress and future development. In such circumstances it was most meet that his Excellency the Governor-General should give utterance to the "earnest hope," re-echoed by one of the speakers, "that their deliberations might through the one eternal source of wisdom and goodness be fraught with advantages to the empire and to the world at large."

Looking at the speeches as a whole, no thoughtful Canadian or well-wisher to the empire could but be struck and deeply impressed by their tone. One or two protested that there was no sentiment in the whole affair, that it was purely a matter of business. But sentiment would not be kept down, and material as our age is, yet we make bold to say that sentiment governs it to a far greater degree than most people imagine or would admit. Even in the matter of fact and purely business deliberations which must follow the opening, an undercurrent of sentiment of which no one can wholly divest himself, will unconsciously influence and shape the deliberations and conclusions of the Conference, and we believe for good. It will delight every patriotic Canadian, colonist, and Briton we may say, that loyalty to the Mother Country, and to the throne and person of Her Majesty the Queen was especially conspicuous, thanks to that far-seeing wisdom which now accords to all the colonies so large a measure of self-government. The distinguished place freely given to the Dominion as the first among all the colonies of the empire, of having suggested and taken the lead in bringing about the Conference, and its being held in her capital, cannot but be gratifying to us as Canadians. The desire for closer relation with the Mother Country, the fruitful parent of these colonial empires, and among themselves; the feeling of kinship and mutual and common interest expressed so warmly by all; the benefits which would in every way result from drawing these ties closer, were themes dwelt upon, and are in their possible world-wide bearing, of inspiring magnitude and grandeur. We shall not speak of Imperial Federation, words and an idea at which so many boggle, but unless some undreamed of infatuation seizes the Mother Country, or one or more of the greater colonies, which may for a time prevent it, some kind of closer and growing union among the various members of the vast empire over which Queen Victoria rules, is an event in the not distant future, as certain as any future event can be. When that shall come to pass, of which we hope this Conference may prove a happy augury, and if those principles of civil and religious liberty, and that regard for the word of God and its teachings in all their grand outlines continue to influence the nation in the future as they have done in the past, this union will be one

of the mightiest forces for good to the whole of mankind, which in the over-ruling providence of God has ever been called into existence.

MISSION CONTRIBUTIONS.

THE first of the annual collections, on behalf of the schemes of the church by order of the General Assembly, takes place on Sabbath the 22nd inst., the object being French Evangelization. It is most important that this collection be made on the Sabbath named. There is a growing tendency on the part of many ministers and others to overlook contributions to the schemes in the early part of the church year, and make a spurt towards the closing months with a view to make up lee-way. The result is a loss of thousands of dollars annually to our mission funds. It is therefore important that where contributions are raised by Sabbath collections, these collections be taken on the dates appointed by the General Assembly, and that they be promptly forwarded to the church Treasurers.

The amount paid for interest on advances during the year has become a serious item in our annual financial reports, and we see no good reason why congregations should hold back money till the last month or two of the ecclesiastical year instead of sending it immediately after each annual collection, or in the case of those who have missionary associations by quarterly instalments.

The Board of French Evangelization pay their missionaries quarterly, and as the current quarter's salaries are due on the first of August, it is most important that the Treasurer be put in possession of funds before that date.

In the interest of that fund, as well as in the interest of all our church schemes, the collection for French Evangelization should be taken on Sabbath, 22nd July, in every congregation and in every mission station of our church.

IRISH PRESBYTERIAN ASSEMBLY—Continued.

THE subject of elementary secular education, is one in which the Irish Church takes a deep interest, its object being to preserve the undenominational character of the National schools which is assailed both by the Roman Catholic Church and a section of the Episcopal Church, and a series of resolutions with this end in view, and the promotion generally of the cause of elementary education was proposed and passed.

An interesting report of mission work among the Jews was presented by Rev. Dr. J. Maxwell Rogers. This is carried on chiefly in Syria at eleven centres, one being Damascus. In day schools are 900 pupils, in Sunday schools 500, at Lord's Day service are 550, and 17 communicants have been added last year, making a total of nearly 200. Besides work in Syria, it is also carried on in Hamburg, Germany. The total amount raised for their Jewish mission, is about £9,500. In the addresses made the statement was repeated which we now often see, of a greatly extending and deepening interest in the Jew, and willingness to hear about Jesus Christ as the Messiah.

A long and somewhat warm debate arose upon the question of instrumental music consequent upon a report from the committee on that subject stating two cases in which the truce agreed upon to continue for three years, during which no introduction or use of an instrument was to take place, had been broken. The action and report of the committee in the case were adopted by the Assembly, precluding the use of an instrument, was adopted by a majority of three. It is evident that a strong feeling, both for, and against instrumental music in public worship exists, and that when the time of truce expires, another great effort will be made to allow the matter to be as it is with ourselves, optional with congregations.

Home mission work, especially among Roman Catholics in the south and west is vigorously carried on, and a very interesting report upon it was laid before the Assembly by the Rev. J. Courtenay Clark. The report and speeches made in connection with it were full of hope, encouragement and gratitude, the burden of them being "that there never was in the history of our country a grander opportunity for mission work. There is a manifest desire on the part of the people to hear the Gospel, and the Bible is being largely circulated."

Mission work is also carried on amongst Roman Catholics on the continent, chiefly in Spain. In this the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland assists the Irish church. It is chiefly educational and evangelistic. There is a college for training native evangelists and teachers, day school where children are taught the Scriptures and catechism, besides a training college in Puerto Santa Maria. Assistance is also given in yearly grants of money to mission work in Belgium, France and Italy.

The Assembly was brought to a close by an address from the moderator embracing many points of interest, commendatory of its tone and work as a whole, and speaking hopefully of the church's outlook. The 122nd Psalm was sung and the court dissolved with the benediction.

Books and Magazines.

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS, being the life of Jesus in the words of the four evangelists. Arranged by W. H. Withrow, D.D., F.R.S.C. Toronto: William Briggs.

This little book cannot but prove both most useful and interesting. The very reading of the life and words of Jesus Christ consecutively arranged in the order of time as far as may be, of itself in many cases throws a flood of light upon the whole sacred subject, and invests it with a new and wonderful interest. This is what Dr. Withrow has sought to do. Patient, reverent care and literary skill and taste, all of which the compiler is well known to possess, have enabled him to succeed in making such a compilation as renders the Gospel narrative most clear, interesting and attractive.

CHARLES WHITEHEAD, A FORGOTTEN GENIUS. By Mackenzie Bell, new edition, with an appreciation of Whitehead by Mr. Hall Caine. Ward, Lock & Bowden, Ltd., London and New York.

The fact of a monograph, written ten years ago on Charles Whitehead, being exhausted, has led to the issuing of this volume. Under the heads of poet, humorist, writer of sketches, romancist and historian, and novelist, the writer gives a full idea of his subject, of whose genius, George Augustus Sala, Christopher North, Dickens and others have spoken in high terms. All whose interest in Whitehead has been revived or awakened by the publication, in a cheap form, of his novel Richard Savage, will find their interest gratified by a perusal of this book.

DISCOURSE AND ADDRESS. By Rev. George Douglas, D.D., LL.D., Principal Wesleyan Theological College, Montreal. Toronto: William Briggs.

The Rev. Dr. Douglas was so universally known in Canada and far beyond it, as a man of learning, as a preacher and orator of remarkable power, fire and eloquence, and a brave and patriotic citizen, and has so recently passed away from us, that it is unnecessary to do more than to say that we have in this book what very many will desire to possess, a collection of some of his best known sermons and addresses with introductory notices of Dr. Douglas by the following well-known and distinguished Methodist leaders: Rev. Wm. Arthur, M.A., Rev. R. S. Foster, D.D., and Rev. John Potts, D.D.

RESCUED IN TIME; a tale. By Cornelius Wilson. Toronto: William Briggs.

Mr. Wilson is, we understand, a commercial traveller whose home is in Galt, Ontario. Few have a better opportunity of meeting and judging of all kinds of people, and of seeing the evils, the suffering and ruin wrought by drink, than the class to which the writer belonged. "While we have endeavored," says the author, "to present the evils of the drink traffic, we have at the same time tried to show that there is an all-wise Providence guiding the affairs of men." Mr. Wilson's tale is written in an interesting and popular style, its incidents are taken from life, and the good object he has had in view will no doubt be accomplished by this story.

SCEPTICAL HOMAGE TO CHRIST, BEING CONCESSIONS OF UNBELIEVERS TO THE PERSON AND TEACHING OF JESUS. By George Sexton, M.A., M.D., LL.D., Ph.D., author of Theistic Problems, etc.

This is a pamphlet upon a subject with which its author is specially well qualified to deal. It will be found very helpful by all who either on their own account or that of others, wish to examine the testimonies of unbelievers to the person and teaching of Jesus. Wm. Briggs, Methodist Book Room, Richmond St., Toronto.

BUNYAN'S CHARACTERS, SECOND SERIES. Lectures delivered in Free St. George's, Edinburgh. By Rev. Alexander White, D.D. Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, Edinburgh.

These lectures have become already so widely and well-known by their publication in religious journals that we need only say that those who have read them, and to those who have not, but wish a spiritual treat of a most unique and profitable kind, will here find these lectures bound up in a convenient and attractive form. Further commendation is needless.

BIG BROTHER; Cosy Corner Series. Joseph Knight Co., Boston.

This is one of a short series of short original stories, is reprints of favorite sketches of travel, etc., to while away a half hour in the railway car, in the country or at the seaside. Rab and his Friends, for example, forms one. Being got up in large, clear type, and light in the hand, they admirably serve the purpose.

THE HOOSIER SCHOOLMASTER. By Edward Eggleston. New York: Orange Judd Co. Toronto: William Briggs, 29, 33 Richmond St. West.

This is a new and revised Canadian edition, with twenty nine illustrations, of a well-known and favorite novel. We shall only say it is a capital story, and all who wish to see a certain phase of American life depicted with real skill and with absorbing interest will find it here.

The June *Missionary Review of the World* has for frontispiece an "Exact Reproduction of the Grass Hut at Ilala where Livingston died, built by Susa and Chuma." It also contains a cut of our Moderator, Rev. G. L. MacKay, D.D., Mrs. MacKay and their children. "Miracles of Missions, No. xxii," is by the Editor-in-chief. Other important articles are "The Unoccupied Mission Fields of the World," "Christendom's Rum Trade with Africa: a Modern Devil's Mission," "The Church at Home," an address delivered by Rev. Dr. MacKay of Fomosa at the Foreign Missionary Conference held in Toronto in February last. "The Cape General Mission," with a map of South Africa. "The Missionary Education Question." "Some features of Work Among the Freedmen"; and the Central Lutheran Hansland Association. All the other departments are full of information and stimulus to lovers of missions. In the *Field of Monthly Survey* is a map of the whole of Africa. Funk Wagnalls, 30 Lafayette Place, New York, U. S.