

The Religious World

The International Sunday-School Convention

The eighth International Sunday-School Convention met in Boston June 23-26. It was a delegate convention representing various evangelical denominations, and about seventeen hundred delegates were present from various parts of the country. It is estimated that these delegates represented not far from 12,000,000 Sunday-school pupils. This is called an International Convention, but in reality it includes only representatives from this country and Canada. It is one grand division of the world's convention which assembles once in six years. At this gathering the Sunday-school lessons for six or seven years are planned. The last Convention arranged a course of lessons up to the year 1899. The object of laying out work so far in advance is that commentators and those preparing lesson helps may have plenty of time for their work. The committee arranging the lessons represents various denominations and includes fifteen American and seven English members. The meetings were held in Tremont Temple and Park Street Church. Addresses were given by such men as Mr. Moody, Drs. Lorimer, A. F. Schaffner, W. A. Duncan, George M. Boynton, J. A. Worden, B. B. Tyler, and others equally prominent in service through the Sunday-school. Nothing in the Convention has interested us so much as the account of the Home Department, which aims at the promotion of Bible study on the part of all the members of the churches. There are between thirty-five and forty thousand sub-departments connected with the Methodist Episcopal Church, many in Congregational churches, and the interest in the department is decidedly on the increase. It seems to us that what are known as the Blakeslee Lessons offer, as a rule, a better method for the pursuance of study at home than those of the International Committee. This International Committee does not lay out the lessons for all the Sunday-schools of the country, and the whole amount of Sunday-school work cannot be judged solely from those represented in the Convention. Many local schools, like that of the Park Church in Elmira and of the Center Church in New Haven, have carefully planned systems of lessons of their own, while a still larger and a growing number are pursuing the Blakeslee Lessons. It will be seen, therefore, that this great Convention, taken in connection with the various other Bible schools which are held throughout the country, indicates an expanding enthusiasm in the study of the Holy Scripture, which is a most encouraging sign of the times.

The Pan-Presbyterian Council

The sixth Triennial Meeting of the Pan-Presbyterian Council convened in Glasgow June 17. Previous meetings have been held in Edinburgh, Philadelphia, Belfast, London, and Toronto. Representatives were present from almost all the nations in which there are Presbyterian churches. The delegates represented more than 4,500,000 communicants. The first sessions were held in the Cathedral. The opening sermon was preached by the Rev. J. Marshall Lang, D.D., of the Barony Church, Glasgow. Dr. Lang is the successor in the pastorate of that church of the famous Dr. Norman Macleod. His subject was "The Building Up of the Body of Christ." He considered the life of the Church in its three aspects of worship, holiness, and brotherhood. It is not a mere federation of sects, but a spiritual organism vitally related to Christ. The work of the ministry is the building up of this body. The standards are the protection of the body. Christ is not a mere ethical teacher, but the Saviour of the world. In concluding, Dr. Lang spoke of the three notes of the body of Christ: its spirituality, its catholicity, and its unity. He denied that the Presbyterian churches were founded by Calvin; they were founded in the Apostles and the Prophets. He did not believe that Presbyterianism has all the truth. Other addresses were given by Dr. William H. Roberts, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States, who spoke on "Protestantism as a Distinctive Religious and Political Force;" Principal Dykes, who spoke on "The Anglican View of the Church;" Professor Orr, who spoke on "The Church as a Witness to Revealed Truth;" Dr. Stalker, who spoke on "The Educative Influence of the Church on Social Life;" Principal Stewart, of St. Andrews, whose subject was "Preaching;" and J. A. Campbell, M.P., who spoke on "Presbyterianism: Its Influence in Social Philanthropy." We cull a few sentences showing the drift of the thought. Principal Orr said that it was his conviction that the Church suffered, not from too much theology, but from too little. Doctrines are treated in a superficial, haphazard, arbitrary, dilettante way. There is need of a theologian who will help men to reconstruct their beliefs in a living way. Dr. Stalker said that there were plenty of churches in Glasgow with over fifty elders and deacons; that the office-bearers are chosen for their character alone; and he thinks one duty of the elders ought to be to provide

Christian work for all the members of the congregation who are willing to undertake it. Principal Stewart said as to reading sermons *versus* extemporaneous address: "In so far as the sermon aims at instruction, it is better to write and read it; but exhortation is most effective when sped direct from heart to heart." A strong paper was presented by Dr. David Waters, of Newark, N. J., on "The Reformed View of the Church of God." Indeed, all the papers seem to have dealt with some feature of the Church, the main line of their development being the spread of religious thought and of the kingdom of Christ throughout the continent and the world. It was decided to hold the next meeting of the Council in Washington.

The Evangelical Alliance

As we go to press, the International Evangelical Alliance begins in London its tenth conference of the Christians of all nations. The meetings will begin at Exeter Hall. Between three and four hundred delegates have intimated their intention to be present, and they represent nearly all the great nations of Christendom, with many from mission lands. The meeting which was held on Monday evening last was intended to be a kind of international *conversazione* and reception, at which a number of the principal representatives would speak. Among the subjects to be considered at this conference are, "The True Unity of the Church as Distinguished from the Proposed Reunion of Christendom," "Christian Work on the Continent," "The Evangelical Faith: Helps and Hindrances," "Christian Work Among the Young," "The Evangelical Alliance and Religious Liberty," "Christian Co-operation," "International Christian Philanthropy." The list of speakers is long and representative. Most of the meetings will be held in the Conference Hall at Mildmay Park. This Conference Hall is related to the Mildmay Mission, and seats about three thousand people. Our readers will remember the great meeting of the Evangelical Alliance held in New York in 1873.

The Archbishop of York to his Priests

Dr. McLagan, the Archbishop of York, recently gave an address to the priests who are members of the Pastoral Order of the Holy Ghost resident in the province of York. His subject was "The Priestly Life." In the course of his remarks the Archbishop said: "A man may be an excellent lawyer or soldier or doctor, whatever the character of his moral life, but the life of the priest is really part of his work. His life is to be a witness for Christ. Of all his sermons his life will be the most eloquent, the most intelligible, and the most influential. His people will be more affected by what he is than by what he does." In enlarging upon this thought, he said: "The life of the priest, like the love of his Master, may be regarded as fourfold in its dimensions. It must have breadth and length and depth and height. Its breadth lies in culture and catholic sympathy; its length in patient perseverance and onward progress; its depth in thoroughness and absolute sincerity; its height in heavenly-mindedness and in holy joy." From what followed in the enlargement of these thoughts we make one or two quotations: "The foundations of the priestly life must be laid deep; not in the superficial soil of emotional experience, of literary leisure, or of social advantage, but on the rock of conscious union with the Incarnate God, and in the strength of his indwelling presence, sustained by a living faith in the divine commission, 'As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.'" "The life of the priest ought to be a spiritual life of the highest attainment, the highest Christian life. It is his calling and his responsibility to show in himself the power of that Gospel which he preaches, and that grace which he administers. What every Christian ought to be, that he is bound to be in the most perfect manner and measure." "The truest elevation of priestly life is found, not in high position, not in high attainments, not in the high esteem of admiring congregations, nor in the high claims of spiritual power; but in upward longings, in heavenward aspirations, and the fervor of holy desire; in deepening love and growing likeness to the beautiful Shepherd, and in 'looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God.'" Dr. McLagan always emphasizes the spiritual side in his official utterances to his workers. The selections which we have made from this address are typical of most of his words to the clergy of his province.

Social Settlements in London

We have received many inquiries from persons intending to visit London concerning social settlements in that city. A few words may be helpful to them and to others. The most prominent social settlements in London are Toynbee Hall, Oxford House, Mansfield House, and Browning Hall. This is by no means a complete list, but it contains the ones which probably will be the most interesting to tourists. All except Browning Hall are in East London, and easily found from the directories. Toynbee Hall was the first of the settlements, but its work has somewhat

changed. It is now a kind of university in the East End. It appeals more largely to the better class of the poor, especially to those who aspire to knowledge and are desirous of rising. It is doing a valuable work, but does not largely reach the laboring and outcast classes. Oxford House is located at Bethnal Green, and represents the High Church party of the Establishment. Its head worker is the Rev. Mr. Ingraham, and he is surely an enthusiast in his mission. This settlement has established many clubs. In a certain way it reaches the laboring people; but more in providing them with amusement and pleasant and agreeable surroundings than in otherwise influencing their life. It is quite as worthy of study as Toynbee Hall. To our mind more interesting still is Mansfield House, Canning Town, located in the vicinity of the Victoria Docks. Mr. Percy Alden is the head worker. This settlement has two departments—one for men and one for women. Of the latter Miss Cheetham is the head worker. More than any other settlement, this reaches the lower strata of the laboring classes. It is peculiar in the hold it has upon men, and no one of all the settlements in London better repays careful study. The meeting which is held on Sunday evening for the discussion of current events in their ethical relations is especially worth visiting. The latest of the prominent settlements in London is Browning Hall, of which the Rev. F. Herbert Stead, a younger brother of Mr. W. T. Stead, is the head worker. Mr. and Mrs. Stead are peculiarly bright and able people. Few are more cultured, and few represent in themselves a finer type of life. Their settlement is in South London, in the midst of what Mr. Charles Booth has proved to be even more desolate than the East. Before entering this field Mr. Stead had been a pastor in Leicester, and for some years had edited the "Independent." From what we know of the workers we should say that Toynbee Hall should be studied as an educational center among the poor; Oxford House for its men's amusement clubs; Mansfield House as the one which is doing most to reach and ennoble the laboring men, and to relieve present distress; and Browning Hall as the one where there is probably the most intelligent and wise study of the many phases of the social problem. Of the other settlements we will mention only that at Bermondsey, under the patronage of the English Wesleyans. This is also said to be doing an excellent work, but with it we are not personally familiar. Visitors are cordially welcomed at the various houses, but perhaps it ought to be said that care should be taken not to impose too much on the courtesy of the workers. There is danger, as the number of Americans interested in such studies increases, that their presence, instead of being a help, may become a burden on the hospitable and always courteous residents.

Georg Ebers not a Buddhist

The report has recently been circulated in this country that Dr. Georg Ebers, the great German Egyptologist, had become a Buddhist. If we are correctly informed, the source of the rumor was with those who have desired to claim Dr. Ebers as a Theosophist. The "Independent" recently published a letter from him to his friend, Mrs. Elizabeth A. Reed, of Chicago, which contains an explicit denial. We give the following extract from the letter:

No, worthy friend, I have not become a Buddhist; I remain Christian to the end, and also educate my children as Christians. I teach them to love the Holy One, as earnestly as my mother taught these truths to me, her only son; and my warm-hearted Christian wife stands side by side with me in this matter. It naturally follows that I would be glad to discredit the wonderful bit of information (?) which had its origin in America, and show your people that nothing is further from me than to become disloyal to Christ by attaching myself to any other religion. You, dear friend, will do me a great favor if you will impart to your countrymen the fact that I remain that which I have always been—a Christian. My convictions are grounded upon earnest thinking, and especially upon outer and inner experience, upon which I can rely.

Truly yours,

(Signed) GEORG EBERS.

Books on Immortality

Mr. R. Ernest Jones, of the Theological College of Bala, North Wales, recently wrote to Mr. Gladstone asking him to name the books on the subject of Immortality which he had found most helpful. Mr. Jones reports that Mr. Gladstone's reply was: (1) Dr. Salmond's "Christian Doctrine of Immortality;" (2) Dean Church's Sermons; (3) Dr. George S. Barrett's "Intermediate State." We are rather surprised that Tennyson's "In Memoriam" was not included in the list, for, while it is not a treatise, it is full of suggestive arguments which have the force of demonstrations. It has been said, and wisely we think, that no truer word on that subject has been spoken in this generation than in Tennyson's immortal poem.

Comity in Utah

We have referred before to the project of establishing a Sheldon Jackson College in Utah. The facts are simply that there has been a union institution in Salt Lake City, in the midst of a scanty population where it is possible at the best to secure but few students. It is now proposed to introduce another, not on the ground that there is any need

for it, either as a Christian or an educational institution. It is to be erected, if at all, solely in the interests of a denomination. Into any details of the controversy we do not propose to enter. If the population were sufficient to make another institution desirable, there would surely be no criticism; but the idea of starting another college and appealing to the Christian public for means to carry it on, when there is no real need whatever, seems to us indefensible. This is said, not in the interest of the existing institution, but in the belief that it ought to be easy to find some basis on which all concerned could unite, and so save the scandal and extravagance of having two institutions where only one is required.

Presbyterians and Mormons

We have received from the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Utah a report setting forth reasons why Christians cannot fellowship with the Mormons. The first thought we have in reading the report is, Who ever supposed that they could? It may, however, be a practical question in Utah, and we will therefore give our readers an outline of the report. Ten reasons are given why Christians cannot fellowship with Mormons:

1. The Mormons claim to be the only true Church.
2. They hold the Book of Mormon and doctrine of the Covenants of equal authority with the Bible.
3. The Mormons make faith in Joseph Smith essential to true religion.
4. They insist on faith in the doctrine of the Mormon priesthood.
5. They teach a doctrine of God antagonistic to the Scriptures.
6. They teach that Adam is God.
7. They are polytheists.
8. They teach an unscriptural doctrine of salvation.
9. They believe in polygamy.
10. They teach that God is a polygamist.

The reasons given by the Presbytery are certainly sufficient.

Presbyterianism in Scotland

The "British Weekly" of May 28 contains a condensed and comprehensive summary of the present condition of the two largest branches of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, which will interest others than Presbyterians in this country. We make the following extract:

The reports of the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland for the past year have now been published. The total income of the Established Church from all sources showed a considerable decline. On the other hand, the number of members has increased by over 6,000. Owing to the way in which the Free Church lists of members and adherents are kept, it is difficult to say what the precise increase this year numbers, but it is over 4,000. The increase in contributions amounts to the large sum of £47,223. Of this a good proportion comes from legacies, but the growth in ordinary contributions is notable and most encouraging. Mr. J. M. McCandlish, one of the ablest financiers in the country, in giving his report to the Free Church Assembly, said that the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church had raised between them this year considerably over £1,000,000.

This is a noble financial showing, and a wide contrast with the condition of things in the Presbyterian Church in the United States, where the debt of the missionary societies is nearly \$300,000. It shows, for one thing, that where Presbyterianism is theologically most liberal it is also financially most generous—a good fact to remember.

Brief Mention

We are informed by cable that the Pope, at a secret consistory held June 22, created four new Cardinals and twelve Italian Bishops. The prelates elevated to the cardinalate were Monsignors Ferrata, Cretoni, Jacobini, and Agliardi, respectively Papal Nuncios at Paris, Madrid, Lisbon, and Vienna.

The seventh annual Convention of the Young People's Christian Union of the Universalist Church will be held in Jersey City, N. J., July 8-14. This organization occupies the same relation to the Universalist denomination as do the Christian Endeavor, Epworth League, and Baptist Union to other denominations. Its various departments are devoted to Charity, Christian Citizenship, a Post-Office Mission, Church Extension, Flower Mission, and Junior Work.

An enterprising religious newspaper in London recently offered prizes for reports concerning the length of sermons preached on a given Sabbath. Nearly three hundred responses were sent in. The longest sermons reported were by a Presbyterian minister in the far north of Scotland and a Methodist preacher in England. Each of these discourses occupied an hour and twenty-eight minutes. The shortest sermon in the list was by a Primitive Methodist brother, and was only five and three-quarters minutes long.

During the summer three of the editors of *The Outlook* expect to take their vacations in Europe. Dr. and Mrs. Abbott, with other members of their family, sailed on Saturday last on the Mohawk, of the Atlantic Transport Line. Dr. Bradford, accompanied by his daughter, sailed on Wednesday on the Majestic. He goes to accept an invitation extended to him by the Kensington Congregational Church of London, to supply its pulpit for two months during the illness of its pastor. Dr. Whiton expects to sail later, and will preach in various pulpits during his absence. All will be absent about two months.

Our readers have already seen in the secular press the appeal of Dean Farrar for funds to aid in preserving Canterbury Cathedral from destruction. He says at least £20,000 is required to make the Cathedral secure for another century. Half the sum has been raised by private exertion, but ten thousand more is needed. He says it should be a matter of national concern; that the Dean and Chapter are unable to keep in repair the glorious fabric intrusted to their charge. The appeal is made to Americans as well as to English. For ourselves, we cannot see why the appeal need go outside the city of Canterbury. The Cathedral makes the city, and it is worth far more to it than would be required to keep it in perfect order. Short-sighted people, however, belong to no one nation, and it is not surprising that Dean Farrar, whom Americans admire and honor, should feel obliged to make this appeal outside his cathedral city.