

historically and independently of his faith, his own department.

In conclusion the writer says:

"The last word in this matter has not by any means yet been spoken. This discussion has for its object chiefly to clear up the problem itself and to bring about its discussion. To-day, however, it must be clearly stated that the challenge is in modern theology of being 'atheistic' contains some truth, but nothing that need frighten us."—*Trinclusion in a Definite* THE LITERARY DIGEST

THREE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS.

OF special interest as emphasizing the organized activities of young people in the Christian Church were three international conventions which met during the last week of June and the first two weeks of July. These were the eleventh International Sunday School Convention of North America which met at Toronto, Canada; the seventh International Convention of the Epworth League, in Denver, Col.; and the twenty-second International Christian Endeavor Convention, in Baltimore. The Toronto convention was attended by about two thousand delegates, representing the principal evangelical denominations. Arrangements were made, after considerable opposition, for an optional advance series to be added to the uniform lesson series. From reports of the meetings we gather the following statistics:

"Sunday schools in North America, 5,103,909; teachers, 1,556,947; scholars, 12,076,232; total Sunday school membership, 127,547,541; number of home departments, 10,371; membership of home departments, 392,839; graded home membership, 198,223; scholars received into churches during past year, 21,716,363."

This convention is generally acclaimed a practical and vital bond of union between the various evangelical churches. The New York *Church Economist* (undenominational), remarks:

"The great gathering at Toronto was supremely important because its dispensation is of the future. Most church assemblies and courts deal with the present age, but a Sunday school congress legislates for the generation to come."

"In another particular such a convention is momentous beyond the ordinary. Meetings for 'grown-ups' are largely critical or analytical; a Sunday school conference is essentially constructive. It deals with humanity in the highest, in the deepest, in the new forces in motion."

The Denver convention of the Epworth League, the Young People's Society of Methodism, was attended by close upon twelve thousand delegates and visitors. The league has a total membership of 2,500,000. A movement was inaugurated tending toward the evangelization of the United States.

The Christian Endeavor is an interdenominational society. At the Baltimore convention it received with enthusiasm the following suggestions of President Clark toward a program for the organization: "A million new Christian Endeavorers; a million new churchgoers; a million new church members; a million new dollars for denominational missions." From the report of Mr. Von Ogden Vogt, the general secretary of the society, we gather the following facts:

"There are today in the whole of Christendom 667,722 societies of Christian Endeavor of which 49,339 are in the United States and Canada. This is a net gain of 2,014 in the year past after allowing for societies disbanded. The leading denominations in the movement in the United States, in order of the membership of their societies, are Presbyterian, Congregational, Disciples of Christ, Baptist, Cumberland Presbyterian, Methodist Protestant, Lutheran, Dutch Reformed, Methodist Episcopal, and United Brethren. In Canada the Methodists have the strongest contingent; the Presbyterians are second."

Mr. William Shaw, addressing the convention, said in part:

"Twenty-five years ago the ruling idea in the Church was that children should be seen and not heard. The result was few were

seen and none were heard. Twenty-five years of Christian Endeavor have resulted to the Church what it is not of the young people—that the kingdom of heaven is not benighted."

"Eminent men have said that there is no organization in the world to-day exerting a more potent influence for good among the nations and none that have done more to bring the denominations together in the spirit of fellowship and cooperation than Christian Endeavor. It has revolutionized the attitude of the Church toward the young people and the attitude of the young people toward the church. It has transformed young people from lookers-on into one of the most enterprising and vigorous departments of the church."

RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE NEGRO.

MR. BOOKER T. WASHINGTON makes the criticism that practically all writers on the subject have discussed the religious life of the negro as though it were something fixed and unchangeable. "They have not sufficiently emphasized the fact that the negro people, in respect to their religious life, have been, almost since they landed in America, in a process of change and growth." The negro came to America with the pagan ideas of his African ancestors; under slavery he acquired a number of Christian ideas; and at the present time "he is slowly learning what those ideas mean in practical life." As indicating the distance the negro has already traveled in his religious conceptions, Mr. Washington writes (in *The North American Review*, July) as follows:

"In the religion of the native African there was, generally speaking, no place for future reward or punishment, no heaven and no hell, as we are accustomed to conceive them. For this reason the negro had little sense of sin. He was not tortured by doubts and fears, which are so common and, we sometimes feel, so necessary a part of the religious experience of Christians. The evils he knew were present and physical."

"During the period of servitude in the New World, the negro race did not wholly forget the traditions and habits of thought that it brought from Africa. But it added to its ancestral stock certain new ideas."

"Slavery, with all its disadvantages, gave the negro race, by way of recompense, one great consolation, namely, the Christian religion and the hope and belief in a future life. . . . This hope and this aspiration, which are the theme of so many of the old negro hymns, found expression in the one institution that slavery permitted to the negro people—the negro church. It was natural and inevitable that the negro church, coming into existence as it did under slavery, should permit the religious life of the negro to express itself in ways almost wholly detached from morality. There was little in slavery to encourage the sense of personal responsibility."

It has been said, continues Mr. Washington, that the negro church is too emotional. He points out that another disability is that it lacks a sufficiently definite connection with the moral and social life of the negro people. On this point he writes:

"Could this connection be effected in a large degree, it would give to the movement for the upbuilding of the race the force and inspiration of a religious motive. It would give to the negro religion more of that missionary spirit, the spirit of service, that it needs to purge it of some of the worst elements that still cling to it."

"The struggle to attain a higher level of living, to get land, to build a home, to give their children an education, just because it demands more earnestness and steadfastness of purpose, gives a steadiness and moral significance to the religious life, which is the thing the negro people need at present."

"A large element of the negro church must be recalled from its apocalyptic vision back to the earth; the members of the negro race must be taught that there are religious emotions that are guided by no definite idea and are devoted to no purpose save a vain."

Pope Pius X. has sent a personal letter to the Mikado of Japan, conveying the thanks of the Roman Church to the latter's attitude toward the Roman Catholic missionaries in Manchuria. The letter has reference to territory where, when Russia was in the ascendancy, missionaries were made to feel acutely the opposition of the Catholic Church.