

## Our Contributors.

### THE THREE ELEMENTS OF LIVE CHURCHES.

BY KNOXONIAN.

The correspondent of the *British Weekly* who was commissioned to "write up" the Wesleyan Conference that met in Sheffield a few days ago divides the members into three classes:

- THE ELECTRICALLY AGGRESSIVE.
- THE STUBBORNLY CONSERVATIVE.
- THE THOUGHTFULLY PROGRESSIVE.

We have no doubt that this division is substantially correct. We think so because the aforesaid correspondent writes just like a man who knows what he is writing about. Every writer does not write that way. There is another reason why we feel pretty sure the division is a good one. The ministers of every live church on earth might be roughly divided in the same way. The ministers of a dead church all belong to the second class. They are stubbornly conservative and violently opposed to everything that would help to put a little life into them. A corpse must always be conservative. It never introduces changes of any kind. There is no such thing as a radical corpse.

#### THE ELECTRICALLY AGGRESSIVE.

The members of this class are restless, feverish, excitable men. As a rule they are weak and not unfrequently have rooms to let in the upper storey. They expect to do everything in a minute and what they can't do in a minute they cannot do at all. Like the bull that Principal Grant used before his Niagara audience the other day, they have more dash than discretion. Addressing a few pleasant words of truth and common sense to those people who think five millions of Canadians could easily surround sixty millions of Americans, the Principal said:

Can Canada defend itself? Some people, plucky fellows and I admire them for it, say, "Yes, we would defend ourselves." I admire the pluck of the bull that charged the railway train. But I say nothing about his discretion. (Laughter.) When you pick up his remains you will say nothing about his pluck.

If one were reasonably sure of his sanity and of the purity of his motives one might admire the zeal of the man who proposes to convert a whole neighbourhood at one meeting. It is possible to admire the zeal of the man who says he can preach every night for three months, though no judicious person would vouch for the quality of the preaching after the fourth or fifth night. There is something to be said even in favour of the man who wishes to plant a church on every concession though everybody knows that Presbyterian influence for good is greatly weakened in many localities by too many churches. In fact aggressiveness is just the element most needed by many congregations, and many people. To be *pro*-gressive a church must be *aggressive*, but aggressiveness must be regulated by common sense. The bull of the aforesaid illustration was a highly aggressive animal but he didn't make much headway against the train.

The electrically aggressive class might be sub-divided. One of the leading sub-divisions would be the hysterically aggressive. This class never does any good. The devil is never afraid of hysterical people.

#### THE STUBBORNLY CONSERVATIVE.

This class is fairly well represented in the Presbyterian Church. Some of its members speak Gaelic. The stubbornly conservative man opposes changes of every kind. He thinks the best work he can do for the Lord is to oppose what he calls innovations. Of late years his attention has been mainly directed in Canada against the melodeon and the singing of such hymns as "Jesus lover of My Soul" and "Nearer my God to Thee."

On the melodeon question the stubbornly conservative man sometimes displays marked peculiarities. One is that after disturbing his own congregation for years, and perhaps almost destroying it, he quietly takes a pew in a neighbouring church where they have a large pipe organ in the audience room and one or two melodeons in the other rooms. He cannot stand the little organ in his old church but his conscience allows him to endure, perhaps enjoy, the big organ in the church that he has moved to. Perhaps the difficulty was in the size of the instrument. The little thing hurt the conscience but the big one gives no offence. The same peculiarity is sometimes seen in regard to hymns. The stubbornly conservative man's conscience will not allow him to sing a hymn or paraphrase in his own church. He raises a fearful row on the hymn question, leaves his own congregation and goes straight into a church in which they sing hymns at every service. These are some of the peculiarities of the stubbornly conservative man.

If all men were of the stubbornly conservative type what kind of a world would this be. No change would ever have been made in anything since the days of Cain and Abel. Stubbornly conservative men may have their uses but until railway trains can be made to run by the brakes their uses must be largely negative.

#### THE THOUGHTFULLY PROGRESSIVE

are out of all sight the best men. They don't try to go too fast and they are not too slow. They avoid the extremes of hysterical aggressiveness and asinine stubbornness. They don't try to run the train by the brakes as the stubbornly conservative men do; nor do they try to run it sixty miles an hour without brakes as the hysterically aggressive men try. If Christopher

Columbus had been a stubbornly conservative man he never would have discovered America. If he had been a hysterically aggressive man he would have set out on the voyage in a birch bark canoe.

In a young country like Canada the thoughtfully progressive is beyond all comparison the most useful kind of man in Church and State.

### ECUMENICAL COUNCILS.

FROM THE POSTHUMOUS PAPERS OF THE LATE MR. THOMAS HENNING.

#### THE FIFTH GENERAL COUNCIL.

was held in Constantinople in 533. Here the Emperor Justinian ruled, the Pope and assembled bishops being the servile instruments of a vicious court. Justinian aspired to the dignity of a profound divine, and a legislator of Christian doctrine as well as of Christian civil affairs. The Church was not now disturbed by dogmas concerning the nature of God, the Persons of the Trinity, or the Union of the Divine and Human Nature of Christ. The orthodoxy or heterodoxy of certain writings by bishops but recently dead became the subject of Imperial edicts, of a fifth so-called Ecumenical Council and a religious war between the east and the west. Under the name of the three chapters, the emperor and the obsequious council condemned certain works of Theodorus, of Mopsuestia, Meodoret, of Cyrus, and Ibas, of Edessa. These works had been suspected of Nestorianism. The East generally received the dictates of the Imperial theologian; while the West as generally refused compliance. Vigilius, who was now Pope of Rome, had gained his position by false accusation, cruel oppression and perhaps by the murder of his predecessor, the gentle Silverius. Being summoned to Constantinople, he set forth loaded with the imprecations of the Roman people, and assailed with volleys of stones, "May famine and pestilence pursue thee; evil hast thou done to us, may evil overtake thee wherever thou art," was the farewell given him by his fellow-citizens. At first he refused to condemn the Three Chapters, but not many months had passed before the Pope at the head of a council of seventy bishops issued his infallible anathema against the Three Chapters. The West at once threw off its allegiance to him, and his clergy revolted against the renegade Pope. He again revoked his concessions, recanted his recantation and prevailed on the Emperor to summon this council. He would not submit to its decisions, however, and apprehensive of violence took refuge in a sanctuary. The Emperor and his troops attempted to drag him out by the feet; he clung to the altar and being a large and powerful man the pillars of the canopy gave way and the whole fell crumbling upon him. The populace prevented the officers from offering further violence. After again acquitting the Three Chapters of heresy, and once again condemning them, he was allowed to return to Rome, but died in Sicily before reaching his See. Such was the miserable fate of a Pope who came into direct collision with the Imperial despotism of Constantinople. It is impossible not to observe how much the Papal power owed to the position of Rome. Even its freedom, far more its authority, arose out of its having ceased to be the seat of Imperial government, and the residence of the Emperor.

It might have been supposed that Nestorianism, with its natural offspring Eutychianism, had exhausted or worn out the contest concerning the union of the Godhead and the manhood in the Saviour. The Church had asserted the existence of the two natures—man with all his perfect properties—God with all his perfect attributes, it had refused to keep them in almost antagonistic separation with the Nestorians—to blend them into one with Eutyches. But the Godhead and the Manhood, thus each distinct and complete in itself, yet so intimately conjoined where began the divergence: where closed the harmony? Did the will, not merely the consentient, but absolutely identical will, and one unconflicting operation of that will, having become an active energy, perform all the works of the Redeemer, submit to and undergo His passion, or did each nature preserve its separate independence of will, and only by the agreement of these two at least theoretically conflicting wills, produce the harmonious action of the two natures. Those who held the identity of wills were called Monothelites, and differed only in form from the Monophysites. As usual the East and West held directly antagonistic views on this subject. The Emperor Heraclius attempted a reconciliation of the two parties by means of an intermediate formula, which bore that Christ had accomplished His work of redemption by one manifestation of His will as the God-man. Several bishops sanctioned this formula, and Honorius of Rome was induced to declare himself, in this sense, a Monothelite. It is supposed however that he had misapprehended the question. The unity he asserted was not an identity but a harmony. His main argument was, that the sinless human nature of Christ being ignorant of that other law in the members warring against the law of the mind, there could be no conflicting or adverse will in the God-man. The Popes who succeeded Honorius amply retrieved by their resolute opposition to Monothelitism what was considered the delinquency of that prelate. The religious war continued without abatement between Rome and Constantinople, and Pope Martin, who condemned at the first Lateran Synod at Rome the views of the Emperor, was brought in chains to Constantinople and declared guilty of treason and banished to Cherson, where he died of hunger and cold. The monk Maximus, who refused to deny the two wills in Christ, was sent into exile, his tongue and his right hand

having been cut off. At length Constantine the bearded (Pogonnatus), seized with a desire to re-unite the east and the west under one creed, called a general council at Constantinople in 680, which was the sixth Ecumenical Council. The doctrine of the two wills carried the day in the Council, and anathemas were hurled against every Monothelite—including Honorius, Bishop of Rome, who was stigmatized as a heretic. The impeccability of the Bishop of Rome was not as yet an article of the Roman creed.

At the commencement of the eighth century image worship had attained its acme in the east. Images were selected to be god-parents; part of the colouring which they had been painted was scratched off and mixed with the sacramental wine; the consecrated bread was first laid upon images that so the faithful might receive from the hands of these saints the body of the Lord, etc. Under these circumstances Leo III, the Isaurian, one of the most vigorous of Byzantine Emperors, issued an edict in 726, ordaining that the images should be placed higher up on the walls of churches, to prevent the people from kissing them. All peaceable measures against this favourite mode of worship were frustrated by the opposition of Germanus the patriarch of Caist, the monks and the populace. A second edict, issued in 730, ordered the entire removal of images from every church. In the execution of this order tumults occurred and much blood was shed. Rome lent the whole weight of its authority to the worship of images, and at a synod held (in Rome) in 732 Gregory III pronounced an anathema against all opponents of this practice. Constantine V. son and successor of Leo, was even a more determined opponent of image worship than his father. He summoned an Ecumenical Council to sanction his principles. About 350 bishops assembled at Constantinople in 754. Rome refused to send legates, and no patriarch was present. The Council excommunicated those who made any image of Christ, and condemned in the most sweeping manner every kind of reverence paid to images. These decrees were mercilessly enforced. Thousands of monks were scourged, transported, driven round the circus for the amusement of the populace with nuns in their arms, or obliged to marry. Many had their eyes put out, their ears or noses cut off, and monasteries were converted into barracks or stables. In the Byzantine empire both monasticism and image worship were almost extirpated. Rome however, protested against the decrees to the Council and Stephen III. issued a dreadful anathema against all opponents of images in a Lateran Synod, 769.

Leo IV., son of Constantine, shared the views of his father but wanted his energy. His consort, Irene, was, however, a zealous image worshipper, and Leo dying suddenly, she seized the opportunity of restoring image worship. She convoked another council at Caist, in 786, which was attended by deputies from Pope Hadrian I. But the Imperial Guard broke into their place of meeting and dispersed the Council. The following year (787) Irene convoked at Nice another—the Seventh Ecumenical Council. The number of ecclesiastics who met is variously estimated from 330 to 387, of whom at least 130 were monks or abbots. The Council annulled the decrees of 754, sanctioned homage to images, passing the following canon, as they declared, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. "With the venerable and life-giving cross shall be set up the venerable and holy images, whether in colours, in Mosaic work, or any other material, within the consecrated churches of God, on the sacred vessels and vestments, on the walls and on the tablets, on houses and in highways. The images, *i.e.*, of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, of the immaculate mother of God, of the honoured angels, of all saints and holy men. These images shall be treated as holy materials, worshipped, kissed, etc. With one voice the Council all broke out into a long exclamation, "We all believe, we all assent, we all subscribe. This is the faith of the apostles, this is the faith of the Church. Anathema on all who do not worship images. To Gregory of Rome everlasting glory," etc. Succeeding emperors tried to extirpate such practices. Once more a woman, Theodora, convoked a Synod at Caist, in 842, which again introduced the worship of images. Since that period, opposition to this practice ceased in the Eastern Church, and the day on which the Synod of 842 enacted the decree in its favour (the 19th Feb.), has been celebrated by the Greek Church as the "Feast of Orthodoxy."

This led soon after to the total disruption of the bond between the East and the West—the severance of the Italian Province from the Byzantine Empire, and of course put an end to what could properly be called Ecumenical Councils. We have seen, and no doubt have been disappointed with the repulsive aspect which Christianity assumed in the very assemblies which should represent it in its best and most attractive form. But let us remember as Dean Milman wisely observes, "A General Council is not the cause, but the consequence of religious dissension. It is unnecessary, and could hardly be convoked, but on extraordinary occasions, to settle some questions which have already violently disorganized the peace of Christendom. It is a field of battle in which a long train of animosities and hostilities is to come to an issue. Men, therefore, meet with all the excitement, the estrangement, the jealousy, the antipathy engendered by a fierce and obstinate controversy. They meet to triumph over their adversaries, rather than dispassionately to investigate truth. Each is committed to his opinions, each exasperated by opposition, each supported by a host of intractable followers, each probably with exaggerated notions of the importance of the question, and that importance seeming to increase since it had demanded the decision of a general Assembly of Christendom."