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SYNOD OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN ENGLAND.

May is the month for the meetings of ecclesiastical assemblies and anniversaries of religious and philanthropic societies of all kinds in Britain. While there is much in them all that is full of interest, the limitations of our space compel us to confine our attention chiefly, if not altogether to those in which as a church we are in the closest alliance. We give here accordingly a brief summary, not so much of the proceedings of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in England as of the present state of the church itself, its work and the subjects of interest dealt with at the late meeting of its Synod.

The twenty-first meeting was held in Regent Square Presbyterian Church, London, and opened on the evening of the 27th ult, the Moderator, the Rev. Richard Leitch, M.A., of Newcastle, presiding. There was a very full attendance. The text of his opening sermon was Gal. i. 8: "But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel, etc." His subject was "The Gospel which Paul Preached." It was treated under these heads: I.—What was that Gospel. This point was summarised in the words, "I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again from the dead the third day according to the Scriptures." Grace lies at its base, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." II.—Paul's Intolerance of any other Gospel. "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you let him be accursed." "The Pauline conception of the gospel was not a theory that he had framed out of his own cogitations, but it was a revelation which he had received from heaven." "It was not after man, for he neither received of man, neither was he taught it but by revelation of Jesus Christ." III.—The Pauline Gospel is adapted to the Present Age. "It never grows old, and those who embrace it never feel that they are behind the age. One feature of its strength is its immutability, and if men will insist in making it accord, as they fancy, more with the spirit of the age, and make it agree more with the dictates of human reason, by divesting it of its supernatural character, they only weaken its force, and destroy its usefulness. The salt loses its savor. The virtue of the Divine remedy disappears." The sermon was able, manly, strong throughout, and had in it the ring of the very gospel which Paul himself preached.

THE NEW MODERATOR.

The Board of Nomination having unanimously presented for Moderator the name of the Rev. J. Thoburn McGaw, D.D., General Secretary, it was cordially accepted and confirmed. He thereupon took the chair, and according to the custom prevailing in the British Presbyterian Churches, delivered an elaborate opening address, passing in review matters pertaining to the Synod, questions to be dealt with, and its relation to public events affecting its own or the general welfare. A summary of this address will include every topic of material interest to us at this distance and give the most necessary information.

After thanking the court for the honor conferred upon him, he referred to the departure by death of five "beloved brethren" in the ministry and of some venerated and valued elders. Of the former we refer only to the Rev. Theodore J. Meyer, who for nearly a quarter of a century as the agent of the church, bore witness for it to the Jews in the east of London. The year, he said, had been an unevenful one. Work had been carried on quietly and steadily. We have continued to proclaim in all our churches, mission halls and Sunday schools the infinite love of

God, and the matchless grace of Christ, and of His Spirit." It was with sorrow confessed that not so much aggressive work had been undertaken amongst the masses of the home-heathen as should have been. The Instruction of the young had commanded much earnest care and attention and the Synod's Committee on the Instruction of Youth included not a few of our ablest men and our most experienced teachers; who have thrown themselves into their great work with heart and thoroughness.

THE COLLEGE, THE SUSTENTATION AND WIDOWS' AND ORPHANS' FUND.

The college had been maintained in thorough efficiency during the year. In the difficulties connected with its removal to Cambridge, its distinguished professorial staff would receive the sympathy and command the loyal support of the whole Church. It is destined, with a growing Church at its back, to exert, in the near future, a potent influence upon great ecclesiastical and theological problems, which are affecting the destinies of the nation, and the solution of which cannot be much longer delayed.

The Sustentation Fund has given fresh proof that it has secured a firm hold upon the intelligent convictions and the practical sympathy of our people, and only needs to be better understood in order to secure for it even a more universal and generous support than it has hitherto enjoyed. The provision made by the Church for aged and infirm ministers is lamentably inadequate; but its improvement is occupying the earnest attention of a Special Committee, whose labours, it is trusted will be crowned with success. More inadequate, if possible, is the provision made for ministers' Widows and Orphans. Few objects could be more deserving, or more appropriate, than helping to provide the necessaries, and a few of the comforts, of life for ministers who have literally worn themselves out in the service of the King, and for the widows and orphans of ministers who have actually fallen on the field.

Our newly-established Mission to the Jews in Aleppo has brought us into close touch with the unspeakable sufferings of our persecuted fellow-Christians of Armenia. Our missionary teacher, Mr. Christie, was present with the Peace Commission at the capitulation of Zeitun, and his vivid, harrowing picture of the terrible things which he witnessed there has touched and moved the whole Church. Our people are responding nobly to his eloquent and pathetic appeal for clothes and money for the naked and starving Armenians; and the Synod will not fail to give voice to our feelings of indignation and shame, that the brutal and fanatical Turk has been permitted by the European powers to doom a whole race to outrage and massacre.

FOREIGN MISSIONS—HALF A CENTURY.

"As in former years, our missions to the heathen in India, Singapore, China, and Japan have been signally blessed. For half a century He has continued to bestow upon us His choicest gifts, in saintly men and women who have consecrated themselves to His service amongst the heathen and also in men and women not less saintly who have consecrated much of their time and of their best thoughts to the gathering and administering of the people's offerings for the work. A wide and effectual door has been long opened before us and our missionaries have had the unspeakable joy of organizing well equipped native churches in China and Japan which have themselves established Christian missions which they carry on at their own cost amongst their fellow countrymen outside their own borders." In this great work the Church enjoyed the invaluable co-operation of the Women's Missionary Association, formed seventeen years ago, and marking a memorable era in the history of our missions and of our Church. Its affairs are administered with rare sagacity and devotion and its agents are second to none in zeal and consecration to the will and service of Christ.

The very success of the Church's foreign mission operations have become to it a serious embarrassment, owing to demands for extension on every side leading the Church into liabilities greatly in excess of its income. A substantial addition to income is indispensably necessary to going forward. "The heathen are perishing; God is calling us to their rescue; we must not,—we dare not disobey."

RELATION OF HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONS—SACERDOTALISM.

To place Foreign Mission work upon a solid financial basis, Church extension must be vigorously pushed at home. "No policy," Dr. McGaw said, "could be more obviously suicidal than for the advocates of the claims of Foreign Missions to seek to withdraw the interest of our people from our Home Mission work. Every new congregation established at home will contribute money and supply missionaries for work among the heathen." This was one reason urged for vigorous work at home. Another was the rapid growth of Sacerdotalism in the Church of England. "This is fraught with serious peril to the souls of men and is being diligently propagated by men who enjoy the prestige of being ministers of the Established Church; it is making its baneful, blighting influence felt in many of our colleges and public schools, and is thus poisoning the fountains of the nations life. Protestantism and the liberties of England are in peril, because of the Established Church being honey-combed from end to end with Sacerdotalism. The result of 30 years of litigation has been a complete triumph of the Ritualists so that their Romish doctrines and practices are now protected, and the mass-house and the confessional have been practically established by law. The English Church Union now numbers nearly 40,000 members including at least 29 bishops, and more than 4,200 of the clergy. It inculcates the Confessional, the Sacrifice of the Mass, Transubstantiation, Fasting Communion, the Supremacy of Tradition over Scripture, the Eastward or Sacrificing Position, Romish Vestments, Candles, Incense, the Mixed Chalice, the 'Agnus Dei,' Prayers for the Dead, and the use of Crosses and Crucifixes in Divine Worship."

Because of this danger, the Home Mission, the Sustentation Fund, the college and all home organizations must be strengthened and developed, especially the effort to raise within five years a Church Building Fund of \$250,000. "There are seventy towns in England of 20,000 inhabitants and upwards, in which there is no Presbyterian Church, and in which there ought to be two or three if we would do our part with the other evangelical Churches in defending the fundamental principles of the Christian faith, the sacredness of our homes, and the blood-bought liberties of England against the superstition, the priestcraft and the tyranny of Sacerdotalism and Romanism."

THIRTY YEARS OF PROGRESS.

In 1865 the sum of \$125,000 was readily subscribed for church building and debt extinction. Since then the Church has increased enormously in members and wealth, partly owing to the union in 1876 of the Presbyterianism of England into one body. During the last decade, however, the Church has been held back for the lack of public spirit and of money. Last year there was initiated a movement supported in an inspiring speech by Dr. Gibson, to raise \$250,000 for church building, and of that \$100,000 have been subscribed in gifts by rich and poor alike. Three previous efforts made at different times resulted in raising \$340,000, adding to the Church, property to the value of \$2,325,000, and 86 congregations. The effort now being made is the fourth and promise to be successful. The record of thirty years progress is as follows:—"The number of our congregations since 1865 has been almost trebled—108 have become 300; our members have increased more than three and a half times—19,000 have become 70,000; and our annual income has been almost quadrupled—

£58,000 has become £230,000. If, therefore, £25,000 was subscribed to a Church Building Fund in 1865, £50,000 ought to be easily raised for a similar fund in 1896. Indeed, the true proportion to our present resources as a Church would be £80,000 to £90,000, rather than £50,000. If we are worthy successors of the men of 1865, we shall hasten to pour the £50,000 into the Lord's treasury before the century closes, giving with glad hearts and open hands, each of us contributing as the Lord hath prospered him, and all of us saying, "Of Thine own have we given Thee, O Lord."

MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS.

Sister Churches.—The evangelistic work carried on on the Continent was to be told of by representatives of the Waldensian Church, the Missionary Church, of Belgium, the Evangelical Society of Geneva, and deputations from the Irish Presbyterian Church, and from the colonies were also to be heard and would be cordially welcomed.

International Arbitration.—The efforts now being made, and arising out of the late Venezuela difficulty, to arrange for the settlement of all differences between England and America by arbitration, and so render war between the two countries practically impossible was warmly supported in the Moderator's speech. He said: "We will not relax our efforts until the principle of arbitration has been embodied in a treaty between the two countries, and a permanent tribunal of arbitration has been established."

The Education Bill.—This bill now before Parliament, and proposing the extension and more firm establishment of sectarian schools to be supported by public money was referred to, and those present urged, both as members of this Synod and as citizens of the State, to show themselves at once enlightened educationists and the uncompromising advocates of religious liberty. "You will do your utmost to maintain the highest possible standard of educational efficiency, and to hinder increased grants of public money being made to schools not under direct and efficient popular control. Happily," he said, "drawing to a close, there is no 'burning question' to come before you. The proceedings may, therefore, be lacking in excitement, but not, I trust, in that solid interest, which imparts spiritual impulse and lasting inspiration."

The interest felt and the agitation over the Dominion upon the educational question, if not mild altogether, as compared with that over the same subject in England, is at least, judging from newspaper reports, far less keen. The cause for this is the same in substance as it is in Canada, namely the bold and persistent attempts of the Church, in this case the Church of England, to manipulate the schools, with the aid of public money, so as to use them for propagating English Church doctrine and strengthening the national Church. The present government is strong and trusts to its strength to be able to carry its proposals against all opposition of dissenting bodies. The Liberation Society in a circular tells its supporters that they should aim at compelling the "withdrawal of the Bill by vigorous action throughout the country; the Liberationists are urged to promote the circulation of publications and the holding of meetings to expose the real character of the Bill." It urges that "constituents should write to their Parliamentary representatives, this being a more effective means of opposition than petitions. Finally, it is contended that it must not be supposed that the largeness of the Government majority makes it impossible to prevent the passing of the Bill. The Factory Education Bill of 1843 was brought in by a Tory Government having a large majority, but it kindled a fire of indignation which compelled its abandonment. The present Bill is more dangerous, but, if opposed with such energy as was the Bill of 1843, it will share the same fate.