

"PONE LUCTUM, MAGDALENA."

TRANSLATED BY W. S. MCKENZIE, D. D.

Magdalena, cease lamenting,
Check thy sorrow, still thy fears.
When at Simon's feast, repenting,
It was well to weep those tears:
Now's the hour of exultation,
For a joyous celebration—
Let thine Alleluia ring!

Magdalena, be thou cheerful,
Let thy clouded brow be bright;
Be not thou depressed and tearful,
For there shines a glorious light:
Christ the bonds of sin has shattered,
And the gloom of death has scattered—
Let thine Alleluia ring!

Magdalena, leap for gladness,
Christ has rent His rocky tomb;
From His face has fled all sadness,
Wears He now the victor's plume,
Grieve no more at His rejection,
Go and greet His resurrection—
Let thine Alleluia ring!

Magdalena, hush thy sighing,
See! He lives to die no more;
Smiles His face are glorifying,
Beam they from the wounds He bore.
Hien's gems are brightly gleaming,
Brighter glow His wounds redeeming—
Let thine Alleluia ring!

Magdalena, live forever!
Bless the dawn that breaks at last;
Bliss is thine that waneeth never,
Bliss no blight of earth can blast.
Banished far are guilt and grieving,
Gladness thrills the soul believing—
Let thine Alleluia ring!

* This Latin hymn is based on John 8:11-18. It has been ascribed, but without sufficient warrant, to Adam of St. Victor, who died in 1177. The Magdalena addressed in the opening verse of each stanza is identified with the sinful woman alluded to in Luke 7:37-50. With the medieval interpretation of this passage of Scripture the translator of the hymn does not here concern himself. The Simon mentioned in the stanza gave the feast at which the penitent woman washed her Saviour's feet.

British Baptists—An Interview With Colonel James T. Griffin.

BY REV. CHARLES A. NATON.

Among the household names among English Baptists is that of Col. James Theodore Griffin, late president of the Baptist Union and most prominent in all great denominational enterprises. Mr. Griffin is an American by birth. He went to England some thirty years ago in connection with the farming implement business and has ever since held a foremost position in the commercial circles of Britain. Since 1865 he has been a member of Regent's Park Baptist church, London, and superintendent of its Sunday-school for the last twenty years. The offices that the genial colonel has held in the denomination make a long and honorable list. To one who knows him it is no surprise that he has enjoyed the confidence of his brethren in such large measure. He is worthy. Even now with the weight of care and years growing heavy he is the same strong, vivacious, hopeful, courteous, friendly Christian man as of yore. He moves with springy steps, talks like a true Chicagoan (that is as though he means business); preaches several times every week; lends his presence to all sorts of Christian and philanthropic enterprises, plans and works as though he expected to live a hundred years, and always has time to do a kindly turn for any one from the American side of the sea.

I have had my eye on Col. Griffin for some time as a good subject for an "interview" in the official sense, and one August day I was able to effect my fell purpose.

"Give me some idea of the state of the Baptists in this country when you arrived thirty years ago," was my first request.

"For the first few years I was abroad a great deal and did not enter into Baptist life very completely. Charles Spurgeon, Baptist Noel, Wm. Brock, J. P. Chown, Hugh Stowel Brown, Charles Stanford, Charles Stowel and Wm. Landels were the leading preachers then. They have all passed away but Dr. Landels. At that time there was little union or co-operation among the churches. Each worked by itself for itself. The difference between Particular and General Baptists was emphasized. Chapels for the most part occupied obscure positions in side streets. There were those who earnestly desired co-operation and in 1864 the Baptist Union was formed, and in 1866 the London Baptist Association. While there were some grand and able men the denomination was weak and lacked that *esprit de corps* which marked the denomination in America. Since 1864 much has been done. Quite ten new churches on the average have been built per annum. The new buildings have sought the open and public places rather than the alleys as in the past.

Pastors know more of each other and there is more unity in their work. The Baptist Union has grown to be a strong body and its influence is widely felt. The London Baptist Association builds one new chapel each year. The work in Ireland gives cause for great gratitude to God. In Scotland the Baptists stand well to the front. The field of our Missionary Society has expanded and its income has nearly if not quite doubled. Chapel debts have to a large extent been paid off and financially the denomination has made great advance."

"As a layman I wish you to tell me how the British Baptists look to you to-day. What you consider their weakness and strength—things that help or hinder progress."

"This is a delicate subject to touch upon, but I shall try to be fair. While in many substantial ways we have progressed in the last thirty years, numerically the advance has been slight. Organization is more perfect. Greater unity has been obtained. The General and Particular Baptists have united but in the truest sense we have not grown. The main cause of weakness is lack of backbone. The principles which all true Baptists hold dear are rarely taught. Open churches lead to indifference. Personally I am not a close communionist, but I am very strongly for close membership. I contend that only regenerate, immersed believers should constitute a Baptist church. The fact that so many of our churches are now open and many of our leaders advocate still greater latitude is cause for weakness and loss of membership. Another cause of weakness is the ministry itself. A larger number now offer themselves for the work but I much doubt if they are equal to the men of thirty years ago. Colleges are weak. They educate largely those who seek for aid while those able to afford an education go elsewhere and rarely are found in a Baptist pulpit. With all kindness and respect let me say that many of the students would do better work for Christ as laymen. We have an underpaid ministry and we lack, not preachers, but men."

"As to the outlook for the future?"

"Well, I am no prophet, but unless Baptists stand more firmly for the old truths—full obedience to the teachings of God's word—I fear they will drift. The union of the churches is discussed. Good Baptists openly advocate entire freedom to all members; go where they will, worship where they prefer, sink all differences. Let the special views of the denomination be kept in the background. Even let there be a font as well as a baptistry—meet the wants of the age and let love prevail. Until our ministers are prepared to stand for the whole truth and Baptist churches are composed of baptized members, I do not see that we can hope to grow in strength."

With these wise words of Col. Griffin for the text I should like to preach a little sermon to our English brethren. A congregation of people in London is like a congregation in Boston or Toronto. They dress alike, look alike, slug alike, think and pray and live and die alike. They are to all intents and purposes one. Yet here we are bounding forward with a noble all-conquering movement, while there the denomination moves with faltering step. Some of the greatest preachers the world has held have been English Baptists. How does it happen that the church of Robert Hall and John Foster and William Carey and Andrew Fuller and Charles Spurgeon has not managed to lay hold upon the public imagination and conscience and make a positive, definite, large place for itself? Some say it is because of the Re-establishment. But Presbyterianism and even Methodism have thriven in the British environment. I may be wrong but at this writing I can not shake off the conviction that the English Baptists have been striving to maintain the name while eager to reject and give up the substance of Baptist belief. The fact is that in the majority there is no deep conviction that the Baptist denomination has any supreme reason to be. There is no assurance of a divine message and mission like that which has inspired the American churches. From Robert Hall down the great men have almost unanimously neutralized and minimized the positive power of their Baptist principles.

Here is an illustrious example: A few years ago Col. Griffin and others organized the London Baptist Social Union after the Boston idea. There are some 40,000 Baptists in London with say 150 churches. The Social Union has only been able to secure a membership of about seventy, and the largest attendance has never gone beyond 150. From the first there has been a desire to "broaden." The rank and file of the London Baptists seem to care little for fellowship with each other. There is always present this fear of standing alone and of being called "Baptists" only. A majority of the members of the London Baptist Social Union are prepared to drop the name Baptist entirely and call their organization "The Free Church Social Union." It has been resolved, however, to do even a nobler bit of renunciation and, if all goes well, the Congregationalists are to be invited to unite with them under the brotherly name of "The Baptist and Congregational Social Union." It is very hard for an American Baptist to understand such lack of cohesion and absence of denominational pride. It is certainly not the result

of a superior spirit of tolerance, for it was in the London Baptist Association that the down grade controversy raged and there are preachers of prominence who refuse to go upon the same platform with others of their own name who venture to think differently.

While there is not enough self assertion in the denomination, there is and has been too much in individual churches and ministers. I have mentioned the Down Grade struggle. It is an illustration of that spirit which prompts individual churches to form little circles of their own and practically ignore the brotherhood at large. We all love the name of Spurgeon, but that does not hinder us from seeing the one great weakness in his life work. He was too local in his organization. It is singular that a man who preached for all the world should organize only upon the parish scale—yet such is the fact. If Spurgeon had said to his denomination, "Come, we need a great university; let us get together and consolidate our little struggling schools and form a great center," the Baptists of Britain would have followed him gladly, and he would have left a monument worthy of his memory.

He chose rather to found a small school of his own. Its foundations were local, its outlook narrow, and when its great founder died, despite the splendid work it has done, the school entered upon a process of decay which must end in its extinction. I suppose the Coats family of Paisley may justly be called the Rockefeller of Britain. But instead of founding a great central school which should mould and inspire the entire denomination, the family has erected in Paisley a most magnificent cathedral costing some three quarters of a million of dollars, and as far as the Baptists at large are concerned, absolutely valueless as a unifier or helper.

I venture to offer these criticisms upon our brethren in England simply because I feel with all my heart that their success or failure is ours as well, and together we must move forward to the end of our high and divine mission. English Baptists need only to be led by men with large organizing powers and high conceptions and ideals in order to become united and aggressive. There is no missionary society in the world more ably officered, more vigorous in its policy, or more deeply entrenched in the hearts of the whole denomination than the Foreign Mission Society of the English Baptists under the statesmanlike management of Secretary Baynes. Now, what Baynes and those who preceded him have done for the Baptist denomination in missions, Spurgeon and others might have done and ought to have done in education.

There can be no doubt that the supreme need of English Baptists is a right system of denominational education. What has made American and Canadian Baptists but the multitude of colleges, seminaries and academies that dot the hills of the continent from shore to shore? Generation after generation of our young people have been educated together—mind and heart cultivated and moulded into the happiest and holiest of all unities by a common love for our common Lord. Our schools are the true centers of our life. So long as they abide our denomination will advance—when they die we die. In education English Baptists have been most unfortunate, not in the quality or learning of their teachers, nor the mental stuff of their students, but in the absence of any centralization and statesmanship in the placing of schools. The year book of 1896 reports eleven Baptist colleges. The largest income of any reported is Regent's Park, £4,382. The largest attendance is at Pastor's College, fifty-five. The Scotch school at Glasgow discreetly omits to mention its income or the number of its students. The average number of students in the nine English schools is twenty-five. There are no academies, no schools for boys or girls, no technical schools, no universities.

The leaders are coming to see the case as it really is. They are casting about for some solution of the difficulty. That there is dissatisfaction with the present system is a most hopeful sign. While the American method cannot be applied in England, yet the American idea is surely gaining ground and we may hope to see English Baptists come together at last and build for themselves a university worthy of the name. The income of all the colleges as they stand to-day is about \$60,000; speaking roughly this would support a faculty of thirty-two men at an average rate of \$2,500 per annum. If these schools were combined—and a few good preparatory academies organized under denominational auspices and a new start made, in one generation the problem of English Baptist perpetuity would be gloriously solved.

There is one sign of the times most hopeful. The Baptist young people are not organized as such. They are asking for some system of instruction other than that furnished by the Christian Endeavor and local organizations to which they belong. If Dr. Wilkins could spend a few months in England as he did a few years ago in America, rousing the Baptist brotherhood to action and organize the whole country upon Baptist Young People's Union lines, then this generation would grow up together, in closest touch with each other, instructed according to a single ideal in the Bible and Baptist history, and out of this united generation we might hope to see grow a new movement in education and denominational aggressiveness which would put British Baptists where they belong and where American Baptists are, in the front rank of those mighty social forces which make for righteousness and exalt a nation.—The Standard.

Power for Service.

At this season of special effort on the part of Christ's people for the saving of the lost and the guiding heavenward of the saved, it must be of the highest importance to know just what is needed to insure success. We have it in this, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." Here there is no doubt, no contingency. All is absolute certainty. But this means that the Christian worker must know by experience what it is to be "endued with power from on high," to "receiv-

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