

DUBLIN UNIVERSITY BRANCH OF THE  
SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION  
OF THE GOSPEL.

The annual meeting of this society took place on the 18th March, at the rooms of the Rev. John Jellett, F.T.C.D., Trinity College, at two o'clock.

The chair was taken by His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin. The meeting having been opened with prayer, Mr. George Scott, secretary to the Society, read the report in which it was stated that two additional transactions of the past year, remain to be noticed, as generally interesting to the friends of the society: the restoration to the service of the Colonial Church, through the exertions of the Bishop of London, of two fellowships of Jesus College, Oxford, which had been long since alienated from the purpose for which the founder had designed them; and the grant by the society of a valuable piece of land, together with the promise of £2000, to the Bishop of Toronto, for the foundation and endowment of a church university in his diocese, in consequence of an act of the local government, which deprived the university established by charter of George IV. of all religious observances, and of the faculty of theology, whereby it had hitherto supplied to the bishop candidates for the diocesan ministry.

The Rev. J. H. Todd, F.T.C.D., moved the adoption of the report and in doing so observed that it was gratifying to find by the report that there was some little increase in the interest in the operations of that society felt among the students of the University. An interesting fact mentioned in the report was the restoration of two fellowships of Jesus College, Oxford, to the missionary purpose for which they were founded. They were, founded by Sir Lionel Jenkins, a friend of Bishop Berkeley's and, possibly, at his suggestion, for the purpose of carrying out his views, but the apathy which existed during the last century towards all such subjects caused them to be diverted from their proper object. It was certainly a matter of great congratulation that they were now restored to their proper purpose, and that they might be expected from henceforward to be used to supply the wants of the Church in the Colonies. The establishment of a new mission at Labrador was also a highly interesting circumstance to the members of that university; for one of them who had devoted himself to missionary labours—he alluded to his friend Mr. Disney—had gone out there, and was now placed in a very remote and dreary situation, labouring in the cause of Christianity and the Gospel.

The Rev. George Nugent seconded the resolution. As he was going out immediately as one of the society's missionaries to Upper Canada, it might not be uninteresting to some of the meeting to know something of the nature of the parish in which he was going to officiate, and to assist Mr. Ardagh, who was a member of that university.—It was eighty miles long and forty wide; and he had in his hand a letter from Mr. Ardagh, in which he stated that he had been now in the colony eight years; that on his arrival in his parish he found two churches there; that he had succeeded in building three more, which were nearly finished; and that he hoped to begin two others next spring, making seven churches in all; but that, from want of funds, he was unable to finish those which were in progress; and he requested him (Mr. Nugent) to do anything he could with his friends at home to assist him, as the people there were too poor to do much. Not long ago Mr. Ardagh preached at one of his distant outposts, and, after he had concluded his sermon, another person stood up in the midst of the meeting and said that he would preach on a certain day. Mr. Ardagh, naturally anxious to know the nature of the man's doctrine, asked him if he believed in the divinity of our blessed Lord. The answer after some hesitation, was, that he did not; and the fact was, that from the want of persons properly qualified, and sent under regular authority to administer to the people of the diocese, every ranting person, no matter who or what he might be, was able to get a congregation and to disseminate the seeds of error. The anxious exertions of Mr. Ardagh since he went into the parish had made him very successful there; but from the want of proper help, another person, not a member of their church, was drawing away numbers of persons whom he had previously attached to the church and her services, and a great deal of his work was being thus in some degree marred. It might not be uninteresting to those present to know that the great majority of the inhabitants of the parish were Irish Protestants, who had been obliged to emigrate from the pressure of the times at home, and who had not the means, however willing they might be, to aid in building churches and maintaining clergymen; therefore if they (the meeting) did not make an effort to foster the good principles implanted in those persons at home, the experience of the colony proved that they would grow up worse than Heathens; and owing to the cheapness of ardent spirits and other circumstances in the colonies, and to the want of regular attendance at Divine worship, they would in a comparatively short time forget all that ever they learned at home. It had been remarked by the Bishop of Norwich, that however anxious they might be to send missionaries to the Heathen, one of the most effectual means

they could take for promoting Christianity amongst them would be to make the colonies in which they laboured Christian; for however fully the Heathens might adopt their principles and doctrines theoretically, they would in their practical lives imitate the conduct of the Christians whom they saw around them; and he was sure that his college friends, who had already done so much in aid of the Colonial Church would not now relax when they saw what good effects had resulted from their efforts. He would mention a circumstance which had not come to the knowledge of some persons, in order to show the anxiety and earnestness of the bishops and clergy in the lower province of Quebec. In 1847, when famine and fever raged, and immense numbers of those who emigrated from this country were landed in fever, there was at one time 10,000 in fever in Grosse Island, and no means whatever of supplying them with spiritual consolation in their hour of death and sickness, when the Bishop of Quebec stood forward and told his clergy that they ought to go to Grosse Island and perform duty there week about. He went down and took the first week himself, and his clergy went afterwards, and the result was that six of these devoted men caught the fever and died. Mr. Nugent concluded by his calling on the students to go forward and aid the society by taking part in its good work, or, if they could not do so, to contribute liberally of their substance to its funds.

The Archbishop of Dublin, in putting the resolution, said he might mention, in reference to the interesting remarks which had been just made, that if information respecting such facts were more frequently brought before various classes of persons, members of the church, good effects would result, and they would see less of the apathy that was now complained of. He would speak in some degree from experience, because he happened some 30 years ago at Oxford to have become interested about Upper Canada, and he then made the acquaintance of that worthy man Bishop Stewart, and assisted in promoting the subscription which he raised for the specific objects of his particular diocese. And it was wonderful how well the thing thrived when the knowledge of it was brought before the public. The present Bishop of Norwich was a Canadian by birth, and being anxious to have a church erected in the place where he was located, he (Archbishop of Dublin) set on foot a subscription for him, and nearly the whole expense of the church was contributed in Canada. And though some persons murmured at the proposed extent of the building, imagining that it would be too large for the population, very sufficient reasons were conveyed to them for thinking that it would not, and ere three years had passed over it proved to be a great deal too small (hear, hear) so rapid was the growth of the colony.

The resolution was then put and carried.

The Rev. R. Dixon, F.T.C.D., moved the next resolution as follows:—"That this association acknowledges the necessity for renewed exertions on the part of the auxiliaries to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, to enable the Colonial Church to increase the efficiency of her agents by the subdivision of their spheres of labour, and to carry out the extended designs of her bishops for the evangelization of the heathen." He regretted that the resolution had not fallen into abler hands; but he believed that it was not likely that the cause of the Society would suffer from the weakness of his advocacy. An existence for a century and a half, and the signs of vitality evinced by the efforts which were now making to extend the sphere of her labours, proved that the Society had taken such deep root as hardly to require any assistance that he could give. He would only advert to the topic mentioned in the resolution, namely, the importance of increasing the efficiency of the Society's Agents, by subdivision of their spheres of labour; and the facts mentioned by Mr. Nugent were amply sufficient to justify that proposition. In fact, it appeared that the extent of the spheres of labour of the clergy and missionaries under the Propagation Society was so enormous as to raise in the minds of many persons the idea that they must be altogether ineffectual and inoperative. They knew how little could be done where the minister was not able to continually follow up a systematic course of instruction in the case of children, and where the adults were not secured the advantage of constantly supplied religious services; but he believed that there were some circumstances in the case of the colonists which diminished the strength of those disadvantages. He believed that they listened to the instructions when given, and to the services when supplied, with more attention than was bestowed by the members of the church here; and they were, beside, removed from the political and religious controversy which was associated with almost every religious question at home. The recollections of their native land and of early years which would be brought upon the colonist by the sound of the church bell, and by the visit of the minister, would lend an efficacy to the impression produced by those occurrences which might atone for their want of frequency. And where the baptismal service was performed how much less likely were the feelings of the party of friends and relatives of the child about to be a member of the Christian church to be chilled by indifference and total want of interest in

the ceremony manifested on the part of spectators, as was too often the case here.?

Mr. James Gwynne, S.T.C.D., seconded the resolution. Never since the foundation of the society had its supporters more abundant cause for thankfulness than at present, whether they looked to the rapid extension of the church in the colonies, to the zeal and success of their missionaries among the Heathen, or to the increasing support which the society was receiving at home. But they must remember that if much had been done by the society still more remained to be done. The speaker pointed out the wisdom of the society's mode of proceeding in establishing the church in the colonies and making practical Christians of the colonists, and sending out missionaries from the colonies among the Heathen. The greatest hindrance to the spread of the Gospel proved to be the practical infidelity of professing Christians. In consequence of the effects of the system of punishment by transportation adopted by the government, it was almost a hopeless task to attempt the conversion of the Heathen in the penal settlements.

The Archbishop of Dublin in putting the resolution remarked, that there was another point of still greater importance to the interests of the Colonial Church than even the subdivision of districts referred to by the resolution—it had been suggested to him by the Bishop of Norwich,—and it was the appointment of an Archbishop of the Colonies. Their Society was virtually the Archbishop of the Colonies, and nothing would be more advantageous than to supersede it in that part of its functions by the appointment of an Archbishop, having the control of the Colonial Dioceses, and resident in London, and to limit the Society to its own proper business, namely, of providing and supplying funds, and of acting under the superintendence of archiepiscopal authority.

The resolution was then put and carried.

The Rev. Dr. Lee, F.T.C.D., moved the next resolution as follows:—"That this meeting rejoices to recognise the tokens afforded by the past year of an increasing missionary spirit in this University; and hopes that the connexion newly formed with the Colonial Church may not fail to produce increased interest in its welfare amongst the students." The fact alluded to in the resolution, as well as the information conveyed by the report, were, on the whole, more gratifying than were the circumstances generally brought before them at their annual meetings. The yearly increasing number of missionaries from amongst themselves was assuredly a most gratifying circumstance. No more satisfactory evidence could be afforded of the practical working of the Society than the fact of several of its members being engaged in the service of the Colonial Church. It was gratifying to observe that in the efforts now making by the church at large to occupy the vast field open for missionary labour in the Colonies, the University was at length beginning to take an active part. The missionary cause was no longer to them that abstract conception which it was a few years ago. They now could point out many who were formerly their fellow-students engaged in missionary labours in the most distant parts of the earth, the narration of whose toils and privations in the service of Christ, when occasionally communicated at their meetings, enabled them to realize most vividly the importance of the sacred work in which they were engaged. Therefore he trusted and believed that the committee had not been too sanguine in asserting that there had been an increase in the missionary interest felt among the students of the University. It was proclaimed by that fact, in accents not to be mistaken that there was also an increasing Christian spirit amongst them; that they recognised their Christian profession as a practical matter, and were alive to the solemn obligation towards the human race at large which their membership of the Christian Church imposed upon them. Not only was a warm interest in the cause of the missions of the church, an earnest of the individual being likely to prove a zealous and efficient parish minister; but it also afforded a sure means of leading divinity students to an acquaintance with the practical details of one of the most important of ministerial duties; for he hesitated not to affirm that no clergyman of a parish performed his duty properly if he did not instruct his congregation as to the obligation towards their fellow-men, which their being members of the Christian Church imposed upon them. This was of particular importance at the present time, when thousands of the members of the Church of England were being forced by inevitable circumstances to emigrate to distant land, where they would be in a state of spiritual destitution unless their more favoured brethren at home made efforts to have religious instruction provided there for them.

The Rev. E. B. Moeran seconded the resolution, in which he expressed his sympathy and satisfaction.

The resolution having been put and carried.

The Archbishop of Dublin apologised for being obliged to vacate the chair, as he was called away by a pressing engagement, and

The Rev. Dr. Todd having been called thereto,

The Rev. R. H. Poole, F.T.C.D., moved a resolution appointing the officers of the society for the ensuing year, and in doing so, added his testimony as to its increased efficiency. He wished to advert

to one or two circumstances connected with the conduct of the government in Canada, which were manifestly opposed to the interests of the Canadian Church. Mr. Poole here referred to a petition of the Bishop and Clergy of the congregations and diocese of Quebec in reference to certain lands in the colony denominated the Clergy Reserves, which were originally set apart as a source of income for the support of the various institutions connected with the Protestant Church in Canada. In 1840 a portion of those lands were alienated for the support of other Protestant bodies beside those connected with the Established Church; and it appeared that in 1849, when there was no agitation in the province on the subject, a resolution was brought forward in the Colonial Assembly and adopted, in favour of alienating the clergy reserves for the promotion of education and for other secular purposes. The Church of England population in Lower Canada was nearly equal to the entire number of Protestants of all other denominations there, and consisted to a great extent of occupiers of back settlements, who were mainly dependent for religious administration on the charity of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; and he need not say that the withdrawal of the source of income mentioned in the petition from the ministers of the Church of England there would be a heavy blow to those people. He wished to notice another move on the part of the ministry to injure the Church in the Colonies, viz., the abolition of the faculty of theology in the College of Toronto, which had hitherto afforded the only constituted means for the appointment of the clergy of the province. Those two events would occasion a large call upon the funds of the Society, and increased exertion would be necessary to meet the demand.

The Rev. Mr. Groves seconded the resolution, which was put and carried.

A vote of thanks was then passed to the Archbishop of Dublin for his kindness in taking the chair on that occasion, after which the meeting separated.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF PROPHECY.

BETHLEHEM.

The first mention of Ephrath, or Bethlehem, which occurs in the Holy Scriptures, is connected with an affecting incident, the death of Jacob's favourite wife Rachel, as he was on his way to present her to his father, after his long banishment from his native land.<sup>1</sup> Bethlehem was also the scene of the touching story of Ruth; here too David was born, and, before his elevation to the lofty position in which "his father's children should bow down before him,"<sup>2</sup> here he fed his father's sheep.<sup>3</sup> On these accounts, Bethlehem was regarded with peculiar interest by the Jews, and though it was "little among the thousands of Judah,"<sup>4</sup> will ever be associated with the most pleasing recollections in the minds of Christians; for here, "good tidings of great joy" were announced to shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night;<sup>5</sup> here the Divine Saviour first appeared, veiled in human flesh: here the long promised "star of Jacob" pointed to Him who claimed the homage of the world; and here the first martyrs for the Lord Jesus Christ shed their innocent blood,<sup>6</sup> and fulfilled the mysterious prediction of the ancient prophet.<sup>7</sup> In the book of Judges,<sup>8</sup> this city is called Bethlehem-Judah to distinguish it from another of the same name, in Zebulun. It was never a place of much importance; but it is worthy of note, that though described by the prophet Micah as "little among the thousands," it was not "the least;" for it appears from the book of Ezra, that inconsiderable as was the number of the Bethlehemites who returned from the Babylonian captivity, several of the cities sent back a smaller number.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxxv. 19. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xlix. 8. Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Sam. xvii. 15. But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

<sup>4</sup> Micah v. 2. But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

<sup>5</sup> Luke ii. 8-10. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

<sup>6</sup> Numb. xxiv. 17. There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel.

<sup>7</sup> Matt ii. 16. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coast thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time when he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

<sup>8</sup> Jer. xxxi. 15. A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachael weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.

<sup>9</sup> Judges xvii. 7. And there was a young man out of Bethlehem-judah of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there.