

requires. We press this upon you not merely because something like a crisis has arisen in the support of Home and Foreign Missions, but still more because we cannot duly honour the Lord, nor enjoy the blessedness of true service, unless we shall consecrate both ourselves and our substance to "Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

WM. CAVEN, *Convener.*

1688-1888.

III.

NO branch of the Church of Christ has a more splendid record of endeavour, endurance, and achievement than the Presbyterian Church. Two hundred years ago she was broken-hearted, lacerated, bleeding from every pore, after long years of relentless persecution. In England two thousand of her ministers had been in one dark "St. Bartholomew's day," driven out of their parishes, for conscience sake. In France they were nearly exterminated—hundreds of thousands having been driven into exile; and countless hosts slain, or imprisoned, or sent to the hulks—treated, in fact, worse than the worst criminals. Indeed hardly one hundred years have passed since Presbyterians were hanged in France for their faith. It is almost incredible; but the facts stand on the lurid pages of history. In Austria and Hungary, in Bohemia, in the valleys of the Alps, the sufferings of our faithful people were terrible. In some instances the persecutor did his work so well that our churches were very nearly exterminated. In Switzerland, in Holland, in Prussia, the record is less disastrous; there are fewer stains of martyrs' blood. But it is not to be forgotten that it was Presbyterian Holland that drove back the invading hosts of Philip II.—that it was a Presbyterian, William of Orange, that humbled the autocratic pride of Louis XIV. and established a constitutional *régime* in the United Kingdom.

However much we may regret the comparatively little progress made by our church for the hundred years after the Revolution, we need not be surprised at the fact. A struggle for existence had well-nigh exhausted her vitality. She needed rest and she, in a measure, obtained it. Still, in the period to which we refer, there was progress. We note its tread in Ireland,

and especially in America. It was then that the foundations of Presbyterianism were laid on this broad continent.

Two hundred years ago there was only one General Assembly of Presbyterians in the world—that of Scotland. Now we have Assemblies in Scotland and Ireland, in Canada and the United States, and Australia; and we have strong "Synods," in many other quarters. Then, our numbers were small, and our people poor from the exactions of tyrants and traitors. Now we number in Scotland over 3,000 churches and ministers; and in Ireland, Wales and England about 1,500 more. On the continent of Europe we have about 5,500 ministers and churches. In the United States we have about 10,000 ministers and churches. In the British colonies, where Presbyterian influence has always been most beneficent, we have about 1,750 churches and 1,300 ministers. We have a grand total of say 20,000 ministers and congregations. Our ordained missionaries to the heathen number nearly 700. There is no continent, there is no great group of islands, there is no British colony where the influence of Presbyterianism is not being benignly felt to-day. No people have shewn a larger or purer public spirit; none have exhibited a more generous catholicity of feeling; none are responding more liberally to the cry for help that comes from heathen lands. Our church has been intimately associated with modern progress; she is never afraid of any truth of reason, or any discovery of science. The Word of God is her weapon of defence and offence; and, founded upon that word, her faith cannot be shaken.

The past of our church, illustrious and glorious though it has been, is but a preparation for her future. She is extending her beneficent conquests at home and abroad; and nothing but unfaithfulness to her Head, and to her own record, can mar her progress. It becomes all those who