

# The Church Guardian,

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November 28th, 1883.

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## BOARD OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN MISSIONS.

THE Board of Management of the above Board, which met in Montreal last week, adopted good working Bye-Laws, and seems to have made considerable progress in obtaining information, and in preparing to grapple with the work which has been entrusted to it. We draw our readers' attention to the several resolutions adopted by this important body, and especially to the Treasurer's report, and the suggestions which are embodied therein. It is of the first importance that the Board shall have the confidence of the Church people of the several dioceses, so that the contributions for all objects shall, as far as possible, not only pass through its hands, but be sent untrammelled, to be appropriated by the Board as it may deem best. Indeed, upon this hangs, in great measure, we think, the value of the new organization. If it is to be simply a paper Board, and not of living, practical utility, better that it had never

been established, better that at once it be allowed to die. But if, on the other hand, it is felt by the people at large, as it was felt by the members of Provincial Synod, that something must be done, and done at once, to increase the missionary contributions of the Church, so as to remove the stigma which now rests upon her, owing to the great contrast between the large sums given for such objects by other bodies of Christians, and the small amount of the total contributions of the Church, then let the several dioceses warmly endorse and in every way second the efforts of this Board by giving more liberally and by throwing into a general fund the whole contributions of the Church for missionary work. Of course there will be difficulties at first, which, however, are surmountable; and as regards special appropriations, and special missionary fields for which parishes and dioceses feel an especial interest, the Board quite appreciates the feeling and admits the principle, and will most scrupulously carry out to the letter the wishes of its benefactors. There is one point on which we must express regret in the action of the Board. We refer to its decision with reference to its Secretary. We are well aware that at present, with no funds in hand, and with no certainty that the Board will be sustained, it seems a risk to engage, at a fixed salary, the whole services of a Secretary. At the same time we believe it would have been found a wise, business-like policy to have assumed the risk, and at once, and with energy, proceed to make the venture a success. That it can only be made successful, as the business man makes his ventures successful, by push and energy, and so arousing the people generally to a sense of their responsibility and duty, and by wise organization in every parish and mission throughout the Ecclesiastical Province, none will deny, and it is not easy to see how this can be done unless an active man gives his whole time and attention to the work of making known the needs of the missionary fields, and in a variety of ways creating an enthusiasm for the great missionary cause.

## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION.

A CORRESPONDENT elsewhere asks if any recent authoritative statement has been made by the Church upon this subject. We can only answer by quoting the words of the Bishops of the Pan-Anglican Conference which assembled in Lambeth Palace under the Presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1878. It is well to explain that by petition the Conference had been asked to condemn certain practices of ritual, and of confession and absolution, and their views are here given on these matters as follows:—

"Considering unhappy disputes on questions of ritual, whereby divers congregations in the Church of England and elsewhere have been seriously disquieted, your Committee desire to affirm the principle that no alteration from long-accustomed ritual should be made contrary to the admonition of the Bishop of the Diocese. Further, having in view certain novel practices and teachings on the subject of Confession, your Committee desire to affirm that in the matter of Confession the Churches of the Anglican Communion hold fast those principles which are set forth in the Holy Scriptures, which were professed by the Primitive Church, and which were re-affirmed at the English Reformation; and it is their deliberate opinion

that no minister of the Church is authorized to require from those who may resort to him to open their grief a particular or detailed enumeration of all their sins, or to require private confession previous to receiving the Holy Communion, or to enjoin or even encourage the practice of habitual confession to a Priest, as a condition of attaining to the highest spiritual life. At the same time your Committee are not to be understood as desiring to limit in any way the provision made in the Book of Common Prayer for the relief of troubled consciences."

There were present at the Conference 35 Archbishops and Bishops of the English Church; 9 Archbishops and Bishops of the Irish Church; 7 Bishops of the Scotch Church; 17 Bishops of the American Church; and 32 Colonial Bishops.

The Bishop of Lincoln, the most learned and able of the High Church Divines, in an address to the clergy and laity of his diocese on the subject of Absolution, says: "Thus, then, we may say in reply to the question—What is the force of the words, 'Whosoever sins ye remit,' spoken by our Blessed Lord to the Apostles on the evening of the Resurrection, after He had breathed upon them, and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost,' and spoken to the priests of the Church of God at their ordination?—that they contain a commission and a power derived from the Holy Ghost, given by the Eternal Son of the Father—to remit sin by applying those means which Christ has instituted and appointed for its remission, namely:

- (1) The sincere Word of God duly preached. The declaration of remission of sins in Christ's Name to all those who repent and believe.
- (2) The Holy Sacrament of Baptism duly administered.
- (3) The Holy Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist rightly consecrated, and fully and freely dispensed.
- (4) The prayers of the Christian priesthood for the forgiveness of sins.

The Christian priest, who faithfully discharges his duty in these functions of his ministry, may cherish a humble hope that his commission has been given him for gracious purposes and glorious ends, and that the work of his ministry will be approved and rewarded at the Great Day by the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. And let no one imagine our ministry to be a feeble thing, although in declaring and pronouncing absolution and remission of sins in the daily office of Morning and Evening Prayer, or in invoking God's pardon and blessing upon faithful and penitent souls in the Holy Communion, or in lifting our hands over them in the stillness of the private chamber, in the hours of sickness and of death, and in saying those solemn words—By Christ's authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost—we do not claim for ourselves the power to give pardon, but only as heralds sent from God Himself, to certify and assure them that He is ever ready to be gracious to them for His dear Son's sake, and that if they have true repentance, lively faith, and fervent love to God and man, and are resolved to forsake their sins and to make reparation for them, and heartily pray for pardon from Him, and for the grace of the Holy Ghost to enable them to keep their good resolutions of amendment, He has washed away their sins in the Blood of Christ, and will remember them no more."