

RULES FOR PAROCHIAL COUNCILS.

The following rules suggested for the formation and guidance of Parochial Councils in the rural deanery of Blackburn, as agreed upon at a Rural Deanery Conference on December 4th, 1871, have been approved by the Bishop of Manchester:—

Objects—To consider questions affecting the religious, moral, material and financial interests of the church and parish, and devise and carry out whatever may be deemed conducive thereto.

Rules. 1. The Council shall consist of the incumbent, curate, churchwardens, and so many laymen, appointed annually as hereinafter provided, as may from time to time be decided by the incumbent and churchwardens.

"2. One-third of the number appointed annually shall be nominated by the incumbent, the remaining two-thirds by the electoral body.

"3. The electoral body shall consist of such members of the Church of England as are owners of property or householders in the parish, or regular worshippers in the church above twenty-one years of age.

"4. Each man appointed a member of the Council shall, before acting, sign in the presence of two of the *ex officio* members, a declaration to the following effect:—

I, A. B., chosen to serve in the Parochial Council of parish, do hereby declare that I am a communicant in the church of the said parish; that I am willing to serve in the office to which I have been appointed; and that I will, to the best of my ability, seek to promote the interests of religion and of the Church of England in the parish.

"5. The meeting for the appointment of the Council shall be held in January in each year, on a day to be fixed by the incumbent and churchwardens, of which seven days' notice shall be publicly given by them.

"6. The first meeting of the Council shall be held within four weeks of its formation, on a day to be fixed by the incumbent and churchwardens.

"7. Subsequent meetings shall be held by adjournment, or at stated intervals, as may be determined by the Council at their first meeting.

"8. A special meeting shall be convened on the request of the incumbent or churchwardens, or any three members of the Council, made to the secretary, in writing, with a statement of the business proposed for consideration at such meeting, whereof seven days' notice shall be given.

"9. At all the incumbent, if present, shall be chairman.

"10. The quorum shall consist of not less than one-third of the whole Council; and no resolution shall be considered passed unless sanctioned by not less than three-fourths of the members present.

"11. Should it ever occur that the incumbent or churchwardens object to any proposition or resolution of the Council, by reason of what they deem their official obligations, the question may be referred to the Rural Dean, or from him to the Bishop, for opinion and advice.

"12. The following form of prayer is suggested for the opening of the Council meetings:—

O Lord, our Heavenly Father, who hast, in Thy good Providence, established Thy Church in our land, and hast made it a blessing to many generations, grant that we, and our children after us, may be steadfast in the profession of Thy truth, and faithful in our keeping of the inheritance committed to us. Earnest may we be in our desires to serve and glorify Thee in the work to which we are called. Be Thou our Counsellor, and give us a right judgment in all things. Be Thou our Strength, and suffer us not to grow weary in well doing. Increase in us, and in our parishes, true religion; and take away whatever may hinder us from godly union and concord, that, as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one Hope of our Calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity, and may, with one mind and one mouth, glorify Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

" J. MANCHESTER "

The system of Conferences, which prevails so largely in connection with the mother Church, and which, in some measure, is devoted to the consideration of evils for which ordinary human skill can hardly furnish a cure, has no parallel in the American convocations and conventions. Still some have regarded the absence of this peculiar form of mental activity as a real deprivation; and have desired opportunity for more discussion and searching inquiry in connection with the various departments of Church work and thought. And yet, at the same time, some of our English brethren are beginning to believe that they have indulged in the conference quite as much as may be desirable, even though the tendency towards discussion is still upwards. The *Guardian* says: "It is possible that it may be so exaggerated as to become a nuisance and a hindrance to practical work; and we observe that some of our contemporaries, especially those who incline to the production of smart sayings, are beginning to regard it. We cannot, however," it continues, "sympathize with this view of the subject." It, nevertheless, admits that it "would undoubtedly be a great evil if the frequency of conferences led to the lessening of individual activity, or to the elimination of idiosyncrasies in persons or institutions, or to the depreciation of the many important forms of influence and action which cannot be brought out in public speeches and discussions."

THE ECLIPSE PARTY IN INDIA.

A letter in the *Daily News*, dated December 16, describes the proceedings of a section of the eclipse party sent out from England. The headquarters of this section was Bekul. The morning was fine. The writer says—

Imagine a round, rough, embattled platform, some thirty or thirty-five feet in diameter, with two large telescopes placed nearly in the middle pointed to the rising sun. At one of them, a large 9½ reflector, was stationed Mr. Lockyer,—at the other Captain Maclean and Mr. Pringle. Close to the reflector is a table with some instruments upon it, at which are sitting two persons—one, Captain Bailey who is to tell how the time is going on; the other a native employed in the Collector's office to take down anything that is said, his paper being carefully marked, so that the place of his record denotes the time of the observation. By the table is standing Mr. M'Ivor, whose duty it is to assist Mr. Lockyer in opening the slit of the spectroscopic, if that should be required, and the like. Mr. Fernandez is there, too, to watch the clock, and disconnect the telescope from it at the right moment. Captain Christie is acting as amanuensis for Captain Maclean. In the other corner, at tables, are General Selby, Colonel Farewell and Judge Walhouse, with cards and telescopes before them, ready to sketch the corona. This is the attacking party, and there are police to keep out intruders.

As the first contact took place at Bekul a few minutes after sunrise, when the image of the sun was unsteady, the exact time could not be noted, but that was a small matter. Slowly the eclipse crept on; swarms of small rajahs and squires, and natives of all sorts and conditions, rapidly coming up in their machiels, and taking up their position round the fort, which they are not permitted to enter:—

There is strict silence in the fort, and the work of recording the comparatively unimportant phenomena visible in telescope, spectroscopic and polariscope, before totality, goes on like clockwork, but it is very different below. The natives see in the eclipse their favourite god devoured by the monster Rahoo, and they, like the observers, are not there for nothing. Yells, moans, and hideous lamentations rend the air as the monster seems to them to get the upper hand; the excitement increases, and evidently something is afoot. Mr. M'Ivor's sharp eye detected an intended sacrifice of fire, the intended fuel being the long, parched grass covering the landscape exactly between the fort and the eclipsed sun. In a moment he pointed this out to Captain Christie; in a few more a number of police were stamping out the flames, and the smoke bank, which threatened to upset all the work, gradually died away.

Presently Captain Maclean announced "bright lines" in abundance. Mr. Lockyer had barely time to observe these, whisper a word or two, and reach the large spectroscopic, before he exclaims "Steady!" the signal agreed on for commencing the counting of time:—

Instantly everybody in the Fort heard Captain Bailey's clear voice ringing out "You have 120 seconds," and there in the leaden-coloured, utterly cloudless sky shone out the eclipsed sun! a worthy sight for gods and men. There, rigid in the heaven, was what struck everybody as a decoration, one that Emperors might fight for, a thousand times more beautiful than the Star of India, even where we are now, a picture of surpassing loveliness, and giving one the idea of serenity among all the activity that was going on below, shining with a sheen as of silver essence built up of rays almost symmetrically arranged round a bright ring above and below, with a marked absence of their right and left, the rays being composed of sharp radial lines, separated by furrows of markedly less brilliancy. The observers, however, saw little of this glorious sight. Now, at the spectroscopic we got the words, "Hydrogen spectrum 1474 longer than F." Following close upon Mr. M'Ivor's command, "Polariscope," we get the words "Polarisation vertical over everything strong;" this was the verdict of the Savart. Next the Biquartz came into play, "Yellow and brown, with green on both sides faintly radial," was next heard. Then came Captain Bailey, "You have eighty seconds more."

This was the signal for observing the eclipsed sun through a long train of prisms, an attack in which Mr. Lockyer placed great confidence, and which he then rushed to make:—

"Four circles, 1474, same size and faint," was at once written down by the amanuensis. Then another manoeuvre. "You have still thirty seconds more," said Captain Bailey. In a moment Captain Maclean and Mr. Lockyer changed their instruments— Mr. Lockyer to observe the structure of the corona with the Astronomer-Royal's 6-inch telescope, Captain Maclean to note the spectrum of any part which Mr. Lockyer might feel him with, in a spectroscopic of large dispersion mounted on Mr. Lockyer's own refractor, of slightly greater aperture. "Definite structure five minutes from sun." "No spectrum, "Structure like Orion," "No spectrum," were now uttered in rapid succession, and the eclipse was soon over to the outsiders, apparently before its time, but not to the observer at the refractor. "Structure still visible" "Still visible," "Still visible," now went on for nearly three minutes, and then the corona vanished into the air.

There was another party of observers in the same locality, and far away at Jaffna, Trincomalee, Poodocottah, and Manatoddy, were others all working out the programme, while at Ootacamund and Avanaah were Janssen, Tennant, Herschel, Pogson, Hennessey, and a host of others.

NATIONAL THANKSGIVING AT ST. PAUL'S.

The preliminary survey of the area of St. Paul's Cathedral, for the purpose of the proposed service of thanksgiving for the recovery of the Prince of Wales, has been made by the proper officers appointed by the Lord Chamberlain and the Board of Works. It is proposed to open the choir—at present closed for alterations and decorations—as far as the Bishop's throne, and to reserve that portion for Her Majesty, the Royal party, and the State officers in attendance. The space from the west door to the choir will be covered with crimson cloth, and the canons, clergy, and choristers are to wear crimson scarves and white gloves, as upon the ceremony observed at the thanksgiving appointed by George III., and at the coronation of Queen Victoria in Westminster Abbey. With the exception of the immediate line of procession, the space in the aisles and under the dome will be thrown open for the accommodation of the ticket-holders, who will probably number about 20,000. As the construction of the new organ is complete, and the arrangement of the several parts only a matter of labour, Messrs. Wallis and Co., the builders, will press forward the work to have all completed by the appointed day. Mr. John Goss, the organist of the Cathedral, and composer to Her Majesty's Chapel Royal, will write the music to the "Te Deum," to be performed during the service, besides a new special anthem appropriate to the occasion.

RUSSIA AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

From the fourth annual report of the Evangelical Alliance for the United States we take an account of the results of the deputation and memorial to the Emperor of Russia, in behalf of the suffering Protestants in the Baltic Provinces.

"The Alliance has never before made such a bold, vigorous, and united effort, and may congratulate itself on the result. The subject of religious liberty, as distinct from mere toleration, was brought prominently, not only before the Russian Emperor and his Prime Minister, but before the tribunal of public opinion, and was earnestly discussed by the leading papers in England, France, Germany, Austria, Russia, and other countries. An impression had been made which cannot be effaced, and seed sown which must in due time bear fruit. The harsh measures against the Lutherans in the Baltic Provinces who wish to retain the church of their fathers, have recently been discontinued, and there is reasonable ground to hope that the penal laws of the Russian Empire, which impede the full enjoyment of religious liberty, will before long be repealed."

This statement is confirmed by the *Evangelical Christian* for January, 1872, in the following words:

"The Council have learnt that already the oppressive measures of which Protestants complained have been stopped: orders have been given that Lutherans, who, from whatever cause, had become members of the Greek Church, shall now be allowed to return to the Church to which they had formerly belonged; and Lutheran consistories, previously constrained by the Russian authorities to exercise discipline upon Protestant pastors who administered the Lord's Supper to returned convicts, or who baptized the children of mixed marriages, have announced their intention not to carry out in future such orders. This declaration has been allowed by the Russian Government to pass without notice or reply."

We give these important statements in full, because many papers have spoken of the deputation as intrusive and ineffectual. From them it is evident it was neither.

As to the proposed meeting of the Alliance in America, the foreign branches have referred the fixing of the time to the Alliance Committee of New-York, promising to co-operate, whether it be held in 1872 or 1873. If the great and good men of the old world can be induced to come in sufficient numbers to make the meeting a success, it will be held in 1873. It is probable that this will be the result, but the Executive Committee have not yet taken final action, but have ordered further correspondence with European branches, to make success more certain. The reason for so much care is thus set forth:

"It is strongly felt by the Executive Committee that the success of the Conference depends not on the number, but the quality of the men who are to attend it from abroad. Unless Europe is willing to send us a fair proportion of her truly representative men, the Conference had better not be held in America at all."

This Alliance does not propose to establish churches, as it has been sometimes requested to do. They devote their efforts to a single object, which is thus set forth:

"The definite aim and object of the Alliance is to promote religious liberty and Christian union on every proper occasion, by the united moral action of individual Christians from various evangelical Churches, without interfering with their respective creeds, policy, and internal affairs."

Spare no pains in beautifying your homes and improving the roads that lead to them.