

and we find the results of some of these convocations in our present Articles of Religion, in the Canons and in the Book of Common Prayer. These convocations are now regularly called at every meeting of Parliament; but it is a long period since they have been called to transact any business concerning the Church at large; and the Bishops and Clergy of the Dioceses have never been summoned to attend them. The third class of meetings of this description is the Diocesan synod. The nature and objects of these are somewhat obscure, inasmuch as I am not aware of any record of them since the Reformation, unless the Visitation can be so called. But before the Reformation, synods were called by the Bishops in their Dioceses, differing in character from the present visitation meetings. They were held regularly once or twice a year, but the power of summoning them rested with the Bishop. They consisted of the Bishop or his deputy, and the Priests or Presbyters of the Diocese, together with some Deacons specially summoned; but the only parties who appear to have assisted at their deliberations or decisions, were the Bishop or his deputy and the Priests. The business brought before them were questions or matters in dispute between clergymen, or between clergymen and laymen in ecclesiastical matters, or between laymen in similar matters. Laymen appear to have been admitted to be present, but not indiscriminately; and when a clergyman was to be tried for any offence, they were required to withdraw, with the exception of those who might be necessary as witnesses. Besides these three descriptions of synods, there were likewise meetings of the clergy from the divisions of the Dioceses called Deaneries, called Deanery Synods, into the nature and uses of which I do not now intend to enter at present. Having thus explained the meaning of synodical meetings, I come to the first point in the resolution, viz. the pleasure we feel at being able to trust that this meeting, called by the Bishop, is the first step in this colony, towards the revival of synodical meetings. And now let us carefully observe that this meeting itself, as it is now called, is not a synod, but an extraordinary meeting called in a special emergency; but the Bishop appears to have carefully and most prudently abstained from giving it a strict synodical character, by defining and limiting its objects, and by giving no pledge, nor even a hint, of its repetition. But although it is not in itself a revival of synodical meetings, we trust that it is a step towards their revival; for there is undoubtedly an increased and increasing persuasion in the Church, that such meetings are necessary for the efficient and wholesome working of the Church.—and this meeting, and every instance of a similar nature (if prudently conducted), will strengthen the feeling, and afford a precedent; and we cannot doubt that our Diocesan is aware that in the present state of public feeling, that will be the result; and has taken this step, with the full knowledge of the facts before him, and the intention that such should be the effect. Believing, therefore, that this will be the tendency and effect of this meeting, we cannot but congratulate ourselves on it, because we participate in the persuasion that such meetings have become necessary, in order to enable the Church, both here and at home, to accommodate itself, both to the altered circumstances of the present times, and to the peculiar and varying conditions of things created by planting the Church on new soils in the colonies, under circumstances which have no parallel in the mother country. And that such meetings will contribute in this manner to the strength and better working of the Church, we may judge from the fact, that all religious bodies who have the choice appears to adopt them,—even the Congregational dissenters (whose very principle is that every separate congregation is absolutely independent of every other congregation), finding it necessary to form themselves in congregational union. And in this case we may even draw an example from our sister Church in the United States;—for although the republican nature of the institutions in that country may for the most part deter us from referring to them as authority, the Church there possesses monarchical features, and harmonizes with monarchical institutions, and is, in point of fact, one of the most conservative of the institutions of that country, and therefore may be appealed to; and there is no one who is acquainted with the working of the general and diocesan convocations of that Church, who is not convinced, that, with some exceptions, their operation conduces eminently to the life and vigour and healthy action, as well as to the extension and stability of the Church. But whilst we reiterate that such a step has been taken, we are equally bound to be satisfied, that, by the foresight of our Venerable Diocesan, this first meeting is not called to determine on general matters, but on a specific subject; because in the revival of an institution which has been long in abeyance, there will necessarily arise many difficulties, and there will be great danger of retracing some false step which it may not be easy to retract. It is requisite, therefore, that the Church should proceed step by step, by slow and well-considered gradations, so that nothing may be done which we may afterwards regret and wish undone, when perhaps it may be too late. The second point in the resolution is our gratification that the lay communications have been called on to take part with the clergy in deliberating on the temporal affairs of the Church; and I apprehend our feeling on this subject will arise, in the first place, from the consideration, that the laity are more competent and more suitable for the consideration of such subjects than the clergy, because in their various occupations and duties they are more employed about temporal and pecuniary considerations, which most necessarily render their advice and assistance in the highest degree valuable upon such a subject; and they are more suitable, because the clergy ought to be re-enabled to devote their attention as unreservedly as possible to the discharge of their spiritual functions,—the conducting of public worship and instruction, and the pastoral care of the poor and of the young, the sick and the ignorant, of all classes. There is, likewise, another reason why it is requisite to engage the attention of the laity upon the pecuniary affairs of the Church, and that is, that they do not appear as yet to have apprehended their duty in regard to the pecuniary support of the Church. I wish to be corrected, if I am supposed to be in error; but when I look to the fact, that when God appointed the method of supporting the more than Churchmen ever think of contributing; and greater than those of the law of Moses, and its ordinances brought more home to every worshipper,—I do not think that Churchmen apprehend their duty aright, else they would perform it more efficiently. And I am strengthened in this view by finding that we are actually taunted by members of dissenting communities with the smallness of the contributions of our

people, compared with theirs. Surely, then, Churchmen require to be awakened to a sense of their duty; and few things can tend more to thus awaken them than that they should be called on regularly and systematically to examine into the temporal affairs of the Church, not only as regards the Clergy Reserves, but as to the support of the clergy in detail; for as surely as they do thus examine, they will be ashamed to allow the sustentation of the sacred ministry to remain in its present inadequate position. And here again I am borne out by the experience of the Church in the adjacent States, in which the laity are called on regularly to examine into the ways and means of the Church, and in which the result is a much more general liberality and more frequent instances of munificence in the cause of the Church. Such, therefore, we may reasonably hope would be the case here. I come now to the third and concluding portion of this resolution; the expression of our hope that both clergy and laity will come to the approaching conference with their Diocesan and each other with that Christian confidence in his Lordship which harmonious and permanent action imperatively require. In a meeting called together for any purpose, it must much facilitate the objects of the conference if frank and open confidence subsists between the parties; and still more is this required when the meeting called by the Bishop is for the promotion of the welfare of the Church. Then individual feelings and jealousies should be laid aside, and all should come prepared to confide in the intentions and judgment of their Diocesan. If that is not the case, the meeting, so far from producing any good effect, or strengthening our cause in the face of our opponents, will only conduce to increase the embarrassments and weakness of the Church. It may possibly appear to some that I have dwelt at unnecessary length and with unnecessary urgency upon this point; but to those who have watched the progress of events here, there will appear cause for dread, lest in a meeting of a new body, and many or most unused to act together, and that upon a subject upon which there is much excitement, individuals should be tempted to insist too much on their own views, and lest jealousies should arise, not only amongst themselves, but also towards the authority which has called them together; lest some should form mistaken notions of their powers and functions, and be displeased when they find them not recognized. But if these individualisms and jealousies do come, they will not only materially impair the actual efficiency of the meeting itself, but will necessarily tend to prevent the repetition of it. And that there is such a danger actually existing, appears, I think, from a document which some of us have seen, from which it appears that some parties are disposed to press upon their Diocesan, at this meeting, ulterior measures, which he himself does not appear, at present, to contemplate. Such urgency I should be disposed to regret, in proportion to the desire I have to see the revival of convocations and synods, because I am satisfied that our onward steps must be taken slowly and with the fullest consideration how each will affect not only ourselves in future, but the other colonies and the whole Church of England; for a few hasty steps taken at this juncture might throw back the realization of our hopes at the very moment when they appear to be advancing steadily towards their sure accomplishment.

DR. BOVELL in rising to second the fifth resolution moved by the Rev. Dr. Beaven, observed, that he should have been content to have given a silent acquiescence to the able and lucid remarks which had fallen from Rev. Doctor, but the resolution was at this juncture far too important to be passed over by the lay members of the congregation of which he stood there as representative. Turn to whatever quarter of the Church we would, we there saw a restless and uneasy heaving of serious and thoughtful minds, an instinctive dread of impending danger; a feeling akin to that which draws the wild beast to seek the protection of the forest, or the timid lamb of the fold to the screen of the lowly hedge, on the rising of the thunder cloud.—Much nervous stress had been laid on the subject of the admission of the lay element into the synodical meetings of the Church, and it has been stated on high authority that in the English Branch of the Catholic Church this element was wanting, but if this question be examined it will soon be apparent that the lay element has formed an essential part of the convocation of the Church. It must be remembered that the members of Parliament represented the people in Church and State, and that all measures, all canons and articles passed by the Houses of Convocation were ratified and confirmed by the Sovereign and Parliament ere they became law. Now the Constitution of England is changed, and we have the lay representation composed of men hostile to the Church and even to the very state. It is, therefore, to remedy so crying an evil, that we desire to amend this anomalous state of things, and purify the lay representation by taking it to the synods of the Church. Fortunately we have presiding over us a Bishop keenly alive to the dangers which surround us; a man whose heart is in the work, and who is quite equal to the labour of carrying us through these our difficulties. Let not the laity, however, deceive themselves or betray an impatient spirit, the evils which have overtaken us, are common to the Church throughout the Empire, and both time and serious deliberation are necessary in order to ensure unity of action, at this late hour, I shall not attempt to enter further on this momentous question, but shall conclude by urging the adoption of the resolution, and entreating the members to be firm in their support to the measures recommended by our good Bishop, and to be guided by him, viz.:

“That we have read with much pleasure the Pastoral Letter of the Lord Bishop of Toronto, in which we trust that the first step is taken in this Diocese towards the efficient organization of the Church by Synodical meetings; and we desire to express our cordial gratification that the Laity are invited to take part in the deliberations on the temporal affairs of the Church, especially at this important crisis; and our earnest hope both Clergy and Laity may co-operate with their Bishop in that spirit of Christian confidence that efficient and permanent action imperatively require.”

MR. J. H. HAGARTY proposed the sixth resolution: He had scarcely had time to read the resolution in his hand, but even if he had it would be unpardonable in him to address the meeting at any length, his voice sounded harsh and discordant under arches, such as those under which he stood—which were more familiar with sacred echoes—besides it was too late an hour to do so. He would tell them, however, that they should not be discouraged. Much has happened to cheer on to exertion. The resolution speaks of “the day of small things,” but the exercises of this holy week have brought us to the vigil of the most mournful anniversary in the christian calendar; on that sad day nearly two thousand years ago, a few faint hearted women and

dispirited fishermen were mourning over the sudden capture and death of their crucified Leader. A few short hours—and the Sun of the Resurrection-morning rose in the infant church, and what was “sown in weakness” was “raised in strength.” So, with a blessing from above, and with prayerful exertions on our own part, our “day of small things” may brighten into a noon of wide-spread usefulness and great results.

HON. W. B. ROBINSON, in seconding the resolution, assured the meeting that if he did not speak at any length, it was not that he took the less interest in the objects of the meeting, nor was he the less conscious of his duty, that duty he felt and he would say the same to others begins from the moment they left the house, and he trusted it would be well discharged:

“That the earnest hope is entertained, that the benefits we have attempted to show, have resulted from our labours, even in our day of small things, while they encourage us to renewed exertions, may induce many who have not yet done so, to enlist in our Association.”

MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR SPRAGGE proposed the Seventh resolution, &c.

“That the following Gentlemen be requested to be the Associated Committee, (together with the Incumbent and Churchwardens, members *ex officio*), of this Branch of the Church Society for the ensuing year, viz: Secretary and Treasurer—S. B. Harman; Committee—Messrs. J. Arnold, J. Bovell, M.D. W. Bright, G. L. Denison, E. T. Dartnell, A. Fleming, Captain Lefroy, F. Medcalf, R. C. McMullen, F. Perkins, T. P. Roberts, H. Rowsell, W. Spragge, W. Stanton, J. Worthington.”

MR. CRICKMORE seconded it, and thus disposed of the business of the evening, on which the Chairman closed the meeting with the usual prayer.

NEWCASTLE DISTRICT BRANCH.

The Annual Meeting of the Newcastle District Branch of the Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto, was held in St. Peter's Church, Cobourg, on the evening of Wednesday, February 12th, 1851. There was a large attendance of the laity, and all the clergy of the district, with one exception, was present. After evening prayer, the chair was taken by the Venerable the Archdeacon of York, who, after briefly explaining the benefits and progress of the Church Society, and the duty of all to co-operate heartily in its objects, called upon the Secretary, the Rev. J. Shortt, to read the Annual Report. This was followed by a statement of the receipts and expenditure of the Cobourg Parochial Committee during the past year, by the Secretary, Wm. Graveley, Esq.—explanatory, in detail, of the account generally embodied in the report of the whole district branch.

The following resolutions were then put and adopted:—

Moved by the Hon. G. S. Boulton, seconded by the Rev. J. Wilson, and

Resolved,—1. That the report now read be adopted, and that it be published in *The Church* newspaper, and *Cobourg Star*.

Moved the Rev. S. Armour, seconded by J. V. Boswell, Esq., and

Resolved,—2. That this meeting desires to record its thankfulness to Almighty God for the measure of success which he has been pleased to vouchsafe to this branch of the Church Society.

Moved by Mr. Sheriff Ruttan, seconded by the Rev. T. S. Kennedy, and

Resolved,—3. That the thanks of this meeting be offered to the several collectors, and other officers of this branch of the Church Society, with a request that they will continue their valuable labours during the ensuing year.

Moved by the Rev. J. Shortt, seconded by G. M. Boswell, Esq., and

Resolved,—4. That this meeting rejoices in the success which has attended the exertions of several of the parochial associations of this district branch, and renews the hope that their exertions will be generally persevered in, as affording the best earnest of the prosperity of the society.

Moved by R. D. Chatterton, Esq., seconded by the Rev. E. C. Bower, and

Resolved,—5. That this meeting highly approves of the principle of appropriating the local resources of parochial committees, after meeting the standing and necessary charges thereupon, to pious objects and enterprises of a permanent character, from which, after generations may derive benefit.

Moved by Wm. Corrigan Esq., seconded by the Rev. H. B. Jessopp, and

Resolved,—6. That this meeting is deeply alive to the importance of connecting religious with secular education, and does therefore warmly sympathize with the Lord Bishop of Toronto, in his zealous and Christian efforts to establish a University in this Province, upon sound Church principles.

Moved by H. J. Ruttan, Esq., seconded by the Rev. Wm. Logan, and

Resolved,—7. That this meeting, in strongly affirming the duty of upholding and contending for the principle of connecting religious with secular learning, deems it incumbent upon the Church Society to give their aid and agency in carrying out that principle as far as possible.

Moved by B. Clark, Esq., seconded by G. S. Daintry, Esq., and

Resolved,—8. That the thanks of this meeting be offered to the Venerable the Chairman, for his services in presiding on this occasion.

REPORT

Of the Newcastle District Branch of the Church Society, adopted at the Annual Meeting held in Cobourg, February 12th, 1851.

A celebrated German poet observes, “Neither in moral nor religious, more than in physical or civil matters, do people willingly do any thing suddenly or upon the instant; they need a succession of the like actions, whereby a habit may be formed; the things which they are to love, or to perform, they cannot conceive as insulated and detached; whatever we are to repeat with satisfaction must not have become foreign to us.” This observation illustrates the benefit to be derived from that observance of the Church, by which, with the sanction of apostolic practice, as declared in Scripture, a part of the regular Sunday service is made to consist in the contribution of “alms and oblations,” for the relief of the poor, and the maintenance of the ordinances of religion. The habit of giving from right motives, and for worthy purposes, being thus fostered, a wider scope to Christian liberality is afforded by the periodical calls of the Church Society; and the opportunity of aiding in the support of the principal enterprises of benevolence to which the attention of a Churchman can be invited, is put within the reach of the very humblest and poorest member of our community.

What can be simpler in its organization, and more effective in its results than the machinery of the Church Society. Its objects being the promotion of religion, as held by our Church; the clergyman of each parish, as the regularly instituted overseer and guardian of the spiritual interests of the people committed to his charge, with the churchwardens, the managers of parochial temporalities, and such other members of the congregation as may be associated with them, zealously and devotedly desirous of doing good, compose the parochial committee. These committees, in their aggregation form the broad and comprehensive basis upon which the society rests; and according to whose efficiency, or inefficiency, the society prospers or declines; inasmuch as the principal part of its annual income is derived from the fourth part of the collections made by the parochial committees, independent of the proceeds of the annual sermons, allotted to specific branches of the society's operations. All the parochial committees, within the bounds of a district or deanery, form, by delegation, the district association, to which every parochial committee transmits its annual report, after its adoption at a general meeting of the parishioners; and this enables the district associations to supply the Secretary of the Parent Society with the information contained in the general report.

Were this system fully carried out, there would be in this diocese, at the present time, one hundred and twenty three parochial committees, uniting in sixteen districts. The district branches at present constituted are only eleven, containing, consequently, much fewer parochial committees than one might expect. Your committee state this fact as an argument to be made use of in exciting ourselves to greater diligence, and more zealous efforts in our own sphere of action.

In our branch of the Church Society we have at present reports from eight parochial committees. But as the number of clergymen in this district has lately been happily increased by the acquisition of three more, we may confidently hope to be able, at our next annual meeting, to congratulate you on the successful working of three or four additional parochial committees.

COBourg.

The method pursued in this parochial branch, during the two preceding years, of distributing its limits amongst several collectors, has proved, in a most satisfactory degree successful. Owing to the zeal and Christian earnestness of these gentlemen, the amount raised within this Parochial Branch seems progressively to increase; and for the past year, it has reached the satisfactory sum of £104 9s. 10d.

Of this amount one fourth, according to the established rule, must be transmitted to the Parent Society to aid in its general purposes. An equitable appropriation has been made towards missionary operations within the District; and a small amount is appropriated annually to secure the tuition of a few scholars in Mr. Dorn's flourishing school. An annual appropriation is also made to meet the expenses of the Sunday School. The balance remaining, after defraying these necessary expenses, is applied to meet the monthly payments upon five shares in the Newcastle Building Society now owned by this Parochial Branch, and which are available for any pious or benevolent object which the Committee may decide upon.

The amount realized by this Parochial Branch for the past year is the more creditable to the parishioners of Cobourg from their being now engaged in an enterprise of great magnitude, the extension and completion of their Church, upon the plan commenced in the new front and tower erected some years ago.

When this undertaking, so much called for by the increasing population of this town, and the corresponding augmentation of the number of members of the Church, is completed, accommodation, it is calculated, will be provided for at least one thousand persons. Although this improvement will cost, it is estimated, about £1500, the congregation of Cobourg, long so distinguished for their liberality in all religious undertakings, will, it is felt, not allow any such consideration to delay the completion of what, on all hands, is admitted to be so imperatively called for.

PORT HOPE.

This growing town is not, by any means, an exception to the onward progress of the Church, so characteristic of the whole Diocese. The Church Society, which has been found there, as elsewhere, a great means of awakening Churchmen to a sense of their duty in contributing to promote the glory of God, continues to be a very great help towards keeping up the spirit of liberality, in expending not only money, but, what is often more difficult to obtain than money, time, in the extension of the Church. Within the last six months one hundred and two pounds have been raised for local Church purposes, by means of the monthly sales of the Sewing Society maintained by the self-denying and praiseworthy efforts of the ladies of the congregation. The increased demand for Church accommodation requires every exertion on the part of our members to enlarge the present Church; and to build a Sunday School house in some central part of the town, which may be used also for Divine Service, preparatory to the erection of a second Church in the West end, which is already in contemplation. But though, under these circumstances, the Port Hope Parochial Committee might ask to stand excused from lessening their local funds beyond the fourth of their annual collection, belonging, by the constitution, to the Parent Society, yet they are prepared to contribute their quota, as usual, to the Travelling Mission fund; and this, indeed, they are the more especially bound to do from the fact that the Church at Perry Town, having been lately included in the charge of the Travelling Missionary, leaves more of the Rector's time at the service of Port Hope. At the annual meeting, which was well attended, these matters, and also the support of the Sunday School from the funds of the Parochial Committee, were provided for. The whole amount of the collection for this year is thirty three pounds one shilling and two pence-half-penny. Of this, two pounds twelve shillings and six pence, were special donations to the Widows and Orphans Fund, and one-fourth of the remainder was transmitted to the Parent Society.

CAVAN.

In the flourishing Township of Cavan, there are two Parochial Committees, one in each of the congregations of St. Paul's and St. John's both increasing in zeal and usefulness.

In the scattered congregations in country places, of course, the same results cannot reasonably be expected as among the more populous, and comparatively richer congregations of towns. It is no less true, however, of the former than of the latter—and this is an observation which applies universally to every part of even this Diocese, remarkable as it is, amongst others, for the unexpected liberality with which it has supported the Church Society. It is, your committee would repeat, no less true of country places than of towns, that very much more can be done than has ever yet been done in promoting the best interests of our people by the agency of the Church Society.