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ORIGINAL.

CHURCHES WITHOUT AUTHORITY.

While in New Brunswick last summer I heard considerable conversation about a sermon that had been preached in the Fredericton Cathedral treating upon "Church Authority." "Ours" the preacher was reported to have said, "is the only authorized Church; that extinct, and the province is without an authorized church. Let us not envy them—the other denominations—the little good they do; but yet remember they are without authority."

We all then, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists are without authority. We may have large, commodious, numerous edifices; able, faithful, successful ministers; efficient Sabbath Schools; members that in life and death exemplify the beauties of Christian principle, yet are we only

UNAUTHORIZED SECTS.

Well, What of it? Does it endanger our Salvation? If I am dying is this the principal question. Is the minister from whom I have received the word and sacraments duly ordained, so that I may hope to enter heaven? Suppose he brings his parchments and shows me he has been ordained by a Bishop, can I die in peace? No, for I must know who ordained the Bishop. Suppose he brings the Bishop's parchment, and shows his ordination valid, he only removes my difficulty one step back; now I want to know who ordained the ordainer. Has a single link in the chain between this and the apostolic days been defective? During all the dark ages, ignominious offices were bought and sold, or wrested by violence, or rivals disputed for place, has every one, claiming to be a Bishop, been a Bishop? has no record been omitted or falsified?

"Tenth or ten thousandth breaks the chain alike." Does authority descend through corrupt channels? Does apostolic grace descend through a child of the devil? If salvation depends on apostolic succession, there can be no such thing as sure and certain hope. The minister at the grave may declare it; but the dying man cannot have it.

But, I may be told, "we do not say that salvation depends upon it. One outside the authorized church may be saved. But God's covenant is with his church and he that is outside is left to the

UNCOVENANTED MERCIES OF GOD.

Is he? Christ says, "Hethat believeth on me shall never perish but shall have everlasting life." Is that no covenant? John says, "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Does that mean no covenant? Paul says, "That by two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, &c." Is there no covenant in those two immutable things, the oath and promise of God? God's covenant is with his church, not the Episcopal church merely, but his whole church. It stands secure; which is just as true of the Presbyterian as the Episcopalian side—and of the Methodist side as any other. But for the salvation of the soul, God's covenant is with the individual believer. "If ye keep my words there are ye my disciples indeed." "My sheep hear my voice"—not walk by a particular under-shepherd—they bear my voice and they shall never perish. Mercies so solemnly and repeatedly ratified and guaranteed are no uncoovenanted mercies.

But it cannot be expected that attendants upon an unauthorized ministry shall have the comfort and advantage of those who wait upon the ministry divinely authorized. Is it a fact then, that Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists have

LESS SPIRITUAL COMFORT THAN EPISCOPALIANS?

Will any Episcopalian assume to say, they have less purity of heart, less strength to resist temptation, less consolation in sorrow, less honesty in life, less hope in death? I have known Methodists for many years, have heard their declarations of Christian joy, their comfort under the preaching of the word, their special blessings at the table of the Lord, their joy and triumph, though called to death from dearest kindred and most interesting engagements. I have met many Episcopalian in similar circumstances. I have heard their statements. I have never found them in possession of any richer spiritual blessings. I am confident no one has; that universal observation will prove they have no superior Christian experience. If our's then is an unauthorized

ministry, what of it? "This, that we who are divinely empowered to preach and administer the sacraments must always look with disfavor upon the operations of those who are unauthorized. Yea, we must protest and, at times, forbid their ministrations." Must you? Are you apostles then? The apostles did the same; but it was before they received the Holy Ghost; and their Master rebuked them, saying, "Forbid them not, for they that are not against us are on our part."

Well, if we may not prohibit we cannot but grieve, that men preach Christ who are not in the regular succession. Then are you

NOT OF PAUL'S STAMP.

He rejoices, that Christ was preached even through envy and strife. He would have rejoiced more heartily, we believe, at the labors of our ministers, for they preach through the love of Christ and his doctrines; and envy and strife towards none; but a sincere desire to glorify their Redeemer.

ARE YOU GUILTY OF THE SIN OF SCHISM?

against which we are taught to pray. Taught where? In the Liturgy, not in the Bible. True, Paul cautions the disciples against schism. There is an unwholy strife and agitation, a separation of brethren for passion and selfishness, against which we are to guard. But separation for usefulness, for liberty for conscience we find no where condemned. Paul himself and his companion separated from Barnabas for more efficient labour. The fathers of the Episcopal Church separated from the Catholic Church, and are still separated. The fathers of Methodism, preaching the doctrines they were led by God to preach, were restricted and persecuted, till penitible separation seemed the only course left for conscientious men. We were never in the Episcopal Church and never left it.

We, console ourselves that God recognizes us; that he blesses our labors abundantly in turning men from darkness to light; from sin to holiness; from sorrow to joy; that our missionaries are redeeming whole communities, from superstition and vice to religion and virtue. God's stamp and seal of approbation, we cannot mistake, his comfort and strength in our hearts, his help in sorrow and death, his co-operation in rescuing men from Satan. The long records of ordinations through eighteen hundred years may be doubted. But these evidences are beyond doubt. If a clerk in Rothschild's banking house were unrecognized by a fellow clerk at his elbow, it might be unpleasant. But it would be immensely consoling for him to know that the great banker recognized him, accepted his labor and honored his drafts. Beside we are not the only unrecognized ones. There are neighbors of our's whose titles and orders are similar. It amuses us a little, sometimes, to see the Popish priest put on airs towards the Protestant priest, and to find Bishop or Pope of the Holy Catholic Church deal with a breath all ecclesiastical claims of the Protestant prelate, and we wonder how he feels about it.

We are sometimes invited to unite with the Church of England. But we do not see what we should gain, nor how it could be honestly done. We could not acknowledge our baptism or ordination invalid, for we believe them as good as any under the sun. We believe an elder or Presbyterian is scripturally the same as a Bishop; that there is no successor to the apostles; that the record tracing connection back to the apostles is a rope of sand; and that if a man could trace his connection through worldly wicked men to Paul or Peter, that it is not worth a straw. When we find a clergyman or Bishop of Apostolic spirit and labor, and preaching apostolic doctrine, we acknowledge him, honor him, desire his utmost success. But though we or an angel from heaven, says Paul, preach any other Gospel unto you, let him be accursed.

A minister is so far superior to any minister, as he shows more of Christian excellence and zeal. A company of Christians is better than another so far as it is holier and more Christian. To such we bow; but ecclesiastically, we call no man master, and acknowledge no church to be better than our own. We have all the gospel there is, all the ordinances Christ ever instituted. If we are not descended from Peter; we are from his Master; and in Christ Jesus all things are ours, whether Paul, or Apollus, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are ours, and we are Christ's and Christ is God's.

A METHODIST.

OUR ENGLISH LETTER.

THE IRISH CONFERENCE

has been one of unusual interest and importance. Our brethren who toil in the Green Isle where Popery has its stronghold, have many difficulties to encounter, and it was with much joy that an increase in membership was reported, and decided progress in all the great departments of Methodist work. The Educational Institutes have prospered, and are exercising a most beneficial influence upon the young people of Wesleyan families. The Conference

took decided action upon the question of Lay Representation. The legal difficulties were satisfactorily adjusted, a plan for the order of business was accepted, and next year will witness the gathering of a Irish Conference composed of ministers and laymen in equal numbers, but with distinct provision for the separation of the questions which pertain solely to ministerial work and character.

THE UNION QUESTION

did not make much headway. The majority of the Primitives in Ireland earnestly desire to be connected with the old connexion, but questions of finance, with the opposition raised by the minority, so far complicated the business as to defer the matter for another year. It is hoped that in the course of the year the way will be cleared, and that very soon there will be one strong and united Methodist Church in Ireland, to hold up a banner for the truth.

THE HOSPITAL SUNDAY

in London was duly observed. The arrangements, which were so difficult at first, have this year been made with comparative ease. Sermons were preached, which in the vast majority of cases were special and appropriate to the event of the day. Large congregations were attracted, and the noble collections of former years have been fully equalled. The total amount has not been exactly ascertained, but nearly £27,000 have been paid in, and it is expected that the total will exceed £30,000. This is a grand result, and coming from all the sections of the Church, and from many who do not claim any relation to Christianity, it is a strong testimony to the value of those fine institutions, and the estimation in which they are held by the masses who attend places of public worship. The attempt to collect money on a Saturday afternoon from workmen and pleasure seekers, has been only very partially successful, and will soon be abandoned. There was a degree of irreligion mixed with the advocacy of the scheme, and it is not probable that it will attain to permanency or produce any marked result.

THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN

is almost irrespressible in his attentions to Wesleyan Methodism, his heart is set upon bringing us into the fold of the Establishment. He has elaborated his scheme, and sent it forth in the form of a tract, but forgets to state that the proposals were made some two or three years ago, and met only with contemptuous rejection. His plan, in brief, is for Methodist ministers to be episcopally ordained in order that they may be competent to preach in churches, remaining subject to the Conference and itinerating as usual. Our chapels are to be licensed by the Bishops, and then clergymen can preach in them. When all this is done and we get so close together, the communicants are to go to the Parish Church to receive the sacrament from the Episcopal minister. Such is the dream of the Bishop at whose hands we have suffered so many indignities, who yet would insult us living or dead, and who if he had the power would make short work in the final disposal of Methodism through the length and breadth of his Diocese.

THE DEAN OF MANCHESTER

has been obtaining a little unenviable notoriety by a fierce attack on Nonconformist orders and ministers. There was not a new thought or argument in the whole of his tirade, but the tone and manner were peculiarly ungracious and unbecoming. Our quiet but able Tutor at Didsbury, the Rev. J. D. Geden, has replied to the Dean and smites him "hip and thigh." Mr. Geden severely punishes the intolerant Dean, and leaves him exposed to the pity of all liberal-minded men. It seems a waste of time and strength to reply to the stale and oft-repeated attacks of the churchly critics, but there are occasions when silence is misunderstood, and these men are to be answered according to their folly.

THE CONFERENCE PLAN

for Nottingham and adjacent Circuits is published. The towns and principal villages within an area of many miles, are to have the voices of the Conference preachers. Nottingham for the first time is preparing for the arduous task, and the high-honour of entertaining 500 brethren at once, who are the invited, for whom homes, lunches and dinners are to be provided either night at hand or in places not too remote. It is equal to the strain, and will not disappoint the high expectation of its admirers. July 10, 1876. "B."

BIBLIAN NOTES.

B. C. 922.] LESSON VI. SOLOMON'S PROSPERITY. 1 Kings 10. 1-10. Aug. 6.]
HOME READINGS.

MONDAY—The Lesson. 1 Kings 10. 1-13.
TUESDAY—The king and his city. 1 Kings 10. 14-29.

WEDNESDAY—The king at Gibeon. 1 Kings 9. 1-9.

THURSDAY—The king's dominions. 1 Kings 9. 10-28.

FRIDAY—A Sabbath song. Ps. 92. 1-15.

SATURDAY—A better kingdom. Rom. 5. 1-11.

SUNDAY—A glorious kingdom. Rom. 8. 31-39.

TOPIC—Yielding Homage to Israel's King.

GOLDEN TEXT—She came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. Mat. 12. 42.

Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. That God fulfilled a promise made to Solomon?

2. How to make those about us happy?

3. To whom to yield our highest homage?

DOCTRINE—Temporal prosperity a gift of God. 1 Chron. 29. 12; 1 Tim. 6. 17; James 1. 17.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

The lesson tells us of the visit of the queen of Sheba to Solomon. Its precise date we cannot tell, but it was not until by his vast commercial transactions his fame had spread far and wide. The story of her visit is told under the TITLE of Solomon's Prosperity. In the TOPIC she is found Yielding Homage to Israel's King, which was true of both kings, the earthly and the heavenly. The GOLDEN TEXT says of her that "She came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." Her proceedings we find in the OUTLINE: 1. "The queen's test." 2. "The queen's homage." The DOCTRINE follows, and will bear study: Temporal prosperity a gift of God.

BY D. A. WHELDON, D. D.

1-5. The queen's test.

1. QUEEN OF SHEBA—Whether her country was in Abyssinia or Arabia is a point on which opinions are divided. Both have traditions that claim her; but it was quite probable that Sheba was in Southern Arabia. The Arabians give her the name of Balkia. The traders of Solomon, in their voyages through the Red Sea, had carried reports of his growing greatness which she heard, and especially of his magnificent temple. CONCERNING THE NAME—Is relation to his name, perhaps the gift to him of wisdom, and the honor paid to the LORD in building a house for his glory. PROVE HIM—Test him, to see whether he was as wise as she had heard. HARD QUESTIONS—Riddles, abstruse, enigmatical, puzzling questions. This would test his sagacity and wisdom. The Arabs are wont to thus test persons of distinction. Yet, beyond doubts, many of those questions related to those moral subjects which we find treated in the Book of Proverbs.

2. SHE CAME TO JERUSALEM, a distance of a thousand miles, "from the uttermost parts of the earth," that is, of the land of Southern Asia, with all the retinue of a great queen and in a state that would be a respect to the dignity of the powerful king whom she visited. Her SPICES, GOLD AND PRECIOUS STONES, products of her own land, were for presents, verse 10. In going to God in prayer we need to go in a manner respectful to the greatness of the infinite one whom we seek. Then she COMMUNED WITH HIM in the freest conversation of ALL THAT WAS IN HER HEART to inquire about. And it would seem that she sought instruction especially in the things of the LORD, his nature, and his religion.

3. ALL HER QUESTIONS—The wise king answered all her inquiries in the most satisfactory manner. The visit seems to have lasted some time, and to have won from the queen the profoundest respect and admiration.

4. SHE SAW ALL SOLOMON'S WISDOM—As displayed in their conversations, in the style of government of his vast empire, in his extended commerce, and in his various relations and works. THE HOUSE—His own palace which he built with great magnificence on the southern slope of Mount Moriah, chap. 7. 1-12.

5. THE MEAT—The food for the supply of those who were dependent on him, including the members of his household.

civil officers at Jerusalem, and the military force on duty, chap. 4. 22, 23. SITTING OF HIS SERVANTS—The orderly arrangements of his officers. MINISTERS—A higher class of officers in habitual attendance on the king's person. Their apparel was doubtless rich and splendid enough to correspond with their position at a court so magnificent as to have won lasting renown among oriental nations. HIS COURTEASERS—rather his butlers. HIS ASCENT—A private passage or stair-way from his palace to the temple. It was evidently constructed with magnificence, but no description of it is left us. These eight things she saw. NO MORE SPIRIT—Surprise and admiration overcame her. She was content to gaze and think, as if she had nothing more to desire. Thus she had applied her test to the king, and he had endured it well. A greater than he has said, Try me and see.

6. 10. The queen's homage.

6. A TRUE REPORT—Having proved him and been satisfied, a frank and fair acknowledgment was due to him and honorable to herself. She had HEARD in her OWN LAND far away of his acts in government and building magnificent edifices, and his wisdom both as man and king, and now confesses the truth.

7. BELIEVED NOT—This was frank. The queen's speech is full of the language of compliment, yet bearing the marks of the profoundest sincerity. We are nowhere told the precise terms of the reports which had reached her ears, but she evidently believed them greatly exaggerated, until she CAME and HAD SEEN for herself. On the contrary, her experience showed her that the HALF WAS NOT TOLD her, but the reality far exceeded all that she had heard. If, as we suppose, questions relating to religious and moral life, the highest of all wisdom, were talked of between this pious king and heathen queen, and the truths of which the Book of Proverbs is full were given her, she surely heard many wonderful things of which she never before dreamed. She learned of the religion of Solomon, and was glad. How many have heard about the religion of Jesus, who, like this queen, on putting it to the test, have exclaimed, THE HALF WAS NOT TOLD US.

8. HAPPY—She thought it a great privilege for Solomon's people and officials, who were from their position brought frequently into connection with him, to enjoy such association. Intercourse with such a character is ennobling. It is a great blessing to live in a Christian family. It is a great blessing to be associated with Christian ministers and Christian people, and to hear them; but a still greater one to have Jesus with us and to bear his voice.

9. BLESSED BE THE LORD—The queen's errand related partly to Jehovah and his dealings with ISRAEL, and she had learned the facts respecting both. Her words are full of profound reverence, yet she may have believed him to be only the national God of the Hebrews, and not the God of the whole earth. Tradition asserts that she was converted to Judaism, and carried the religion back to her own country; but, however pleasant it would be to so believe, the evidence is not sufficient.

10. SHE GAVE—Gifts are very frequent things in the East as tokens of friendship and regard. To refuse a gift is said to be interpreted as evidence of enmity. ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY TALENTS—The value of the Hebrew gold talent is uncertain. At the lowest estimation this gift would be nearly three millions of dollars, a royal present truly of itself, to which others were added. In verse 13 we learn of those given the queen in return.

Lesson. 1. We have heard of Jesus, the true King of Israel, his wisdom, power, and glory, and it is for us every one to know in our own experience how great and good he is, and how precious is his love. John 7. 17, 46; 9. 25; Phil. 3. 7, 7; 1 Pet. 2. 7; 1 John 5. 10. 2. We ought to bring our fullest homage to Jesus our king. He is greater than Solomon and more worthy. Had this queen known of him as we do, would she not have taken him for her Lord? If she took so great pains to know and honor Solomon, shall we not be equally earnest to know and honor Jesus by giving him our hearts? John 4. 29; Acts 5. 31; Phil. 2. 10; Col. 2. 9; Rev. 5. 9; 23. 14.