

perhaps, than any other not merely personal to himself, and after, as his end drew near, was on the lips and in the heart of our beloved father, to whom this notice is devoted. "Will thou not revive us again, O Lord, that thy people may rejoice in thee?"

THE PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE, ENGLAND.

On the last day of March, the third Session of this College closed. The number of students who had matriculated amounted to nineteen, in different stages of progress, and the whole of whom have decided to devote their lives to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church. We understand that the progress of the students and their attainments in theological and other knowledge have given much satisfaction to the Professors. During the summer recess the students will be under the superintendence of the Presbyterians within whose bounds they may respectively reside; and, in the event of any of the respectable families of our congregations needing private instruction for their children, we would suggest that they might be serviceable to our students by engaging them as tutors.

THE "PRIMITIVE CHURCH."

In the *Messenger* for March (page 392-3), we referred to Lord Chancellor King's "Inquiry concerning the Constitution and Usages of the Primitive Church." From this valuable work the following extracts are taken:—

"Preface.

"The design of the following Treatise is in general to represent the constitution, discipline, unity, and worship of the Primitive Church, that flourished within the first three hundred years after Christ; but more particularly and especially to describe by their opinions and practices, with respect to those things that are now unhappily controverted between those of these kingdoms, who are commonly known by the names of Church of England men, Presbyterians, Independents, and Anabaptists.

"What I have written as to this subject I have wholly collected out of the genuine and unquestionably authentic works of those ages that are now extant, making use of no other writings whatever except the ecclesiastical history of Eusebius, which was written in the beginning of the fourth age, and relates only those affairs that were transacted in the three former; beyond the period of which time this inquiry doth not reach.

"Whether all, or some, or none, of the following primitive customs may be changed by the civil magistrate, or by a convocational assembly, I pretend not here to determine, my design at present is only to search into matter of fact, to find out what were the usages of the ancient Church within the first three hundred years after Christ; which, after the most impartial and serious inquiry, I find to be as described in the ensuing treatise, in the penning whereof I have avoided all prolixity and tediousness, and for that end omitted to answer several objections that I know may be made against several things which I have here asserted; my intention being briefly and perspicuously to prove what I judge to be the true practice of the Primitive Church, as to those points now disputed by us."

Of Diocesan Episcopacy.

"That there was but one church to a bishop will appear from this single consideration, viz. that the ancient dioceses are never said to contain churches in the plural, but only a church in the singular. This was the common name whereby a bishop's cure was denominated, the bishop himself being usually called the bishop of this or that church, as Tertullian saith, that Polycarp was ordained Bishop of the Church of Smyrna.

"As for the word 'diocese' by which the bishop's flock is now usually expressed, I do not remember that I ever found it used in this sense by any of the ancients; but there is another word still retained by us, by which they frequently denominated the bishop's cure, and that is 'Parish.'

"In Eusebius' 'Ecclesiastical History,' the word is applied in several hundred places. It is usually used to signify the Bishop of the Parish of Alexandria, of the Parish of Jerusalem, of the Parish of Antioch; and so of the Bishops of the number of several other churches; by that term denoting the very same that we now call a parish, viz. a competent number of Christians dwelling near together, having one bishop, one pastor, or minister of over them, with whom they find a constant way to worship and serve God, according to a particular particular church and synagogical terms, signifying one and the same thing, and consequently a bishop having but one parish could extend his government no further than one single congregation.

"That a bishop's diocese exceeded not the bounds of a modern parish, and was the same, as in name, so also in thing, will appear from these following observations, as—

"1. All the people of a diocese did every Sunday meet all together in one place to celebrate divine service. Thus saith Justin Martyr, 'On Sunday all assemble together in one place, where the bishop preaches and prays.' (*Apolog. ii. p. 98, Edit. Colm. 1686*)

"2. The bishop had but one altar or communion-table in his whole diocese, at which his flock received the sacrament from him. 'There is but one altar,' says Ignatius, 'as there is but one bishop.' (*Epist. ad Philad. p. 41, Edit. Amstel. 1616.*) At this altar (or communion-table) the bishop administered the sacrament to his whole flock at one time.

"3. The other sacrament of baptism was generally administered by the bishops alone within their respective dioceses. For as Cyprian says, 'the bishops only ought to baptize.' (*Epist. 73, p. 220, Edit. fol. 1593.*) So that the bishops did ordinarily baptize all the persons that were baptized in their dioceses; and if so, it is not probable, I may say possible, that their dioceses were extended beyond the bulk of single congregations.

"4. The Church's charity was deposited with the bishop, who, as Justin Martyr reports, 'was the common curate and overseer of all the orphans, widows, diseased, strangers, imprisoned, and, in a word, of all those that were needy and indigent.' (*Apolog. ii. p. 99.*)

"That diocese could not be very large where the bishop personally relieved and succoured all the poor and indigent therein.

"5. All the people of a diocese were present at Church censures, as Origen describes an offender as appearing before the whole Church. (*Comment. in Matt. p. 335, vol. i. Edit. fol. Rothom. 1668.*)

"6. No offenders were restored to the Church's peace without the knowledge and consent of the whole diocese. (*Cyprian Epist. lix. p. 164.*)

"7. When the bishop of a Church was dead all the people of that Church met together in one place to choose a new bishop. (*Cyprian Epist. lxxviii. p. 202.*)

"8. At the ordination of the clergy the whole body of the people were present. Therein they imitated the example of the apostles and apostolic men, who ordained none but with the approbation of the whole Church. (*Clement Romanus. Epist. i. ad Corinth. p. 57, Edit. Oxon. 1633.*)

"9. Public letters from one Church to another were read before the whole diocese. (*Cyprian Epist. lv. p. 144.*)

"10. Lastly: the whole diocese of the bishop did meet altogether to manage the Church affairs. 'Cyprian formed his whole diocese, that all those things should be examined before them and be judged by them.' (*Ad plebem Epist. xii. p. 37.*)

"Now put all these observations together, and duly consider whether they do not prove the primitive parishes to be no larger than our modern

* : from which verb the word Parish is derived.

† On this and all other points Lord King cites a great number and variety of authorities. We only give the first of his quotations.

ones; that is, that they had no more believers or Christians in them than there are now in ours. I do not say that the men at bishoprics had no larger territories, or no greater space of ground than ours; but, on the contrary, it is very probable that many of them had much more; and that the very days of Christianity, in many places the number might be so few, as that for the better and more orderly they might associate themselves into several bishoprics, and make up but one Church, and that a small one too; but thus I say, that the number of their local extent was, their numbers were but one single congregation, where all the people met together at one time, prayed together, received the sacrament together, assisted at Church censures together, and despatched Church affairs together; and yet members of the primitive dioceses did all this together, as the preceding observations evidently declare.

"I might stop here and add no further proof to that which hath been already so clearly proved. But yet that we may more clearly illustrate this point we shall demonstrate it by another method, viz. by showing the real bulk and size of these bishoprics concerning which we have any notice remaining on ancient records; and manifest that the very largest of them were no greater than our particular congregations are.

Bishoprics being confined within the primitive bounds of a single congregation, it is no marvel that we find bishops not only in cities but in country villages; there being a bishop constituted wherever there were believers enough to form a competent congregation."

(To be Continued.)

On the subject of diocesan episcopacy we good give no further extracts. If any one after the foregoing statements can defend the system, it must be assuredly on other ground than either that of Scripture or early Ecclesiastical History.

JOINT COMMITTEES OF THE SECESSION AND RELIEF CHURCHES.

These bodies met in the Session house of Greyfriars' Church, (the Rev. Dr. King's) North Albion Street, Glasgow.

It was recommended to the United Synod, that large Presbyteries should be divided as soon as possible after the union, which was to take place at Edinburgh on Thursday the 13th of May next, instead of Wednesday the 12th, as formerly agreed on.

The Sub-Committee on the title deeds of properties read and laid on the table their Report, which contained very important matter, viz. the basis of union the doctrine, worship, government, and practice of the Churches since the separation from the Established Church, with queries which were submitted to counsel for their opinion, and the answers to said queries by counsel, all of which was considered to be very satisfactory by the Committees; and it was agreed to transmit the same to the Synods.

The Sub-Committee on the arrangements for the distribution of preachers of the United Church submitted their Report, also a code of rules for their regulation, which contained the time the list of preachers had to be made up and sent to the respective Presbyteries, viz. every four months, instead of the present plan—six months, in the Secession, and one month in the Relief churches; with an alphabetical list of the preachers.

The meeting then took up the business regarding the professorial chairs. Professors Brown, Harper, MacMichael, Lindsay, and Edie were present, and stated that they would agree to make any further arrangements in regard to the attendance and the time of the students; the salary to be £60 per annum to each of the professors. The Report was then agreed to.

It was agreed to amalgamate the two libraries, with a recommendation to have the united library enlarged, and to be put in good working condition.

* In the highland and thinly peopled districts of Scotland and the north of England, there are many such parishes or dioceses still, and in all newly-evangelized countries.