

GENERAL PRESBYTERIAN COUNCIL.

(Continued from our last.)

EVENING SEDERUNT.

The Council resumed its sittings at half-past seven o'clock—Mr. George Junkin, Philadelphia, chairman. The subject for consideration was "Home Missions in America and other lands."

Dr. Paxton, New York, proceeded to refer to a few facts in the history of America which seemed to indicate that God in His providence did not design America for Romanism. Among these was the fact that Columbus and his companions discovered Florida instead of North America, which preserved North America from falling under the power of Roman Catholic Spain, and gave it to Protestant England. Another of these facts was that the hand of Divine Providence, which seemed to cover America from the eyes of men, was removed, and the country was opened up for actual settlement just before the period of the great Reformation. If America was preserved under Divine providence, it was reserved for a peculiar people. It was a composite of all the nations on the face of the earth; there was no nation of any importance not represented. They brought their religion with them; they first founded the Church, and upon that foundation they reared the State. (Applause.) It was the simple fact that their political institutions grew out of their religious principles, and that was a peculiarity of their American history; and it was that which gave interest to their history and distinctness and peculiarity to their national and religious works. But there was another point, and that was the rapidity with which everything was carried on in America. Dr. Paxton proceeded to point out that while the Grecian, Assyrian, Roman, and all the other empires of the old world had taken many centuries to develop themselves, America had reached its present position of influence and power in one century. The work of the Church was carried on in the midst of this mighty progress. They had had to occupy a territory three thousand miles wide. They strove that wherever the woodman's axe rang, there should the gospel also resound. (Applause.) The mission efforts thus started were at first local, but as time went on they soon developed into regular schemes for sending the Gospel along the whole western frontiers. A Board of Home Missions was started, that they might defray the expense of sending missionaries out to the far west and supplement the small sums that the frontier families were able to give for mission work, and to superintend the whole work of evangelization along that line. Then grew up the Board of Church Erection which simply stimulated the people to help themselves by offering their assistance to complete the work which they had begun with their own hands. But then they required Sabbath Schools, books for the children, and Christian literature for the people. Hence came their Board of Publication, which circulated literature either freely or at very small expense through that great western land. Then, naturally, sprang up the Board of Foreign Missions, for just where the sense of responsibility to their family, relative, or friend, was really awakened in any human soul, just so certainly would that principle deepen and develop until the spontaneous prompting was to send the Gospel to the whole wide world. (Applause.) In all there was no denomination of Christians so acceptable as Presbyterians. There was no system of Church organization so popular; it suited the people, because it resembled their Republican system of government. Another reason of its acceptability and popularity was, that it was the broadest and the most catholic of all Churches, and could work anywhere and under any condition. The Presbyterian could go into any community and give the right hand of fellowship to a brother of any other denomination. And this was one of their peculiarities, because there was no other system that could do work anywhere, and under any circumstances, as the Presbyterian system could. (Applause.)

Dr. Cyrus Dixon, New York, explained that while he spoke on behalf of the Church North, they must not think that other denominations were not engaged in the same great and blessed work. His Board operated through the Presbyteries. The Presbyteries were bound to certify to the character of the missionaries, and the Board had to report all their income and expenditure connected with missions to the Church, and also all their work. They had more than a thousand ministers under the commission of the Board, and carrying on their work under their superintendence. The Churches made collections on behalf of the mission work, and many gave liberally of their means to the work among all classes. The gentlemen who, the other day, had given a million dollars to Princeton, had given the Mission Board a hundred thousand dollars. The men who were engaged in the mission work were as good men as the best men in the ministry of the Church of God he ever met with. Dr. Dixon proceeded to give some interesting details illustrative of the privations endured by the missionaries of their Church. He also referred to the self-denial of many of their missionaries. He could also tell the Council that the American Zion was more indebted to the tears and toils of the women than her ministers or men. (Loud applause.) The children of America also knew what the chief end of man was, and they knew how to go about it. Speaking of the people among whom they laboured, he said they had missionaries among the Germans, Bohemians, Waldensians, French Huguenots, and Hollanders. Among all sorts and conditions of nationalities this work was going on. In their Western Coast in 1847 gold was found there, and as the news went throughout the world thousands flocked to California. The moment the sound reached China that country began to send forth its teeming population. They had a quarter of a million of Chinese in California. These Chinese men will continue to come across to San Francisco till these vast solitudes will have their millions of Chinamen. Whittan open door! And their Church was called to enter at this door. Their

missionaries were entering in at it, and were engaged in evangelistic work among the Chinese, and now converted Chinamen were going back to China, and there was no better man than a converted Chinaman, because he learned to distinguish between a man of God and a man of the world.

Dr. J. Van Dyke, Brooklyn, said he apprehended there was a popular mistake in regard to the true meaning of the word progress. He was not a progressive man who was always digging down at the foundations of the mountain to see whether they stood firm. That was not the progressive man who plucked out to-day the trees that his forefathers planted, and whose greenness and freshness were sufficient fruits of their vitality. It was here, he thought, that home missions came appropriately into the consideration of this Council. Home mission work was, in reference to the new countries, the application of those principles of doctrine and polity which had been well-established by their forefathers and which they professed to accept. He proceeded to ask, what were the influences for good which were to mould all the various populations which were in the United States of America? He believed the steam-engine and steamship, and all inventions of modern science and art, were instruments in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ for the conversion of this world. He believed all literature, language and science, and all government was to be so controlled. First there came the country itself. The next influence in importance was the English tongue, with its grand literature. As another moulding influence, he mentioned the great body of English common law, which was pervading all American social and political life. Then again, there was their educational system—from the common school to the college; it was built upon the broad base of the people's will; and as crowning and embracing all, was the Church of Jesus Christ, of which themselves, the Presbyterians, claimed to be not only one, but the best embodiment and exponent. Touching on the adaptation of the Presbyterian system of doctrine and government to home missions in such a country as America, he gave it as his opinion that the Presbyterian Church was a pioneer as well as a conservative. He believed that the hardest thing to kill and easiest to establish in America was a Presbyterian Church—a priori because he was satisfied it was in accordance with God's Word; a posteriori because of its history in this and other lands. They recognised the visible and the invisible Church. They defined the invisible Church to consist of all who believed in God. They defined the visible Church to consist of all who professed the true religion. Could they make it broader than that? They left such things as vestments and forms of worship to the discretion of the local Church. Among the fifteen hundred Churches under the missionary board, and among the three thousand Churches that supported them, they had psalm-singing and hymn-singing Churches; they had Churches with organs, and Churches in which the only instrument used was a pitch-fork; Churches in which the minister used a gown; and others in which the ministers use no gown; Churches where the congregation sang a doxology at the beginning, others where they sang it at the end, and some where they did not sing it at all. And they had at least one Church where the congregation used a regular fixed liturgy, and read their prayers out of a book. What they all wanted was more faith to believe God's Word as to the value of the soul—faith to believe that all men were lost in sin, and faith to believe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ was the power of God unto salvation—and love to baptise their faith, swelling out and growing out towards all their fellow-men for Christ's sake. They needed to re-inscribe on the blue banner which so appropriately floated over this hall, the great rallying word, the great battle-cry of the Reformation—"In things essential, unity; in things non-essential, liberty; in all things, charity."

Rev. William Williams, Swansea, referred briefly to a home missionary society in Wales, which, he said, was unlike any other institution in connection with any Church represented at the Council. It was instituted to meet a peculiarity which he believed belonged to the principality. This society employed missionaries at home to preach in a foreign tongue and sent them abroad to preach in their own tongue. This was made necessary by the spread of the English language among the Welsh. There was about thirty-five missionaries meeting this difficulty in North and South of Wales, but they wanted as many more.

The Council then adjourned, after a vote of thanks to the chairman, moved by Lord Kintore.

FRIDAY, July 6th.

The Council resumed its sittings at half-past ten o'clock—the Rev. Principal Harper, Edinburgh, in the absence of the Rev. Wm. France, Paisley, Moderator of the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church, Chairman.

Professor Blaikie moved, seconded by Principal Tulloch, that the next meeting of the Council be held in Philadelphia, in 1880, which after some discussion was agreed to.

Principal Harper then vacated the chair, and his place was taken by Dr. Geo. Jeffrey, Glasgow.

Professor Blaikie read letters of greeting from Dr. Dormer, of Berlin; Professor Lechler, of Leipzig; Professor Christlieb, Professor Ebrard, of Erlangen; M. Coulin, Genéval, Geneva; Superintendent Dr. Newenhaus, of the Dome Church of Halle; Dr. Herzog, Professor Biggenbach, and several other leading ministers and laymen of Basle, in Switzerland. A committee was appointed to reply.

Dr. Calderwood said that the Business Committee proposed that the transactions of the Council should be published, and that it be remitted to a committee to take steps for doing this, which was agreed to.

The subject of discussion for the forenoon sitting was "Missionary Obligations," and was first considered in a letter from Dr. Duff, who has been unable through severe indisposition to attend the Council. In this communication, which was brimful of

the venerable missionary's wonted enthusiasm in the cause, in which he has devoted so many years of a long life, Dr. Duff advocated the adoption of some well-organised scheme by which missionary effort by all the branches of the Presbyterian Church may be strengthened and extended. The letter, which produced a profound and solemn impression upon the meeting, closed with a practical suggestion that, as an expression of thankfulness for the great fact of a union of Presbyterianism which girdles the earth, a united Presbyterian mission should be undertaken to the Milanese group of islands in the New Hebrides.

Dr. Marshall Lang, Glasgow, moved that the suggestion should be referred to the Business Committee to consider and report.

Dr. Andrew Thomson, Edinburgh, seconded the motion which was carried by acclamation.

The Rev. J. H. Jones, Ph.D., Trevecca College, Wales, read the first paper. In the outset Mr. Jones insisted that the Church had been called into existence with the sole design of doing good to the world. The economy of the ancient Church made it in a certain sense a missionary Church, and our missionary obligations to the world were founded upon the last commands of the Saviour. That command was addressed to the whole Church in its succession to the end of time, and the apostles represented not so much the office bearers of the Church at that time, but the Church as a whole. As to the constitution of the Church, whether it were Presbyterian, Episcopalian, or Congregational, doubt and uncertainty might prevail, but as to its missionary character, there could be no question. When the Church ceased to be this, its very existence would be at stake. (Ear, hear, and applause.) Missions were but the simplest instincts of Christianity, and essential to it, and instead of being its redundant drapery and superfluous ornament, were required from its very nature. (Applause.)

Dr. Murray Mitchell, Edinburgh, said the extension of the kingdom of God over the whole world ran like a thread of gold through the whole even of the Old Testament, or they might call it a light which dawned in Eden, and shone with ever-increasing brightness, till in the great evangelical prophet, the glory of the Gentiles was seen coming into the Church of God like a flowing stream. They had there the infinite yearning of the Divine love for perishing sinners. Then came the last word, the farewell request, the one command, he thought, which our Lord gave after His resurrection from the dead, "Go into all the world, preaching the gospel to every creature." Preach it to the uttermost parts of the earth; as if He had said—Whatever else ye do, do this; whatever else ye forget, I entreat you forget not this. He proceeded to direct attention to the fact that at present three-fourths of the globe were still in darkness, and the habitations of orality. There were more heathen alive in the present day than in the days of the Apostles; for the Roman Empire in his day hardly contained 120,000,000 of people, and the Indian Empire contained more than double that number now, while China contained more than 400 millions. That was the state of things eighteen hundred years after the great commission was given to the Church to preach the Gospel to every creature. There were men who told them that heathen religions gradually improved, as muddy streams gradually ran themselves clear. If that was true, he had utterly misread history. Compare the heathen religions existing now with those existing in the days of Paul. The great systems of Hindooism, of Zoroasterism, and of Buddhism in India, of Confucianism in China, of Fetichism, so largely developed in Africa, of spirit worship, which was almost universally the religion of the Tartar, were all showing no signs of improvement; and, in addition to these great systems, another had arisen since the days of Paul, which was spreading still and spreading rapidly—a system that, admitting the unity of God, denied the divinity, the death and atonement of Christ, which tied down the devotees at best to the European civilisation of the seventh century, which degraded women even more than Hindooism, which recognised the unutterable evil of slavery, and which proclaimed as a duty war for the conversion and, if necessary, the enslavement of believing nations. The condition of the heathen nations was not better now than it was in the days of Paul. He thought they might demonstrate that it was decidedly worse. There were openings now for the Gospel that had never been experienced till of late. There were, for example, the openings in America and in India. Light could now be poured into the darkest recesses of the Zonas, and surely it was the duty of the Christian Church to take advantage of all these openings. There were also other advantages which they had as compared with the early Church for carrying on missionary work. Those were a handful of men, but the modern Church consisted of a mighty nation. They had the Scriptures translated into two hundred different languages, and had all the advantages of steam carrying their messages to the ends of the earth. They had also the same glorious promise to sustain them in their high enterprise which the early Church possessed, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." It was necessary that the obligation to present and assist in missionary work should be enforced from the pulpit with a zeal and devotedness that had never been attempted as yet. The mind, and heart and conscience of the Church required to be educated on this subject, and none could do this so well as the pastors of the Churches. Prayers on behalf of missions ought also to abound in all their Churches. Means should also be taken to extend information as to missionary enterprise among the people. Parents and guardians should also take up the duty of creating and fostering an interest in mission work among the young; and the press should be looked at, and a missionary literature provided for the old and young.

Dr. Wangemann, of Berlin, read a paper on "The True Missionary Spirit." He said he thought it was dangerous for a missionary not acquainted with the character of the heathen to think that he can win

their affection to the Gospel by overloading them with temporal gifts and benefits. They came to think that they did the missionary a favour by listening to his sermons or allowing themselves to be baptised. Another error was that of encouraging the idea that all missionary buildings, and books, and other material for the schools, must be furnished from the missionary system. Another danger which he had to enumerate had reference to civilization preceding Christianity—for he had a high respect for civilization only as it followed Christianity. A still further evil was jealousy between different missionary societies. The most effectual means of securing fruit from the missionaries' labours was to exercise the spiritual strength of the new converts, to make them work for them, to bring their thank-offerings, to visit their fellow-countrymen, and to make them elders of their Churches. The sooner they learned to labor for the Lord the sooner would their Christianity be healthy.

Dr. Moody Stuart, Edinburgh, gave an address on "Jewish Missions." Presbyterianism, he said, was peculiarly fitted for the conversion of the Jews, both because the Jew recognises its Scriptural government, and very specially because Presbyterians throughout the world have a great love for the Old Testament, and nothing more touches the heart of the Jew than our love to his own Scriptures. It is not desirable (he proceeded) that the same amount of prayer, of labour, of money, of men, should be bestowed on the Jews as on the heathen, because for every million of Jews in the world there are perhaps a hundred millions of the heathen; yet the place of the Jew in the world and in the eye of Christ is not as one to a hundred.

Dr. H. MacGill, Edinburgh, called attention to a projected meeting to be held in October of next year in London. The meeting was to consist of individuals belonging to the Church of England, the Baptists, the Presbyterians, the Nonconformists, and, indeed, to all denominations that were conducting foreign missions. The main object that was in view was to have an opportunity of comparing their various methods of operation. The Council then adjourned.

AFTERNOON SEDERUNT.

The Council resumed at half-past two o'clock—the Rev. Dr. Flech, Paris, Chairman.

The subject for the afternoon was Co-operation in Missions (including Development of Missionary Enterprises).

Dr. Herdman, Melrose, said there must first be unity of action in providing for the preparation of missionaries. The subject was of the greatest importance, and the instruction to missionaries ought, he considered, to be given systematically—taught as a science at their universities. Dr. Herdman proceeded to suggest that Presbyterians should combine to effect the appointment, to commence with, of a Professor of Comparative Theology at each university. He also asked whether they might not unite to maintain some common central missionary institute, such as the one opened in London by Mr. Grattan Guinness, which, however, lacked Church connection. Second, as to co-operation abroad, in some cases actual union was possible. There were other ways in which the various denominations might work together. He thought it might perhaps be too much to expect that at present they would see their way to the establishment of a joint mission by all the Presbyterian Churches represented in that Council, though he hoped they might see that ere long. (Applause.)

Rev. Dr. Thomson, Beyrout, said the rapid expansion of mission work was very cheering, and it showed that every branch of the Christian Church in Europe and America was rapidly absorbing into its inner consciousness the immense obligation upon the Church to give the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the whole world. It was thence exceedingly important that there should be fraternal co-operation in this work by those engaged in carrying it on at home and abroad. He proceeded to show the way in which co-operation would promote and strengthen the action of foreign missions in the wide field of the world. The two great obstacles in the way of the rapid extension of this work were, briefly stated, want of men and want of money. He believed it was possible that by wise co-operation a very great economy might be realized in the expenditure of both men and means, and that would be regarded as of no small moment to anyone engaged in carrying on this missionary work, either at home or abroad. Any economy in expenditure of men and means was of the utmost importance to the success of this great enterprise. He pointed out various ways in which advantages would arise from more co-operation, suggesting, among other matters, that if there was greater union of effort different religions in the foreign field might combine in providing higher institutions for the necessary training of the native pastors, teachers, writers, and others necessary for the conduct of Christian communities.

The Rev. Dr. Blackwood, Philadelphia, gave a brief review of the missionary work of the Church in the past. They recognized the fact that the Church was essentially a mission institute. Success was, in the judgment of many, hopeless, and they point to the teeming millions of their race, to the years and efforts which had been devoted to missionary toils, and to the numbers still ignorant of Christ; but such objectors failed to remember the fact that those who deduce sound conclusions respecting the moral revolutions of this world must calculate upon long periods for the accomplishment of the object. Dr. Blackwood pointed to the noble results of missionary efforts in foreign fields during the past six years, and went on to say that from the nature of Presbyterian mission work, they had much in common with the brethren of other evangelical Churches who had entered the foreign field. He mentioned that the training of native teachers early became a leading object in the prosecution of the missionary work in India as in other lands, and he explained the efforts they made to approach the rising generation in the way of education. It was worthy of remark that the brethren who had gone to the heathen had been able to dwell together in amity. There also had been constant har-

mony and brotherly love among all their foreign missionaries. There had been no lordly assumption on the part of their missionaries. Their missionaries had never intruded agitating controversial questions into their work, but had extended the hand of fellowship to all who were endeavouring to lead sinners to the Saviour.

Dr. Palmer, New York, next addressed the Council on the missions of the Southern Presbyterian Church of America to the blacks. He proceeded to show prophecy told them that this great work would triumph. Turning attention particularly to the prophecies concerning Africa, he observed that the notion that there was any prophecy against Africa was a mistake. He adverted, in passing, to the difficulties which had been experienced in the case of Africa, noticing the horrid cruelties in connection with the slave trade, which drew from that land he did not know how many tribes of that people. In the City of New York there were no fewer than sixty-eight languages spoken every day, and to the country where the Africans were they brought with them great diversities of language. Passing from this part of his address, he proceeded to speak more directly concerning the work among the blacks. God had raised up in the British possessions in the West Indies, and all over the United States, some most marvellous instances of noble Christian magnanimity in the colored race. He showed that there were great difficulties in the way of missionary work among the colored people, among which was the progress of Romanism in the Southern part of the United States. Romanists were establishing chapels there everywhere, and were inviting the colored people into them. He pleaded earnestly for help in the mission to the colored people in the South, on the ground that, as that mission succeeded, they would be able to carry back to Africa the seeds of civilization and Christianity. Dr. Philip, the Secretary of the London Missionary Society's Mission, said that eight or ten such colonies as America had established on the West Coast of Africa would entirely abolish the slave trade. These negroes could be inspired with the love of Christ, and to help one great work of missions. (Applause.)

Dr. Lansing, Agent of the United American Presbyterian Church Mission in Egypt, read a paper on "The Adaptability of Presbyterianism to the Foreign Field." He said that in April 1860, the missionaries organized the Presbytery of Egypt, and now the number of organized Churches was six, and of congregations not yet fully organized twenty-one. The Moderator of the Presbytery that year was a native who had formerly been a Coptic monk, and he was their first native Moderator, although the Clerk of the Presbytery was a native, and all its proceedings were conducted in the Arabic language. The missionaries thus had a twofold character. They were emissaries of the home Church which sent them forth, but they were also members of the foreign Presbyteries, and the principal feature of this constitution was that while the home Churches had full authority over them in matters of doctrine, the native Presbyteries had full power in cases of discipline.

Dr. Kalopothakes, Athens, spoke of native agency in connection with foreign mission work. The chief weapons of the missionary were three in number—the press, preaching, and visitation. A foreign missionary could not do more than a native of the same capacity. If we had no natives to do our missionary work it was because the natives had not our advantages. Give them equal advantages, and they would do as much work as we did. The native missionary, further, could not only do the work as well as the foreigner, but at less cost, natives living more cheaply than the foreign missionaries. Let them educate the natives, and then they would have an army that would conquer the world. The sooner they brought the native element to bear upon the foreign field the better would it be for the foreign Churches, as the natives would then begin to feel that they had a work to do, and they would do it. (Applause.)

Dr. Thomas Smith, Edinburgh, supported this view.

Rev. Dr. Sloan, Alleghany, moved a resolution to the following effect:—"That the Council, having regard to foreign mission work as an essential and urgent duty, needing to be much more earnestly prosecuted by all Christian Churches, and in which it is of increasing importance that there should be the utmost attainable co-operation amongst the Churches of this alliance, appoint a committee to collect and digest full information as to the fields at present occupied by them, their plans and modes of operation, with instructions to report the same to next General Council, together with any suggestions they may judge it wise to submit respecting the possibility of consolidating the existing agencies, or preparing the way for co-operation in the future."

Rev. Dr. Brown, Richmond, Va., seconded the motion.

Mr. James Stevenson, Glasgow, spoke of the missions in Southern and Eastern Africa. He said that one of the greatest missionary movements that had ever taken place was in proximity to the three great lakes in Central Africa. At the first of these the Scotch missions had taken up a position; on the second the London Missionary Society, which represented the Congregationalists, had begun work; and on the third or northern lake the Church Missionary Society, which represented the Church of England, had taken a place. They had agreed to take separate positions, but to work in harmony in this great work. In a report recently issued by the Geographical Society, the first or Scotch mission was not mentioned by name, although it was the one which preceded all the rest; in fact, giving an impulse to the whole. On the other hand, when the report came to speak of the Church Missionary Society, although not established yet, it mentioned where they were going and what they were going to do. He thought it sectarian on the part of such a society as the Geographical Society to ignore the Presbyterians, and that brought up the very important question whether they should not use means to make themselves felt in the country. (Applause.) With regard to the French mission among