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Contributors and Correspondents

ANOTHER LETTER FROM CHINA.

The following letter from Dr. Fraser, dated Amoy, January 28th, 1875, and addressed to the Students' Missionary Society of Knox College, has been handed to us for publication, and we take great pleasure in placing it before our readers:

"You will almost have concluded before this reaches you that I have forgotten you all, and the promise I made you last spring of a letter each year from Formosa, by way of helping your news agent for Asia with his 'monthly account of missionary operations' in the far East. I hoped when I made the promise, to be in my field of labour before the end of last year, and to have written you from there after I had fairly begun work. One thing and another has arisen to detain us, so that now I write before I am on the ground, lest my promise should be broken by my letter not reaching you before the close of the Session. My letter will not have the interest for you that it would have had, had it been written from Formosa. But that cannot be helped. 'If you cannot do the best thing, it is always best to do the next best.'"

"We are here on the mainland of China, just across the channel from Formosa, within 150 miles of our destination, and expecting almost hourly to see the steamer in which we are to complete our voyage into port. Surely it is a time to make grateful acknowledgment of the goodness of God! I wish when this is read that you should all unite your thanksgivings with ours, that we have so nearly completed our journey in safety and comfort, and join us in our prayers that in future years of life and labour we may experience as much of the loving kindness and favour of our heavenly Father as has crowned our lives thus far.

"I have only two or three things to write. As yet I have not begun work, and it will perhaps be better that I should defer writing of the work till I am engaged in it personally. But I cannot forbear saying that it does seem to me a most blessed thing to be a missionary. Picture to yourselves a vigorous and flourishing native church springing up all about you as the result of your sowing the good seed of the everlasting Word. How much better than to contend all one's life for the ascendancy of denominationalism. Don't misunderstand me. I am not one whit less Presbyterian than I have always been. I glory in the history of our Church. I believe her doctrine and polity to be more Scriptural than that of any other. But, alas, dear brethren, does it not seem a great pity—a crying shame—that in a village of two or three hundred people there should be four or five ministers of different Christian denominations engaged more in propagating sectarian differences than in striving to bring those that are afar off nigh by the blood of Jesus Christ, while there are whole towns and cities here, with thousands of perishing souls who have never heard the sweet sound of Jesus name. If we could but turn the strength, and means, and talent, that are now spent in denominational contentions, into the vast field of heathendom, which is now a howling wilderness and a barren desert—with the exception of a few oases which have been made to bloom within the present century—it would soon blossom as a rose, and rejoice as a fertile field. My convictions on this point grow stronger the more I see of the utter desolation of this whole land, and the utter inadequacy of the force as yet in the field to undertake the work which lies to their hand. The harvest truly is plenteous—how plenteous none can know save those who have lifted up their eyes and seen. Multitudes through the streets of China's cities, towns, villages, and country, and no man careth for their souls. The labourers are few, too few; oh, how few, shamefully few! Again and again in the past few days have my eyes filled with tears as I have looked upon the crowd of people groping in the dark, and grovelling in the mire of heathenism; and I have wished that you, brethren, could see them too, that many of you might be moved to give yourselves to the blessed work of lifting them up to sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. Many of you will remember how strongly I used to plead in the Society for sending missionaries away out to the very front, and how I was accustomed to oppose our appointing one to a certain place simply because there were four or five families of Presbyterians, when that place was already occupied by any other evangelical denomination. You may say that we must have a minister from each of the denominations in each place, or there will be several people entirely without Gospel privileges. Is it right to pander to and propagate these dissensions among those who should dwell together in fellowship and love? Here is a question for discussion, for serious, prayerful consideration. Is it not time to take up the subject, when in Scotland there are more than two hundred licensed Free Church ministers out of employment? Nothing to do! and the world lying waste, and Foreign Mission Committees, like our own, unable to secure as many missionaries as there are fairs on hand

to send. If you will but think of the whole subject—of the condition of the heathen, of the blessedness of the Christian life, of the will of Him whose we are, concerning those who are without His Gospel, of the joy of gathering full many a sheaf into the heavenly garner, and of the glorious rewards in store for those who turn many to righteousness. I am sure our hearts will be refreshed before long, and our hands strengthened by the arrival of some of you to help us in our work. Of this I am sure: We require at least one more labourer for Northern Formosa; and then I see no good reason why our Church should not send out another band of two or three to take possession of some other large and still unoccupied field in this vast empire—of which there are still very, very many.

"Just one thing more. Don't hesitate to come on account of the length of the journey, or the dangers of the way, or the trials that await you on your arrival, or in your work here. Don't resolve to stay at home with the idea that you will have an easy life, or that you will never meet with accidents, or that you will have no trials. Such delusions are quite common, but I am persuaded better things of you, though I thus write. If you have a good constitution, if you are conscious of a strong desire in your heart to do good, and if the church at home wants a foreign missionary, come. I used to say, I would not offer myself, but that if the church wished to send me, I would willingly go. Knowing what I now know, and having seen what I have seen, were I a student again, I would offer myself for the acceptance of the committee. Not that there is no hard work, nor difficulties, nor privations. No, for there are all of these, but I am sure there are many of you who are never happier than when hard at work, nor more in your glory than when contending manfully with difficulties, nor more content than when suffering just such privations as you meet with in your summer work for the society. I already find myself wondering and speculating as to which of you will be the next to come, for some of you will be here before long I feel perfectly sure.

"I hope my next year's letter will be more interesting, for by that time, if spared, I will fairly have begun my work. You are often in my mind and as often in my prayers. I beseech God that He will bless you every one in your lives, and labors. Please send me your Annual Report that I may see how you prosper. I hope very earnestly that this may reach you before college breaks up."

The Reviewer Reviewed.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—Your article of two or three weeks ago upon Dr. Kennedy's "Hyper-evangelism" I did not relish. As between Kennedy and Moody your sympathies seemed to be with the former. This I regret, and in this, I think, you differ from most of your readers. Dr. Kennedy's theology may be Westminster doctrine, as you say; and that as you hope, he "misrepresents," there can be no question. The forces which according to Dr. Kennedy swept all before them ten or twelve months ago should by this time have expended themselves. But instead of this they are increasing in impetuosity, as the fact of the ten thousand assembling, night after night in the Victoria Hall, Liverpool, sufficiently proves. The causes of the movement Dr. Kennedy, evidently, misrepresents.

You say, you have heard of a reply to Hyper-evangelism. Since I read your article I have waited with anxiety to see a notice of that reply from yourself, or from some of your correspondents; none has yet appeared. You might have told by whom the reply was written, and what was the title. We, at least, who differ from Dr. Kennedy, would have liked you had. Five months ago, I have heard not of one but of many replies to the review in question. One of them is entitled, "The Old Gospel," not "another Gospel," but "The power of God unto salvation." The author is Horatio Bonar, D.D. Now put the author and the title together, and have we not a good guarantee, even in the absence of the work itself, that Dr. Kennedy "misrepresents" when he calls his review "Hyper-evangelism, another Gospel." You say "Dr. Kennedy is an author of deserved reputation." Is Dr. Bonar less so? Is Dr. Bonar's theology not Westminster doctrine? Does he usually make a good his positions in the title of his books and the headings of his chapters? Let those who are acquainted with his little volume on "Truth and Error" answer the two questions. If Dr. Bonar proves the proposition enunciated in the title of his reply, then Dr. Kennedy "misrepresents," and then you will be glad.

WM. BENNETT.

Springville, March 16th, 1875.

KEEP in mind that though the library shelves may groan with books, whose name is legion, there are in each department only a few great books, in relation to which others are but auxiliary, or it may be sometimes parasitical, and like the ivy, doing harm rather than good to the pole round which they cling. Stick, therefore, to the great books, the original books, the fountain-heads of great ideas and noble passions, and you will learn joyfully to dispense with the volumes of accessory talk by which their virtue has been as frequently obscured as illuminating.—Prof. Blackie.

The Probationer's Scheme.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—It was gratifying to me to see a letter in your issue of the 12th inst., over the signature of "A Probationer," calling attention to the unsatisfactory working of the probationer's scheme, and suggesting improvements. That the present system of distribution puts into the hands of some a very large amount of patronage cannot be questioned, and that such has been used in some cases very unfairly, I presume cannot be denied. But I fear Presbyteries are partly to blame in not giving a closer attention to their Home Mission work.

My chief object in writing, however, is to call attention to the amendment he suggests in No. 2. "Let the appointments be for six Sabbaths instead of one or two, as at present." Something like this is what I have earnestly advocated for years. Let us see what advantages would spring from it.

I. "One of the Twenty-six," very sensibly remarks that this would give congregations a reasonable opportunity to learn the suitability of a probationer as a preacher or pastor, and in every relation. According to the present system, a probationer comes and preaches to a congregation, and disappears like a spectre from the pulpit. It is impossible for the congregation to know what sort of a person he is, beyond his pulpit ministrations. No congregation ought to call a minister on the ground of his pulpit ministrations alone. The very terms of the call which they sign, forbid it. And who will say that two Sabbaths are sufficient to judge even of pulpit abilities?

II. Complaint is made that stations are placed on the list of vacancies in winter for convenience, and put in charge of students in summer. I do not think that is exactly so. The fact is, our vacancies are supplied irregularly. One Sabbath by Mr. A., two Sabbaths vacant. Two Sabbaths by Mr. B., another Sabbath vacant. Perhaps a Mr. C. comes next, and a month's vacation. And so forth down to the end of a six month's chapter. They become so reduced and heartless, they must be put on the list of mission stations for a season. When a student has visited the families from house to house, and awakened up the dormant energies of the people, they may be restored again to the list of vacancies, and subjected to the treatment above described, which would soon destroy the best settled congregations in the church. The plan suggested by our friend would relieve the difficulty. A minister labouring among the flock for a month or six weeks, would be expected to visit them, and do the work of a pastor. This plan would also favour those who have most worth and wear about them; who are too often put at a disadvantage by such as resemble a dazzling meteor which blazes for a little, and then leaves darkness behind it. The settlement of a ministry and congregation after such opportunities of knowing one another, would likely be permanent.

III. Such a system would greatly remove the uncomfortable and unprofitable feeling in both the probationer and people, that he has come to exhibit himself as a candidate, for their suffrages. He should be required by the Presbytery to do the proper work of a pastor during his stay, visiting the sick, and as many families as the proportion of time would admit, holding prayer meetings, Bible classes, etc. This would enable the congregation to judge of his probable usefulness.

IV. It would save a vast amount of wasted labour and money in travelling.

V. It would lead to more speedy and harmonious settlements.

Now let us consider objections to it. 1. It is asked, what would become of other vacancies unprovided for, while a probationer is staying six weeks in one? I answer if the next vacancy is six weeks without service, they would have their six weeks supply in turn. In the whole year they would have as much supply as they have now, and have it longer at a time, which I believe nine out of every ten would prefer, besides the members of Presbytery ought to give a proportion of time to such fields.

2. It is objected that all the probationers would never get round all the vacancies at this rate. But that necessary or even desirable? On the contrary, we think the number and rate of ringing changes are most injurious to all concerned. Scarcely have a people begun to draw towards a probationer, when another comes in his stead, and the congregation oscillate between one and another. The labourers would not go over so much ground, but they would gather a better harvest.

3. Probationers would not submit to it. Each wishes to be heard with a view to a settlement, and even now complain of waiting time where they do not expect a call. To this I would reply, first, it is the duty of the church to judge what is best for the cause and kingdom of Christ, not what would be to the likes or dislikes of any class. The probationers are perhaps not in the very best position to judge what is best even for their own interests. But secondly, the objection is a pure assumption. Witness "One of the Twenty-six to the contrary." Very likely the other twenty-five would endorse his testimony. That several of them do I know.

4. The objection of probationers to stay long in any congregation, applies to such as are unripe to call, or have resolved to call. I quite agree with your correspondent that such congregations ought not to be on the list of vacancies at all. Whenever a congregation has asked for a moderation of a call, send them no more probationers till that call be disposed of. It is not well to send probationers in such cases; it may spoil what might otherwise be a unanimous call. Let them be supplied otherwise.

I fear the present system will be liable to such abuses, as "One of Twenty-six" describes. It is not well to put temptations in the way of men. The centralization is such that there will surely be patronage, and improper tampering with the rights of probationers and congregations. I hope for a more excellent way after the union. Yours &c.,

J. STRAITH.

New Brunswick School Law.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—I observed in your last issue an article headed "The New Brunswick School Law," which I think contains questionable statements. You say: "We agree with Mr. McKenzie that the establishment of Separate Schools is a necessity. We do not need either age or experience in politics to know that the Church of Rome will never allow her children to be educated in the Protestant schools."

The common school system adopted in New Brunswick is not, correctly speaking, more Protestant than Catholic. It is undenominational, intended for all classes and creeds, and although the clergy of the Church of Rome object to the common schools thus established, because the dogmas of the church are not taught in them, yet, the laity in general, neither object to them nor consider separate schools a necessity.

For illustration, these common schools are generally well attended by Roman Catholic children, both in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

At the late election in New Brunswick for the Local House, the test at the polls being separate or common schools, members in support of the latter were returned with an overwhelming majority, and not a few even of these constituencies in which Roman Catholics were greatly in the majority, returned common school supporters in open defiance of the incessant efforts and threats of the Romish clergy.

Further two of the separate schools established in this country have lately amalgamated with the common schools, contrary to the wishes of the priests and bishops. Are not the schools in the neighbouring states established on the same principle as those of New Brunswick, or Protestant, if you like to call them? Are they not well attended by the children of the church? Brother Jonathan glories in his free institutions of learning.

What has the Church of Rome with her religion and dogmas done to educate Italy, Spain, or Lower Canada? And in the face of these and other facts which might be adduced, you concur with the Premier in granting power to the Church of Rome to wrap other portions of our fair Dominion with her sable mantle of pious ignorance.

Again you state: "We know also that neither the constitution of the Dominion, the peace of our country, nor the safety of the British Empire would be considered, if they stood in the way of the Popish claim and alleged grievance. Each and all of them would be ruthlessly sacrificed in the interests of Papacy."

If these statements are true, then we Protestants are losing our peace and safety, by granting old mother church extensive grants of the best lands in Manitoba, or by letting her rebellious and murderous sons escape condign punishment, and by singing insult into the faces of the intelligent and noble supporters of unsectarian education in New Brunswick, by our contemptible interference with their constitutional rights.

Mr. Editor, if you and Mr. McKenzie have extensive knowledge of politics, I think you lack in knowledge of the arrogant and ambitious spirit of the Church of Rome, when you think you can secure the peace and safety of the Dominion, and of the British Empire by granting her separate schools. No, she will never cease asking and threatening (as I have no doubt Bishop Sweeney, of New Brunswick, has been doing in Ottawa when Costigan's resolution was on the tapis,) until the Dominion and the British Empire be dragged to the feet of his holiness the Pope!

Had the House of Commons adopted Mr. Blake's motion, it would have met the whole case honorably, and it would not have merited the contempt of all intelligent Protestants in this and other lands for its truckling to Rome. Yours, &c.,

Kinloss, 23rd Mar., 1875. EDUCATION.

A VERY interesting and enjoyable social was held on the 18th ult., in Zion Church, Brantford. The spacious school-room was filled to repletion with adherents and friends of the congregation. Much of the time was taken up with social intercourse, and a discussion of the good things which had been provided by the committee in charge, the most good feeling and unanimity appearing to prevail among these present. The chair was occupied by the pastor, the Rev. Wm. Cochrane. Short addresses were given by the chairman, Mr. Thos. McLean, Mr. Hudson and others, and a reading by Dr. Nichol.

Presbyterians, Attention!

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—Will the Presbyterians of Ontario listen to a voice from beside the sea? I hope and believe they will. We have a common interest in our common country, and we must learn to fight shoulder to shoulder. Down here we think we are not well treated by the Ontario members of Parliament, who vote for forcing separate schools upon us; for to force these institutions on New Brunswick, is to force them on Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island as well. Parliament will not because it cannot force the abomination on us. We are so far able to guard our own rights.

But there is a measure that threatens you and us, which, in my opinion, should be strenuously resisted. A new Province is to be formed upon the Saskatchewan, and separate schools are to be a part of the constitution of that Province, as established by the Dominion Parliament. Is this decent? Is it not a piece of disgraceful truckling to the Ultramontane element? Education is under the control of the local legislatures. Why not leave it there? Why go to the pains of spreading a foul disease?

How Ontario Reformers, and especially Ontario Presbyterians, can stand measures of this sort, passes my comprehension. Is the Dominion to be converted into a machine for spreading Sectarianism? If so, let us know it, and we will humbly bow to the yoke. If a "Reform" House and a "Reform" Cabinet are to resort to means of this kind, what may we expect from those who do not claim the name of religion? Did Sir John McDonald and his colleagues in their palmy days initiate any measure more palpably intended to serve Rome, than the measure referred to? The BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN will surely utter no uncertain sound. Yours faithfully,

ROBERT MURRAY.

Halifax, March 22nd, 1875.

"Conservative" and Mr. Inglis?

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—Mr. Inglis' letter on the Hymn question has surprised me not a little. I see, by the Year-Book, that this reverend gentleman was ordained in 1842—some thirty years ago—and if, during all that time he "never met a man, professing a true missionary spirit, among those who slam the book on the desk when a paraphrase or hymn was given out in church to be sung," he has produced an argument of most overwhelming force against the psalms which the enemies of hymns would do well to ponder and take heed to! In my simplicity,—Mr. Editor, I had always hitherto thought, that the very opposite was the case, and that it was during the reign of cold and dreary moderation when paraphrases and hymns were introduced into the Church of Scotland; and, moreover, that it was at this ebb-tide of the church's history, when missions to the heathen were openly derided and proclaimed against by the moderate leaders. Indeed, I suppose Dr. Carlyle, Hamilton or Gladsmuir, or Hugh Blair, would have had no objections at all to have introduced, as Sunday readings from the pulpit, selections from Hume's History of England or from Home's Tragedy of Douglas. But I would not wish to be understood as trying to prove by this, that therefore all the admirers of hymns are unorthodox and anti-missionary. I suppose it will be readily admitted that the free church cling more tenaciously to the old psalms, and the old path, than any other Presbyterian body in Scotland, with the exception of the Cameronian, and yet, we are sure that Mr. Inglis would not dare to say that this dear old church of our fathers is anti-missionary! Perhaps the minister of Ayr will reply, that he only refers to such as "slam the book on the desk." If this be what he means, then he need not have gone to such trouble and expense to proclaim it through the press, for no person on either side of the controversy would ever think of connecting the Spirit that would prompt an individual to "slam the book on the desk" when a hymn was given out to be sung, with the Missionary Spirit. I fear, by the tone and spirit of Mr. Inglis' letter, that he believes that all the opposers of hymn and organ innovations are also opposed to missionary exertion and enterprise. I sincerely hope that I may be wrong in this supposition, but I cannot see the aim and object of his letter at all, if this is not what he wishes to set forth. I am glad to see that Mr. Inglis is not a Tory. It is a remarkable fact, though, Mr. Editor, which has its significance, that the most radical church innovators come from the Tory ranks. Yours truly,

CONSERVATIVE.

THE Thoral portion of the congregation in connection with the Canada Presbyterian Church, Beaverton, surprised their pastor, Rev. John McNab, on Tuesday evening last, with an address expressing well wishes for himself and family, and a purse containing a handsome sum of money. The party numbered about thirty, and spent a very pleasant evening at the manse.