

THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH OF IRELAND.

(Concluded.)

Itinerating in Ireland fourteen hundred years ago was not without its adventures, and sometimes these were a dangerous complexion. It was Patrick's custom to be driven over the country by a faithful servant, about whom a striking story is told, which possibly includes some grains of truth. It appears that the people of one district were addicted to the worship of a certain pillar set up on a plain, and as the most effective and shortest argument on the side of righteousness seemed to be the one of throwing the column down, Patrick adopted that summary procedure, but not without exciting the rage of a native chief, who vowed revenge. One day, when Patrick was passing through this dangerous country, O'nan, his servant, suspecting mischief, insisted on changing places with his master, for the purpose of baffling any lurking enemy. The servant, mistaken for his master, was shot dead, while the intended victim escaped unscathed.

The accounts which have descended to us of the founding of what is now the cathedral church of Armagh, after being judiciously sifted, show the simple earnestness and the evangelistic zeal of Patrick. One day, on passing by this spot, he readily discerned the eligible situation of the hill, whence the cathedral now raises its towers, for the site of a college similar to others established in the country. The missionary straightway begged the land of "a certain rich and honourable man . . . whose name was Daire." Not caring to surrender to strangers so important a military position, Daire offered another site, which, being accepted, became the home of the primitive church of the district. This was a very simple business. A gift for Christ was asked and gratefully appropriated. We look in vain for any of those grand attendant circumstances with which Rome too commonly clothes similar transactions. The evangelist dealt in no imposing ceremonies. The highest object he had in view was the conversion of neighbouring tribes. "Patrick is represented as asking from the chieftain Daire a place for the exercise of or practice of religion only," says the authority already quoted; "nothing is said of an episcopal see or diocese, much less of a primacy. All that was demanded was a place or site for such buildings as might suffice for the residence of a religious society. The religious life, and the worship of God, were all that Patrick had in view."

In connection with this subject, it is impossible to measure the amount of good effected by Patrick's exertions; but, whatever may have been his success or otherwise, his achievements are doubtless overcoloured by the old chroniclers. The vast number of conversions accredited to this man's preaching must be taken in a merely nominal sense. To conquer the old Adam in ancient Ireland was quite as difficult as it still remains; but were we to accept partial testimony, we should believe that the new faith suddenly burst forth like the verdure of an Arctic summer. This is not likely, though it is almost certain that the gospel achieved mighty triumphs. The dangers of the missionaries must not be forgotten. Going forth on a hazardous mission, in the midst of a country such as Ireland then was, Patrick appears to have aroused many enemies. As just related, his attendant fell a martyr to the cause; and, as regards the person of the missionary himself, the Druids, who still lurked in Ireland, thirsted for his blood. On account of their savage or uncivilized surroundings, many of the Christian stations were fortified. Others were situated near forts, and places naturally protected were preferred to sites open and exposed. And, moreover, notwithstanding all his self-denying labour and loving solicitude, the message Patrick carried was, by some tribes, entirely rejected.

It is quite refreshing, in such a philosophical age as our own, to turn to Patrick and his simple but arduous work, and to find him exercising unwavering faith in the efficacy of prayer. On all hands he banded the faithful together in religious societies—an effective method of encouraging learning and piety in a barbaric age. The institution of clanship was imitated by the church, and it is the belief of some writers, that in so rude a state of society the church could not have been preserved in strength by any other means. This was not monkey, for the several communities did not exclude women. On being converted to Christ, many persons desire to find a shelter from

the corrupting influences of the heathen world, such a shelter Patrick provided for them in the houses of his brotherhoods.

Ireland justly rejoices in the memory of her first and greatest missionary. Patrick had many of the qualities of a great man, and he was free from the idolatry and false doctrine which have brought shame on the Romish Church. He died sometime during the last decade of the fifth century, but the exact year is unknown. The dates vary from 491 to 493.

"On the whole," says Dr. Todd, "the biographers of St. Patrick, notwithstanding the admixture of much fable, have undoubtedly portrayed in his character the features of a great and judicious missionary. He seems to have made himself 'all things,' in accordance with the apostolic injunction, to the rude and barbarous tribes of Ireland. He dealt tenderly with their usages and prejudices. Although, he sometimes felt it necessary to overturn their idols, and on some occasions risked his life, he was guilty of no offensive or unnecessary iconoclasm. A native himself of another country, he adopted the language of the Irish tribes, and conformed to their political institutions. By his judicious management, the Christianity which he founded became self-supporting, at least it was endowed by the Chieftains without any foreign aid. It was supplied with priests and prelates by the people themselves; and its fruits were soon seen in that wonderful stream of zealous missionaries, the glory of the Irish Church, who went forth in the sixth and seventh centuries to evangelize the barbarians of central Europe. In a word, the example and success of St. Patrick have bequeathed to us this lesson, that the great object of the missionary bishop should be to establish among the heathen the true and unceasing worship of God's church and to supply that church with a native ministry."

Before leaving this subject, we may just observe that it remains to be clearly proved what order of government was set up by the ancient Church of Ireland. Some writers think it was in a measure presbyterian; others argue that it was episcopal. If it was an episcopacy, it was an episcopacy widely differing from the modern régime going under that name. Bishops flourished in remarkable numbers; for, says St. Bernard, "almost every church had its separate bishops." It would be absurd to infer that these men performed functions corresponding to the office of modern prelates. There existed no archiepiscopal rule, and the heads of religious communities, like the one at Iona, were superior in power to the so-called bishops. Indeed, it seems probable that such a thing as a modern diocese was unknown in the ancient Church of Ireland. We even read of a hundred bishops living together in one house; and, though called bishops, they were in reality working missionaries, and cultivators of learning and piety. But seeless bishops were not peculiar to Ireland; for, in the eastern and western division of the church, they were common phenomena, until set aside by the arrogance of persons occupying high places, whose power had its root in the growing corruptions of the times.—Sword & Trowel.

The Christian Messenger.

Halifax, N. S., Nov. 29th., 1871.

CHRISTIAN FORGIVENESS.

Perhaps there is nothing that renders Christians more unlovely in the estimation of the world than their indulgence of a haughty, unforgiving spirit. It is well-known, even by the least intelligent in a Christian community, that an unwillingness to forgive is essentially unchristian. Any system of Theology that attempts to defend the exercise of an irascible temper and the maintenance of a state of haughty reserve against his fellow Christian, or even his fellow man is not from above. A man who has become the victim of fancied or real grievance, in consequence of which he shuts himself off from all intercourse with his offending brother, until a humiliating confession of wrong doing be made by him, shews but little of the spirit of Jesus.

One who places himself upon a pedestal of fancied superiority, and wraps around himself the garment of injured innocence, may retain the name of Christian, but he is not suited to live in this sinful world, or prepared to illustrate the teachings of the Saviour of sinners. The influence of such a man

is evil, and must be injurious to the spiritual character of the community in which he mingles.

Our Lord taught his disciples to pray for forgiveness, "as we forgive." A fearful prayer for the unforgiving to offer! Some people who dislike this condition—making the cherishing of an unforgiving spirit towards another an obstacle to ourselves receiving forgiveness—try to avoid the application of such a rule to their own case, by replying that God requires confession of wrong and an intention to pursue another course before He grants forgiveness, and that therefore the same condition may be exacted by one man from his fellowman before forgiveness can be justly demanded. This is but a flimsy fallacy, for there can be no analogy between man in relation to his Maker and one erring mortal in relation to another. But supposing that it were the case, and that a like confession and resolve were to be a prerequisite to reconciliation, the party aggrieved would become the judge of what amount of reparation should be accorded to himself, and the Christ-like spirit would cease to rule in his heart. Worldly principles would then become predominant, and gospel injunctions no longer applicable to any case of offence. It must needs be that offences come, but the gospel is the great rectifier, and it demands of Christ's disciples a readiness to remove offences, and so not allow them to separate or tarnish the church of Christ.

"A CRY FOR MINISTERS."

Our N. B. contemporary a week or two since gave expression to this cry, which is heard amongst nearly all denominations of Christians. Our brother instituted the enquiry: "How are we to obtain the needful supply?" After asking "Whither shall we look?" and offering a very satisfactory reason why we may not hope for them from the United States, he concludes that probably we could obtain earnest men from Mr. Spurgeon's College "with the distinct understanding that they would not only refrain from advocacy of open communion views, but that they would thoroughly adopt our denominational system of church order, and assist us in working it out."

He thinks that "Having such an understanding with honest men, there would be no special danger of friction."

We have nothing to say against the importation of any number of good earnest men by any who may feel disposed to do so, or able to induce them to come, but to get men under such restrictions, would we think be undesirable, or at least a doubtful experiment. If they do come it should be free and untrammelled.

We would take the liberty of suggesting the enquiry, in reference to this matter, Does it not indicate that there is something defective in the churches of any denomination when they fail to send ministers out from their midst? The men best adapted to become ministers for these provinces are we believe at present here, in this country. Does not our half-century of experience shew that the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and P. E. Island men are the best adapted to labor here? Yes, we have the material. We want more of a spirit of consecration in the churches, so that those having gifts may be encouraged and helped by their brethren to make this their life-work. We might point to a host of young and valued brethren who have so been brought from the membership of our own churches, and cared for until they have become worthy successors of the fathers, and are now doing good service in the Master's vineyard. Why is not the number of such men doubled? It only needs more of a spirit of devotion in the churches, and they would be sent out. We have all necessary arrangements for giving them a thorough educational equipment, so as to make them not inferior to what we have ever had, or what any other country affords. Let us then rather "Pray the Father that he would send forth laborers." If our "cry" reach His ears, and we act in accordance with that cry, we shall find that the supply will soon be sent and continue to appear more according to the demand. The churches here will then have the benefit of sending them out, which is an important consideration, as well as that of receiving their labors.

Next to the Gospel itself, and the Word of God, we regard the Sabbath as the greatest of blessings conferred on mankind. To it we are indebted

for ten thousand other blessings we enjoy. Our nineteenth century civilization would be of but little value if it should omit all reference to a Day of Rest. We intended to have called special attention to Rev. Dr. Cramp's very comprehensive letter in our last week's paper, but omitted to do so. If any of our readers failed to read it carefully we would recommend them to do so now. It presents in a very succinct form the authority on which the observance of the day rests. Errorists of various types make use of the difficulties they presume to place around this institution for the purpose of inculcating their erroneous sentiments. The undermining of Lord's Day observance prepares the way for all the various stages of scepticism and infidelity. It has always been a fruitful precursor of evil habits and crime.

Christians should endeavour not only to have a good reason to give for all they do themselves, but should seek to inculcate correct sentiments in the community around them, and by that means reflect on others the light they have received from heaven, and so prove themselves the lights of the world, and 'the salt of the earth.'

THE HALIFAX SCHOOL BOARD.

There has long been a large amount of dissatisfaction with the city School Board. It is not pretended that the government Commissioners are a fair representation of the religious communities of Halifax. There being two clergymen on the Board it is believed is unsatisfactory to the majority of the people, and to their clergymen who have but little in common with these two gentlemen. We have received a brief communication having reference to this matter. We entirely concur in the opinions our correspondent expresses: Mr. Editor,—

It is currently reported that one of the Government Commissioners of Schools has resigned, now here is an opportunity and opening, that the friends of the different religious denominations should avail themselves of to urge upon the Government, that the vacancy be filled up by a clergyman of one of the denominations still unrepresented at the Board. This is only fair-play to all, and I would respectfully intimate to our friends the necessity of at once moving in this matter. If the two clerical incumbents, that sit on the Board of School Commissioners are to hold their position in perpetuity, then the sooner it is understood the better, then, I for one shall want my clergyman to represent my denomination at the Board, nothing more, nothing less. Deprecating, as all right thinking persons should, the system of denominational schools at the public expense, it is but right and proper, that, in the present working of the school act and in common justice to all, each denomination should be fairly represented. If these ideas meet with your approval, would you kindly advocate them through your journal.

Yours, A LAYMAN.

We have received a Circular addressed, "The Baptists of Chicago, to our Brethren throughout the world," signed by about eighty of the leading men there. It gives a statement of the losses of the Baptist body by the late fire in that city—the University, Seminary, Publication Society, and church properties, amounting to \$229,000. The Appeal is for aid to the extent of \$100,000 by collections and donations between the present time and the middle of January, 1872. Funds may be sent to the Treasurer, James F. Gillette, No. 393 Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

We doubt not many will, in the same generous spirit which they have contributed to the temporal necessities of the sufferers, aid them also in resuming their work in their Lord's service.

We find the following paragraph in the St. John Christian Visitor of last week:—

NOVA SCOTIA.—Asiatic Cholera.—Report says there are four cases of Asiatic Cholera in Halifax, resulting from the recent visit of the ship Franklyn. Two persons have already died.

We are glad to be able to correct the above report and to state that there has not been a single case of Asiatic Cholera in Halifax, as above affirmed. The cases of death which have probably given rise to that report, occurred at Chezzetcook, twenty miles from Halifax. There was probably never less of disease, especially of contagious disease, in the city, than at the present time.

The medical men sent to Chezzetcook reported on Monday morning that the two cases there have recovered, and no new ones have appeared.

Will the Visitor please correct?

Thanksgiving is demanded of us for mercies received, but it must not be that we confine our attention to the temporal blessings bestowed, and forget our spiritual wants, and the general state of the church and the world. In thinking of the need of a Day of HUMILIATION and PRAYER we would not lose sight of the reasons we have for gratitude. Our unfaithfulness is painfully evident when we view the condition of the church; but when each individual looks within himself he may find far more reason for self-reproach and Humiliation before God.

As the Census is before us we may take this as the basis of some reflections.

After going over the calculations of the increase of population in the various Counties and Cities of these Provinces we were curious to ascertain what had been the rate of increase in our churches in the same period. Looking over the Statistics we find that in 1861 the numbers in the membership of the five Baptist Associations of the Lower Provinces was given as 22,978. In 1871 the number of members is 28,316, an increase of 5,408, or 23.5 per cent. True this is something over the increase of population, but it bears no proportion to what might have been expected of those who believe they are saved from hell by the death of the Son of God, and are surrounded by men and women needing the same, no less than themselves. Who would suppose this amount of success enough to satisfy men and women who had been bought with such a price?

The fact above stated is that in ten years, on an average, every four members have been instrumental in adding but one person to the church. Some, of course, have passed on to their reward, but so have they in the calculations of the general Census. Let this one fact be borne in mind by every Baptist member on THURSDAY THE 7TH OF DECEMBER, and if there is not enough in it to humble him before God, and to call forth Prayer for more consecration of himself and all he has to the service of the Master, we think he should seriously doubt if he has any part or lot in this matter.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS OF THE CENSUS have been supplied during the past week, shewing the number of inhabitants in the principal cities and in each of the counties of this Province and New Brunswick. By the following table we may compare the Censuses of 1861 with that of 1871, and learn the increase in each of the counties respectively:

Table with columns: County, 1861, 1871, Increase, Increase per cent. Rows include Halifax City, Kings, Antigonish, etc.

A similar comparison of the Census of 1861 and 1871 of the counties of New Brunswick will interest many of our readers:

Table with columns: County, 1861, 1871, Increase, Increase per cent. Rows include St. John Co., Charlotte, King's, etc.

The progress of the larger Cities, and their increase in the past ten years, varies considerably, as will be seen by the following:

Table with columns: City, 1861, 1871, Increase, Increase per cent. Rows include Halifax, St. John, Montreal, etc.

These developments will surprise many. We have not the means at hand for accounting for the large increase in several of the counties.