

THE
HOME AND FOREIGN RECORD
OF THE

Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

VOL. VIII.

PHILADELPHIA, AUGUST, 1857.

No. 8.

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CHURCH-DEBTS.

As many of our missionary churches have been greatly embarrassed by debts incurred in the erection of church edifices, we feel it to be a duty to call the attention of our brethren to this subject. It is very desirable and important for congregations to erect suitable houses of worship, as soon as they are able to do so; for without church edifices, they must continue to labour under great disadvantages. For want of them, many churches remain for a long time weak and feeble, and are obliged to be almost wholly dependent upon the Board of Domestic Missions for their support; and hence this Board has always encouraged its missionaries to endeavour, as soon as they prudently can, to procure the erection of suitable church edifices.

But while it is desirable and important to erect houses of worship, when the means can be raised for their erection, it is very undesirable and injurious to contract debts which the people are unable to pay.

Such incumbrances are often oppressively burdensome, and occasion a great deal of uneasiness and inconvenience. They sometimes prevent the growth of congregations by deterring others from uniting with them, and not unfrequently lead to the removal of pastors, on the ground that more popular and attractive preachers are needed to enable the people to liquidate their debts. And while thus incumbered, they are of course not able to support the gospel among them, and are compelled to continue their dependence upon the Board. It is no uncommon thing to assign church-debts as the reason why the same appropriation is required from the Board from year to year, and for many years in succession, and why, in the meantime, they take up no collections for any of the benevolent schemes of the Church!

The erection of church edifices, under such circumstances, instead of relieving the Board, only adds to their expenditures. Thousands of dollars are expended by the Board of Domestic Missions in the support of pastors whose congregations would be able to sustain them without aid from the Board, were it not for their church-debts; and thus, *indirectly*, the Board of Domestic Missions is liquidating debts contracted in the erection of church edifices, or helping to pay the interest accruing upon debts incurred in the building of houses of worship.

There is reason to fear that in some instances there is great want of discretion in the building of houses of worship—they are sometimes unnecessarily large and costly. It is certainly desirable to build churches sufficiently large to accommodate the existing congregation, and to make a reasonable allowance for a prospective increase of members; and it is conceded that neatness, as well as comfort, ought to be consulted in the style and manner of their construction. Neither are we disposed to condemn a more costly style of architecture, when congregations are able to

AFRICA.—The most recent intelligence from this part of the world is dated Monrovia, May 22d; Sinou, April 7th; and Corisco, April 13th.

Mr. and Mrs. McQueen, of the Corisco Mission, arrived in New York on the 10th of July, and bring the sad intelligence of the death of Mrs. De Heer of that mission, which occurred on the 2d of April, after a very short illness. The particulars of her illness and death, the first that has occurred among the missionaries on that Island, will be laid before our readers in a future number of the *Record*. Mr. and Mrs. McQueen have returned on account of her enfeebled health. She has derived much benefit from the sea voyage home, and they hope to return to their work after a short sojourn in this country. They were accompanied by the elder of Mr. De Heer's two motherless daughters. The rest of the missionaries at Corisco were in the enjoyment of their usual health, and such was also the case with the missionaries in Liberia.

SOUTH AMERICA.—A letter from Buenos Ayres of May 15th, and another from Bogota of May 16th, have been received. At the former place the French service is well attended, and the meetings are spoken of as being very interesting at times. Much is being done in Bogota and other parts of the country, in the way of circulating the Scriptures and religious tracts, and thus far without awakening any serious opposition. Articles in explanation and defence of the Protestant religion are published without restriction in one of the leading newspapers of the city, which, it is believed, are doing an important work.

PAPAL EUROPE.—Letters have been received from the Rev. L. Vernes, Secretary of the Protestant Central Society of Evangelization in Paris, of the 17th of May; from Dr. Merle D'Aubigné, of the Evangelical Society of Geneva; and from Dr. Revel, of the Waldensian Synod, of June 4th; all acknowledging the receipt of remittances for the use of the Evangelical Societies which they respectively represent, and at the same time furnishing many interesting details in connection with their work, but lamenting the necessity which compelled the Executive Committee to curtail their usual appropriations to these missions. Some of these communications will be laid before the readers of the *Record*.

INDIAN MISSIONS.—We have letters from the Chipewa Mission, June 5th; from the Creek, June 15th; Chickasaw, May 23d; Goodwater, June 10th; and from Spencer, June 11th.

From Spencer we have received the painful intelligence of the entire failure of Mrs. Moore's health, and the consequent necessity of her immediate removal to a more southerly climate. Mr. Moore, in consequence, has asked and received his dismissal from the further superintendence of this Institution.

The Committee regret to part with his valuable services, and especially the painful circumstances which have made it necessary for him to leave. Mr. Moore testifies to the orderly deportment and good behaviour of the boys at Spencer. "I have found very little difficulty in the management of them. They are more easily governed than so many white boys, and it is with sorrowful feelings that I sever the ties which bind me to the place." There has been some sickness among the pupils, and one boy of considerable promise has been removed by death. One of the teachers at Wapanucka makes the following encouraging statement. "Eight of my girls hope they have passed from death to life. Some of them give good evidence of a change of heart; with others the change is not so apparent. They seem fond of reading the Bible, and often desire me to pray with them. I have sometimes stolen upon them unobserved, and found them at secret prayer. The influence of those who hope they are Christians is very good on their companions."

Mr. Wilson speaks of the Chickasaws around Wapanucka as making slow, but steady improvement in industry, temperance, and general moral character. Some of them, he thinks, are, without doubt, children of God, and are trying to follow in the footsteps of the Saviour.

SPEECH OF REV. J. B. ADGER IN THE ASSEMBLY, UPON FOREIGN MISSIONS REPORT.

The object of the paper which your committee have just submitted for the adoption of the Assembly, is simply to reassert and declare once more, those principles on the subject of giving, which have been of late years brought back to view, and to exhibit some ways of applying them particularly to Foreign Missions. Perhaps there may be some here who have not yet fully embraced these principles, and certainly some of our brethren not here, do need to have these principles again urged upon them. This is indeed all the Assembly can do; and I once thought this was very little. Once, when an eminent minister of the Congregational body, a particular and respected friend of mine, made the criticism on our Assembly, that it governs the church, *by meeting yearly to pass resolutions*, I felt it was a just criticism, and was stung with the merited reproach which I thought it involved. But I have lived to be wiser and to understand the matter better. Now I know that great is the power of ideas, for they rule the world. Great is the vigour and force of a resolution, if the idea it expresses be only true, and have life in it. It is a great thing for even one man to get possession of an idea, of a great and true idea which he never had before. But for a church to get possession of an idea of that description, or rather to be possessed by such an idea, and for an Assembly like this to give articulate form and expression to such an idea, in a resolution to be passed around amongst our people and handed down to our children, is an exceedingly great thing. Moderator, creeds and confessions are matters of moment, as all Church History shows us; but their whole power consists in their giving an articulate utterance to

truth. There is this further quality in a resolution passed by the Assembly, that it comes forth from a body invested with the power of rule. We meet here in our capacity of rulers of God's house, and therefore our testimony, articulately uttered on any subject, is testimony with authority. I do therefore conceive that the Assembly is doing something truly important and effective, when it reiterates again the Christian doctrine of benevolence testified to at Buffalo, and at Nashville, viz. "that giving for the support and propagation of the gospel is a grace of the Spirit, that it is a fruit and an evidence and a means of grace; and that offerings of money for the service of the Lord are acts of worship which ought to be systematically and solemnly performed in all our churches, and by every Christian."

But, sir, the Committee have gone further than the reiteration of the doctrine, and ventured to point out some ways in which it may be practically employed in behalf of Foreign Missions. We do not wish the Assembly to say these are the only ways, nor even the best ways of making practical use of the doctrine. We do not wish you to say these ways must be universally adopted by our churches. Far be it from your Committee, Sir, to set too much value upon any mere expedients. We think there is too great a disposition to have the Assembly enact mere expedients. We believe in the power of ideas, of doctrines, of principles, but the particular forms and modes of putting them into practice, must vary with circumstances. What is revealed in the Scriptures by our Head, the Assembly must reiterate as his binding law; but the modes and ways of his people's obedience are not within our dictation.

Now the first method we would have the Assembly recommend for training our people in the grace of giving for Foreign Missions, is, that pastors enlist their Sunday-schools in the good work. The amount of money which might thus easily be collected is immense. Just see how, when the American Board appealed to the children for the means of building a missionary barque for their South Sea Missions, not only did they give all that was required, but they kept on giving long after the sum was made up, until twice the amount had been contributed; and like the people of Israel when they were giving for the tabernacle, they had to be "restrained from giving." But this is not the chief point; our children would thus be trained to give. A better generation both for giving and for going would thus be getting ready for the service of the Lord in that more glorious day that is now dawning upon the Church in regard to foreign missionary zeal.

The second method we suggest, looks to the communication of more knowledge on the whole subject, by our pastors, to our churches, so that we may do the best we can with this generation, this imperfectly trained generation, that is now on the stage. The subject of Foreign Missions must be systematically, and frequently presented from the pulpit, for great is the power of an idea clearly expressed and earnestly repeated in the ears of mankind. The churches and the individual members of the church, must perceive distinctly that there needs, from the nature of the case, a constant increase in the amount of their offerings to this cause; because our object is to spread the knowledge of the Lord till it fill the earth. I am reminded just here of what a missionary in Constantinople—the learned, the eloquent, the enthusiastic German, Dr. Schaffler—once said to certain Jews who had been persecuting some of his Jewish disciples, by which, as I suppose, he struck a momentary

terror into their souls. "You think," said he, "that you can stop this work by your little persecutions—but let me tell you now, there are thousands of Christians in America, and thousands in Europe, and they have millions and millions of money, and they are determined to fill the world with this doctrine, and so if you cannot bear this doctrine, you must just go out of the world!" He claimed the whole of this world for his Lord and Master. And, brethren, our work is to fill the world with the doctrine of Christ crucified, and therefore we must teach the churches to grow continually in the grace of giving.

And so too we ministers must teach the churches that it is necessary there should continually be more and more missionaries going forth to the heathen. Young men, that are strong, must more and more devote themselves to the work, when the Holy Ghost moves them, and the great Head of us all calls them. And parents may dedicate their children to this service, so glorious, so exalted, and so happy. The happiest men I have ever known were foreign missionaries. The happiest years of my own life have been the thirteen years I was a foreign missionary. And if I had time, I could give you at least half a dozen reasons to explain how and why, from the nature of the case, it must be so. We must get the Church rid of that wretched and carnal notion that it is a great and dreadful privation to be a foreign missionary; and that none ought to be expected to go except those few young men who are willing to be martyrs. It is a great honour to go, and a great happiness to go! Who in this Assembly, let me ask you, has been more honoured, in the providence of God, than the Secretary who just now addressed you? He was chosen of God to give the gospel to a nation, he was honoured to be a translator of the Scriptures into their language, after having reduced that language to writing! I say nothing about his giving them the arts of life; I say nothing about his teaching them that civilization which the world talks so much about, but which is only one of the numerous temporal blessings that Christianity always scatters about her in her triumphant march.

As to the debt reported by the Board, your Committee would have this Assembly, confiding in our Head, and in his people, bid the Board, notwithstanding this debt, go forward and enter every door he sets open before them. Yet debt is something which a Board cannot bear to have resting upon them. They must be set free from it. But this involves our giving this year more than ever before. And it is a question which your Committee desires the pastors here to speak to the question, whether the Church will give the Board this year more money—money enough to pay this debt, and at the same time to go on expanding and enlarging its work as Christ our Head shall open the way before them. What do you say, brethren in the ministry and in the eldership? Speak and let us hear what you think about this debt, and about the prospects among your churches for Foreign Missions next year. As to me, Moderator, I have never had the honour of being a pastor, but always a missionary, first abroad, and then amongst the negroes at home, so that I cannot speak for any church. But I know my own Synod and its churches. And I hope my brethren here from Georgia and Alabama, and the other Synods of the South, will join me in promising that we will try, on our return home, to get the Board more funds than ever from that quarter. Moderator, the one thing needful in this case is, that every minister and every elder here, put his own shoulder to the wheel, and also strive to bring up his

own church to its duty. And you are to bring them up to their duty by testifying, in the Master's name, to such truths as are embodied in this Report. Only get established in our churches the doctrine that giving is a grace and an act of worship, and the most important and delightful consequences must follow. The father who preached to us the opening sermon said, he was solemnly and profoundly impressed with the belief that the present is but a day of preparation on the part of the Church, for a much brighter day that is fast approaching, and, Moderator, my heart bounded exultingly as he uttered the words.

When I think of what this Church, which we all love, may grow and be and do for the world in the course of a hundred years to come, language fails to express for me what I feel, and I can only weep tears of joy. In less than half one hundred years, nay in twenty years from this time, I expect, if I live, to see this Old School Church giving *one million of dollars annually* for Foreign Missions! Eleven thousand dollars of debt for such a Church! Why, sir, it is nothing! Let the Board go forward!

PAPAL EUROPE.

A LETTER FROM DR. MERLE D'AUBIGNÉ.

The following letter gives a general view of the labours of the Evangelical Society of Geneva, and will be read with pleasure by all who feel an interest in the progress of evangelical religion in that part of the world. This letter is dated as late as the 15th of June.

Dear Brethren—At the close of the twenty-sixth year of our Society's labours, we wish to present you with a short summary, or rather with a statistical account of them, as in our Annual Report you will receive all the details of our various fields of labour. We may perhaps reproach ourselves in not having sufficiently communicated with you since the return of our friend and colleague, Mr. W. Rey; but we trust that the interest his presence was the means of exciting in your Committee and your churches for this portion of God's kingdom, has not diminished, but is rather increased, as it appears to us worthy of that result.

We will begin by giving you an account of our present field of labour, and then explain to you how we may perhaps be called on to give it a greater extension.

School of Theology.—At this moment there are five professors and twenty-eight students. Six have left us this winter, and are now employed as follows: Three in Italy, serving the Waldensian Church. One in France, in the stations of our Society. One in Prussia, who belongs to the Moravian Church. One is still at Geneva. All have carried away good testimonials, and are now perfectly free to serve any religious denomination which their conscience, and the circumstances of the country in which they are placed, may point out to them as a field approved by God.

Foreign Evangelization.—Our Society has now 24 stations with 15 ministers of the gospel—24 schoolmasters and mistresses, and 7 evangelists—total, 46 labourers. Last autumn we had to grieve over the loss of a dear and faithful pastor, Mr. Gonin. The Lord called him to himself, from the arduous post of Chamberg (Savoy), where he had begun a new station.

The evangelist B— of Bouvières (Drome) has left the Society's service to take the direction of the Free Church, which seems on the eve of forming itself in that place, and which is, in a great measure, the fruit of his labour. The schoolmistress at Philippe-

ville (Algéria), having lost her husband, has returned to France. But these gaps have been more than filled up by new labourers.

Most of our stations, i. e. 21, are in France. We can say that in all of them God's work is now progressing. We have been able freely to preach the gospel everywhere this year, and many conversions in different places have rejoiced the heart of our dear labourers, upon whose work the blessing from on high has visibly rested, and whose numbers have been increased, especially in the "Department de Saone and Loire," a most important part of our Society's field, where two years ago our best ministers and evangelists were persecuted and cast into prison. Mr. Dupraz, formerly professor at Bâle, has abandoned a brilliant career for an humble pastoral charge at Montpont, and God's blessing seems to rest on the beginning of his work. Mr. Descombay, one of the students who had just left our school of theology, has been called to Branges and Chalons, and a revival has manifested itself at Tournus, the oldest of our stations, which is now entrusted to the care of Mr. Jandard, another of our students. As might be expected, the progress of God's word has given rise to opposition; the priests on one side, and Plymouthism on the other, have redoubled their efforts to turn souls away from our meetings, and to cause dissensions in our flocks, but, thanks be to God, their efforts have been in vain. Working parties have been found amongst the women of our poor little congregations, to assist those most in want, and to provide for part of the expenses of the church.

In the Department de l'Isère, the misunderstanding which troubled the flock at Voiron, has been settled by the arrival of a new evangelist. Our brother Clot continues to evangelize in the same department with great activity.

At Marseilles, Mr. Rouazo (formerly a Roman Catholic priest, and now a minister of the gospel,) is busily employed in visiting from house to house, and the numbers of those who receive the word with joy is increasing. The same movement is going on in the Drome, and in the western Department.

The work in Algeria has been enlarged by an evangelist, who labours at Oran among the Spaniards; their zeal for the Bible and its teachings caused a riot amongst the Roman Catholic colonists in the neighbourhood—a riot in which the priest does not appear to have been quite blameless.

In Savoy, (Sardinian States,) an ignorant and remote mountainous district, where Rome has always had dominion, we could not expect Christian liberty to be quickly understood, and we have in general found it a difficult ground to break. Experience has taught us not to confine our efforts to the northern parts of the country, but rather to turn them to the south, which is less under the dominion of the priests, very numerous in Savoy, and in many places, absolute masters of men's minds.

Colportage, thanks be to God, has been carried on with the same activity as last year. This winter we have employed 20 colporteurs in France, 2 in Switzerland, and 1 in Savoy. Their sale has been considerable, notwithstanding the universal and increasing dearness of provisions; and they have not only sold Bibles, but they have visited a great number of families, who, having formerly bought the Book of Life, have since neglected it. The colporteurs enter these houses, try to show the value of the forgotten treasure, and proclaim the infinite love of God the Father, in his Son; they return later, hold little meetings, (where the number present must not exceed twenty,) in a room,