

*Anal.*

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Semicentenary Celebration

OF THE

*Church, U.S.—*

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF EDUCATION;

HELD BY APPOINTMENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, MAY 25th, 1869.

CONTAINING ADDRESSES BY THE

REV. DRS. MCGILL, LORD, BEADLE, AND McCOSH.

ALSO,

A SEMICENTENARY REVIEW; OR PRACTICAL SUMMARY OF THE PRINCIPLES AND WORK OF THE BOARD, FROM ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN 1819 TILL THE PRESENT TIME; BY WM. SPEER, D. D., CORRESPONDING SECRETARY OF THE BOARD.

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world. Builds railroads in Russia, telegraphs in China; works mines in Brazil, Chili, Peru, Central America and Mexico. Gathers wealth from the most desolate outposts at the South Pole; extorts nature's secrets from the eternal frosts of the North. Builds mountain roads in Japan, and aqueducts across her plains, to supply her cities with water; cultivates sugar in the Pacific islands, and cotton in the Eastern Archipelago; ventures her trade upon the Amoor, and her ships in every sea. And what shall *Christian America* do for the world? *Preach Christ*; the gospel to "every creature;" furnish men and materials; pour her wealth at Christ's feet, and her armies into every field; go up against every stronghold of heathenism, and demand surrender in the name of Emmanuel! Come to every island of the sea, and traverse every continent of the globe to find the men whom Christ will have with him. And what part of this great work shall this Board take? History shall answer, *one-half*. It must furnish one-half the men who shall be detailed to this service, at home and abroad. One half the men who shall outrun the pioneer, and plant the cross of Christ on the farthest outlook, before the heavy tramp of peoples is heard. One half the men to muster against China, and India, and Africa, and the dark places of the earth filled with the habitations of cruelty. Under your fostering care, and sent away to night with your blessing, we will strive for these grand issues. We will gird afresh, and set ourselves steadfastly to the work. We will search out the "first-born," now "hidden among the stuff;" in shops and secular employments; in professions where they are not needed, and in lowly homes; while we pray with you that God would bring up the whole redeemed Church to higher ground, sanctify all Christian families, and make the children of this generation a seed to serve him. Then may we not rejoice soon to see our own land regenerated, and find *this* grand purpose interwoven in all Christian life, and present in every movement of the Church: **THE WORLD FOR CHRIST, AND CHRISTIAN AMERICA TO WIN IT.**

*Dr. McCosh's Address.*

[The following is the address of Dr. McCosh, as it was prepared by him. It was however not read; and he gave additional interest to some portions of it by extemporaneous remarks—particularly in connection with those passages in which he urged greater simplicity in the style of preaching, and increased efforts to reach the children in the ordinary services of the sanctuary.]

The subject allotted to me this evening is a very important, and at the same time a somewhat difficult and delicate one. The full discussion of it would require a dissertation, and I have only some twenty minutes allotted to me. It is on the relation of the Church

to elementary education. I can only throw out a few loose hints applicable to the circumstances of the Board of Education, now celebrating its semicentenary.

Let us begin with inquiring what information can be had from the light of nature, and the still clearer light of revelation? The light of nature seems to me clearly to teach that the duty of instructing the young devolves primarily on parents—not on the State, nor on the Church, but on parents. The right lies with them, and they are responsible to God for the use which they make of it. But parents engrossed with the various occupations have not time to devote to the thorough education of their children, and even though they had the time, most of them have not themselves the knowledge and the capacity. Hence the importance of a set of professional teachers trained to the work, and giving their whole time and attention to it. These parents might combine among themselves to procure and pay teachers; or, better still, they might call on the government to provide the means of education. And this is a function which the State not only may, but ought to take up for the good of the community. The State should see that every child has the means of receiving a good education placed conveniently within its reach. But has the Church no function in the matter of the education of the young? I believe she has a very great and responsible office, second only to that of parents, which is primary and equal to that of the State. Her function is to see that the education imparted be religious. Her direct office is confined to this. The commands are, "feed my sheep"—"feed my lambs." In the execution of the first of these, she does not seek to provide employment and food for her members. Her Master did not require her to buy farms, to build factories, and open stores, for the benefit of her communicants. The business of the Church is to proclaim and enforce the doctrines and duties of the word of God on all who are under her influence, and thus make them, while not slothful in business, to be at the same time fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, whether in their farms, their factories or their stores. And just as little is it the direct office of a Church to set up a college to teach such branches as mathematics and natural history and chemistry, or to plant schools for teaching penmanship and arithmetic. This is not one of the injunctions laid on the Church in the word of God; this is not one of the powers which Christ has committed to her. Of this I am sure, that a Church, a church court, a General Assembly, a Presbytery, is not the fittest body for managing a college or a school, any more than it would be the fittest body for conducting a factory or infirmary. The history of England, Scotland and Ireland corroborates this. The churches in these countries never were good managers of general educational institutions, and the people are now proceeding to take these out of the hands of the churches. I have not the least fear that

religion will suffer in consequence. The truth is, that the colleges, such as Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin and Edinburgh, under the churches, did not promote the cause of religion to any extent, and for ages past the parochial schools of Scotland have not been in any special sense seminaries of religion.

What then, it may be asked, is the office of the Church in regard to colleges and schools? It is, as it appears to me, a very responsible one.

First, it has a very important indirect power. It has to stimulate the State, it has to stimulate private individuals, to set up colleges and schools. It is a matter of fact that education, that educational institutions, have been favored and promoted by the Church of Christ more than by all other influences put together. It was John Knox and the Scottish Reformers who set up the first system of popular education ever established. Here the Church of Christ and members of the church have a very wide sphere of activity. They have to make Christian parents to feel an interest in the education of their family. They have to persuade, urge, or like Knox, to compel, governments to set up schools, lower and higher, for the benefit of the people. They have to stir up private Christians to their duty to the rising generation, by seeing that they have colleges, high-schools and elementary schools planted everywhere. It is a matter of fact, that in America your system of elementary instruction was instituted by devoted men carefully instructed by their churches, and that your colleges have almost all been founded by pious men. So much for the indirect influence of the Church on education, an influence which cannot be over-estimated. It does not consist in the Church itself setting up schools and colleges, but encouraging commonwealths and private Christians to do so.

But wherein, you ask, is the direct function of the Church in the matter of education? It is to "feed my lambs;" to see that the religion of Jesus be taught to the young. She is not required of herself to set up schools and colleges, to teach arithmetic and geometry; but she owes it to her great Master to see that those who are learning arithmetic and geometry be also learning their duty to God and to man. For this purpose she must use every means that her Great Head and Master has put at her disposal. She must see, first of all, that Christ be preached to the young. I fear that we ministers often forget how large a portion of our audience are or ought to be children. I am sure some of the best preachers in Scotland write sermons which were never meant to be understood, much less relished by the young. The tide was happily turned to a simpler and better system by the sainted McCheyne. I am not sure whether some of your ablest American ministers do not preach as if boys and girls, young men and maidens, formed no part of their congregation. Horace delighted

to sing *pueris et virginibus*, but there are some who preach as if their audience were all a set of speculative philosophers. An infinitely greater than Horace encouraged little children to come unto him; we must take care that we are not rather copying the disciples who were for putting them away. Then the Church must use its Sabbath-school organization more extensively than and effectively than ever. I have sometimes thought that among these other accomplishments our students of theology should be taught in all our seminaries the special art of addressing the young. In the German Universities there is a department called "Pedagogie," the giving instruction in the art of teaching; I believe there might profitably be such a branch in all our seminaries for training men for the ministry. The Church of Christ, wakeful and active, must see that religion has a place in the school and the college; that either religion be taught there by religious men, or that religious men have access to teach religion; that no hindrance be thrown in their way, and every encouragement be given them. Then by her labors and her prayers she must labor, she should strive to raise a set of able and learned, and at the same time pious, persons to become teachers and professors, especially in the more important parts of the field. In all these ways, and in many others, the Church has a sphere of influence, the importance of which cannot be overestimated.

But it is time to make these general remarks bear upon what ought to be the duty of the Church, in present circumstances, towards its Education Board. And first, in a negative way, I am not sure that it is the duty of the Church to organize a system of education in opposition to the national system. I believe that, even though you were to attempt this in a more thorough manner than you have ever yet done, you could not succeed—so deeply is the national system seated in the affections of the people. Your people, I believe, would not subscribe to such a rival system, and you would never, with your teachers, rival the well trained teachers of the State schools. Your exertions should, I think, be made in a very different direction. You should seek rather to support and advance the State schools, and labor in every way in your power to give them a religious character, by rearing pious teachers, male and female, and anxiously striving to get them appointed. I am aware that you can never expect the State schools to give all the religious instruction you could wish imparted to the young; but you have a variety of ways of supplementing it, by giving instruction beyond the school hours, in Sunday-schools, and otherwise. Then it is the special duty of the Church to watch that the State system be not undermined. I believe it is in eminent danger of being so, at this present time, in the State within the bounds of which we are now assembled. If the measure passed by the State Legislature of New York become law, we shall soon have Popery taught every hour of the day in schools supported by the State. This is a

measure to be resisted to the utmost. I am surprised more noise has not been made about it, and more strenuous efforts made to resist it. The Presbyterian Church should set itself vigorously to arrest this system of denominationalizing the State schools.

But the Presbyterian Church has a great many other duties to discharge in present circumstances. I approve out and out of that Church having a fund for the promotion of education. This fund should, in my opinion, be vastly larger than it has ever yet been. If you devote it to purposes having the hearty approval of the members of the church, you will get, in my opinion, a vast increase of contribution. But what, you ask, should be done with the money. There are several purposes to which it might be devoted. First, there will be cases in which the State system is abused, in which an infidel scoffer is appointed to teach the young. Your duty in these circumstances is first to remonstrate, and if this is not attended to, set up a rival school. If it is known that you have a fund for this purpose, there will be less risk of the abuses creeping in, and a greater assurance that your remonstrances will be attended to. Then you should have the means, not perhaps of yourselves establishing schools, but of aiding benevolent persons in setting up schools and colleges where they are needed. In this way you may benefit, more than I can express, the cause of Christian education, by encouraging good men to devote their substance to this cause. I have been inquiring of late into the reason why the number of students attending our theological seminaries is so very inadequate to meet the wants of the Church and the mission fields. I believe that one cause of this is to be found, not in the want of colleges, but in the want of good high-schools and academies, to set young men on the road, and prepare them for colleges. A portion of your funds might be profitably devoted to encourage the establishment of such schools. And then you need in this country a set of schools such as you cannot expect the State to establish. You need what are called "ragged schools" in Great Britain; you need mission schools, schools for the children of the lower classes, where you may not only have to give education but food and clothing, schools specially adapted for poor and ignorant emigrants. Such schools might be properly set up by your Board; certainly you should have a means of aiding and encouraging them. To further such good ends as these, you need much larger funds than have ever been placed at your disposal. Were it only known that these were the purposes to which you devoted the money entrusted to you, I believe there would be a large flow of liberality towards you on the part of the Christian people all over the country.

After singing the doxology, the meeting was dismissed with the benediction by the Moderator.