

American Presbyterian.

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THE YEA AND THE AMEN.

The seemingly casual, brief expressions of Bible writers often open the way to the grandest truths. Paul assuring the Corinthians that he was not fickle-minded, lets slip, seemingly without a deeper purpose than to strengthen that assurance, a sentence in which a vast sweep of the divine economy is included, and which suggests to us a survey of all history and a search for the deepest questionings of the human heart in all ages. For all the promises of God in Him,—Jesus Christ,—are Yea and in Him Amen; or: How many so ever are the promises of God, in Him is the Yea and through Him the Amen. Jesus Christ is the grand affirmation of the truth of God in all His promises. In Him the purpose of Redemption, which includes all the purposes of God and is the key to all the divine methods of dealing with man, is fulfilled. Without Christ, the divine economy would be like an arch, springing from strong and deep abutments and arising to vast heights, but without a key-stone—a structure incapable of upbearing the weight of human want and sin, furnishing no sure pathway to a better world, unsteady and certain to fall by its own weight. Christianity is positive, authoritative, historical, answering expectations, satisfying wants, fulfilling hopes and promises, a point of rest, a harbor of peace. Coming to Christianity, we leave the region of guesses, of vague anticipations, of moral and philosophical systems spun out of the brain of the most exalted of fallible human teachers; we emerge from the fire-mist in which the myths of Greek and Roman and Norseman and Persian and Aryan were born. We pass beyond promise, type, prophecy. We are in the region of fact, of history, of personality, of results, of problems solved, of victory.

It is its own fault, if the world is still inquiring, groping and speculating after the true religion. The time for that is gone by. The real seeker for truth is not in a cave, with only a few chinks opening into the light, as Plato pictured him. We can cordially sympathize with Plato's guesses, but not with the man who assumes to be as ignorant to day as Plato was. Such a man may indeed be in the dark, but it is because he has burrowed away from the light, and gone into voluntary eclipse, loving darkness rather than light. What Plato foreshadowed and Socrates sought, what the myths and cosmogonies of East and West brokenly imaged forth, that the Gospel gives us. In short all that which has floated before the mind of man, as guess, suspicion, theory, hope, that is given to us in the eternal affirmation of the Gospel, that Christ is.

What is it which the best spirits of the world have asked for, in all ages, which is not found in Christ, more abundantly than they could ever ask or think? What purest longing and most spiritual expectation of unlightened men will not be found rather to be a troubled dream, which in Christ only became a waking reality; what are they but cloud palaces, which to us have become a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God; what make up the core of all the best forms of man's religion, but divine ideas, wandering up and down the world, till oftentimes they had well nigh forgotten themselves and their own origin, but which at length clothed themselves in flesh and blood, and became incarnate with the incarnation of the Son of God? The Yea and the Amen, which was to assure men in their doubts, to satisfy their longings, to enlarge, transfigure and exalt their dim conceptions to his own measure of truth and excellence, was Christ.

The Greek fables of a descent into Hades and of a rescue of the victims of that gloomy kingdom, are but troubled prophetic dreams of that crowning fact of Christianity and of the world's history, the bursting of the gates and the barriers of the grave, on Easter morning, 1837 years ago. The apotheosis of heroes, the frequent "raising of a mortal to the skies," which crowded the Greek and Roman pantheon with human names, are but the dim presentment of the fact that the Greatest of mankind would also be divine. The endless multitude of heathen no less than Jewish sacrifices; the choice of the purest and best for victims; the voluntary offering of themselves by the foremost men of the nation, like Decius, to receive upon their own heads the anger and curse of the immortal gods, are a unanimous outcry from the depths of the human heart for some means of reconciliation.

The deep and painful consciousness of discord, struggle and sin, which breaks forth in all the noblest utterances of the famous masters of rhetoric and philosophy, in classic literature, and which

*Trench: Hulsean Lectures.

has embodied itself in all the huge, crushing systems of superstition, that for ages, have darkened the world, are anticipations of the Christian doctrine of sin and of the need of conversion. Socrates half uttered the declaration: Ye must be born again; Plato speaks of the necessity of a change from the shadows to the light; both, indeed, with utterly inadequate views of the deep spiritual meaning of which the words were capable, but both feebly whispering that which waited for emphatic affirmation in the Yea and the Amen of Christianity. And the dream of a perfect civil state which the great Philosopher dreamed in his Republic, and the various attempts of men and of conquerors to found a universal social order which so sadly failed and which left thinking men under such rulers as Tiberius and Nero, in blank despair, are a plain proclamation of the want of that kingdom of heaven, which at last has been really founded on earth by Christ.

At this late day, and with this accumulated experience of the ages pointing to Christ, men will not seek another Saviour. They will have Jesus or none. The Jews are giving up hope of a Messiah; the unbelieving world has no intention of experimenting in new faiths. They are not artificial growths. They can only spring from a deep unsatisfied want, which cannot exist under the full and gracious provision of the Gospel. The Yea and the Amen to all these wants has been uttered. He whose religious nature is truly awakened will find in Christ just what he wants. The experiment of a modernized heathenism must fail. A Christ robbed of His divinity, and ranked among the speculators, inquirers or greatest of human teachers, instead of being recognized as the eternal positive answer to all inquiry, is no Christ at all. Christianity or no religion, Christ or Atheism, Regeneration or Materialism: these are the alternatives which men are considering to-day.

THE PROBLEM OF CITY EVANGELIZATION.

HOW WE HAVE MET IT.

Since the division, thirty-two years ago, Presbyterianism has nearly quadrupled itself within the limits now covered by the city of Philadelphia. The aggregate membership of the twenty-nine churches occupying the field in 1836, was 5,440. The sixty-eight churches of the reunited body number, according to the report in last year's minutes: 20,116 (O. S. 10,123, N. S. 9,993), an increase of 270 per cent. This is a growth much exceeding that of the Presbyterian Church in the country at large; which, as already shown, is but a little over one hundred per cent. (125). On the other hand, it somewhat surpasses the rate of increase of the city population. That must have been about 225,000 in 1836; now it probably does not reach 800,000. A growth of less than 250 per cent.

The elements of this increase deserve to be considered in estimating the problem before us. The total immigration into this country from the beginning down to the year 1839, is put at less than one million; while for the ten years from 1839 to 1849, it is known to be over one million four hundred thousand, and for the eleven years ending December 31st, 1860, it was three millions, within a fraction. Without doubt, the foreign population of our city has grown far more rapidly than its native elements. It is probably five or six times as great as it was in 1836. In 1850 it was computed to be nearly one third of the entire number of the inhabitants. Over this element, it must with sorrow be admitted, we have had but little, in fact almost no influence. If we suppose there are now 250,000 foreigners in this city, and that there were only 50,000 in 1836, it will follow that the native population has scarcely tripled itself since 1836. It thus appears that a positive advance of some magnitude has been made upon the native population by the Presbyterian church, since the division.

Within the last five or six years, stimulated especially by the noble example of Mr. Baldwin, the former New School branch of the church has shown unwonted zeal in the colonizing of new churches and the erection of new buildings. The dedication of Oxford Church on Sabbath, December 12th, was the tenth that has taken place within that period, in that branch of the church alone; the buildings being completed in every case but one (Bethesda), and being all designed for comparatively recent organizations. These ten churches reported 2212 members to the last General Assembly; they have added about 6700 sittings to the church accommodations of the city, and their new property thus acquired, including ground, is worth not far from half a million of dollars. Two new churches, thirteen hundred sittings, and one hundred thousand dollars average gain per annum, are indications of a hopeful degree of enterprise. It implies a progress each decade of sixty-six per cent. in that branch, in new churches alone; and if half of that rate of progress is attained by the churches already established, a doubling of strength in about ten years. This has actually been the rate of growth in the churches of this branch, they having increased fifty per cent. in five years past.

While we have much reason to hope, we have no assurance that this rate of church growth will be maintained. It is exceptional in the history of this branch; exceptional, we might

say, in the career of nearly every denomination in the city. Their entire work in this line, the whole city over, during the past five years has but little exceeded that of this one branch of one denomination; certainly, if we omit a few very fine structures now in progress, chiefly for old organizations, it does not double what the late New School branch alone has done. A few years ago—before the war—the Episcopal church had a season of similar activity in city church extension; but that has long ago come to an end. On the other hand, there are clear indications, that the spirit for such work is yet rife among our people. On all sides we hear that the reunion is to be signalized by a powerful movement which shall develop the strength of the former Old School branch, and give us the advantage of united counsels and systematic efforts. On this field we may expect to enjoy the advantage before the outside public, of the prestige of reunion. The way is open to their hearts. Reunion in their eyes is success; and nothing succeeds like success.

Amid all, it is plain that while our great and growing city has not, on the whole, gone beyond us since the division, yet the vast accessions of foreign population have been, we may say, in no degree reached by us with the ordinances of the gospel. Even the Scotch and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians are mostly accommodated in other branches of the Presbyterian church. It cannot be said that we have made an effort for the evangelization of Celts or Germans. A little German church has fallen nearly dead between the two branches. A duty neglected for a generation is now upon us, and calls for the exercise of our united wisdom, strength and consecration.

ALWAYS AFTER MONEY!

Yes, it is a fact. The church is always after people's money. No sooner is one thing out of the way, than another is got up. Nay! we may think ourselves very well off, if two or three first-class schemes are not on foot at once, every one of the highest importance. Now it is a church, now a mission chapel, now a college or seminary endowment, and now a collection to make up deficiency in current receipts, now for a Sunday-school at the West, or for Tract Society, or Refuge or Wanderers' Home in the city; to say nothing of the regular procession of church causes, ten or twelve in a year. Yes, it is true; and it is equally true, that it would be a very miserable sort of church of God on earth that was not always asking for money. Only a dead church does not want money. That which is alive, pushing, enterprising; with keen eyes fixed upon the perishing world and seeking opportunity to save it by preaching, by missions, by tracts and books, by schools and colleges, will of course be asking money. That which is bold and aggressive; which strides forward to keep pace with increasing population; which, in this age of vast secular interests and commercial enterprises, is thrilled with ambition to keep the church in the advance, will want great sums of money. Just as every call for men during the war proved the steady purpose of the administration to maintain our nationality and cheered the heart of the patriot, although to respond to it often proved exceedingly inconvenient; so every call of the church for enlarged resources is really a new proof of inward vigor and a presage of victory.

Imagine the Saviour weary with His people's praying; complaining that these Christians are always wanting something! Imagine a parent frowning at a child for being hungry, and scowling whenever it asked for bread! The child that ceases to crave nourishment is sick, and all arts are used to revive its appetite; when it begins to ask for food again, there is joy in the house; the sick one will get well. The surest sign of spiritual declension is a lessening of the number of our requests before God. The individual Christian or the church that ceases to ask for God or man is becoming paralyzed.

You cannot push or extend a business without putting in capital; and it is a great business which the church has to do. It has made most encouraging progress. But has it gone so far, or accomplished so much, in the conquest of the world, that further outlay is needless? Have we built enough churches, or sent out enough missionaries? Are there indications that the city, the land, the world is becoming so much better as really to have no more need of our efforts? We all, grumblers included, know better. The cry of the church for means, is the cry of a perishing world for help. It is a sign that God's people understand the situation and have laid it to heart. It means business. It means advance, enlargement, aggression. It means that the church is not only in a healthful state, but resolved, hopeful, practical, teeming with enterprise, ambitious for God.

It can scarcely be less than a crime to grumble at frequent appeals for money, or to wish that some time they might come to an end. Until the millenium dawns, that sort of grudging is criminal. God has put you in a world full of needs. Be thankful, if you have means, that God does not give you up to the rust and canker of selfishness, or suffer you to degenerate into a mere watch-dog over your property; but that He has made you His steward, with the honorable duty of dispensing His bounty, through the church, to a dying world.

Moderators Fowler and Jacobus propose Thursday, Jan. 6th, as a day of prayer for the reunited church.

OUR ROCHESTER CORRESPONDENT.

ONTARIO PRESBYTERY.

This Presbytery held its annual meeting this week at Mt. Morris. In view of the glorious reunion of the two great branches of the Presbyterian Church, this was made a sort of jubilee. The Presbytery of Genesee River (late O. S.) was invited to meet with them. This invitation was cordially made, and courteously accepted. The two bodies, covering substantially the same territory, came together as though they were one, and made a joyous occasion of it. The church was beautifully trimmed with evergreens, with a motto singularly appropriate upon the pulpit, "THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE."

The opening sermon, striking and impressive, was preached by Rev. L. D. Chapin, of East Bloomfield. Rev. J. R. Page, of East Aron, was chosen Moderator. The morning prayer meetings were deeply interesting and tender, the exercises participated in by members of both Presbyteries. In addition to this, by invitation of the Presbytery of Ontario, a special sermon was preached on Wednesday evening by Rev. J. E. Nassau, of the Genesee River Presbytery. Most appropriately he discussed the doctrine of the oneness of the Church: One doctrine, one plan of salvation, all true believers are one in Christ Jesus. The sermon gave great satisfaction.

We noticed that, as a part of the business of the Presbytery, the pastors and elders were called to account for delinquencies in regard to collections. If the blanks were filled in the statistical reports, very well. If not, the pastors and elders were asked for the reasons of the failure. They gave their reasons, in some cases good, in others not quite satisfactory. The effect of the inquiry was excellent. The delinquents promised to do better. We think this custom would do good in all our Presbyteries.

The communion sermon was preached by Rev. I. N. Sprague, D. D., of Genesee, the two Presbyteries uniting. It was a pleasant and profitable season, all mingling together as one in this divine service.

But the best part of the service was reserved for Thursday evening, the closing and crowning exercise of the occasion. This was the real reunion jubilee. Ample preparations were made, due notice, given, expectations aroused, and the large church was filled with an audience ready to enjoy all that could be said or sung.

The venerable Dr. Barnard, of Lima, now almost eighty years of age, was called to the chair. A dozen or fifteen speeches were made by different members of the two Presbyteries and their invited guests. They were all in one key, joyous and jubilant, thanking God for the glorious event which He has brought about so auspiciously in His wondrous providence, and anticipating the great good that is to result from it. With united voice, all urged at the same time the duty of greater consecration, increased efforts and enlarged usefulness in the time to come. It was a joyous meeting, one of the most intensely interesting and pleasurable which we have ever attended. It reminded us of the first united meeting of the two Assemblies in the Second church of St. Louis in 1866. It helped us to understand something of the intense feeling which pervaded the first meeting at Pittsburgh. The pleasure almost amounted to pain. It was time the two branches came together. Surely they were more ripe for it than some had dreamed.

But one of the episodes of the occasion deserves special mention. This meeting of the Presbytery of Ontario just completed fifty years in which Dr. Barnard had served as *Stated Clerk*, a man of rare wisdom and great gentleness, a sort of presiding genius over all its deliberations, and the friend of every one. It was thought fit by the members of the Presbytery to take some special notice of his services. It was but the thought of the day. All was quietly arranged, however, and in the midst of the evening service, he was taken entirely by surprise by the present of a writing case, a gold pen, and a large photograph album, the latter to be filled as fast and as far as possible with the faces of the present and former members of the Presbytery. It was a well deserved tribute of respect handed, made by his admirable successor at Lima, Rev. A. L. Benton. The venerable Doctor's reply was characteristically modest, tender and touching.

We noticed, also, in the proceedings of the Presbytery, that the Elders were called to lead off, in giving in the reports on the condition of the churches. It gave them a more prominent part in the proceedings of the occasion than they have sometimes had in the meetings of our Presbyteries. It is the way to get the Elders to be more faithful in attendance upon these meetings—give them something to do.

GENESEE.

Rochester, December 18, 1869.

—Old Pine Street church must positively enlarge its accommodations, if it expects to celebrate many more such S. S. anniversaries as that of two Sabbaths ago. The mission school, of the church school, besides the general public, which are always about when Pine Street Church makes a demonstration, are almost too many for any church building. Of course the exercises were highly satisfactory, but as our reporter could not get in, we are obliged to take it on trust. On last Sabbath the communion season was observed, when an accession of twenty-four

was made to the church, half by profession. On next Tuesday there is to be a social church gathering, which we may refer to again. Thank God for the abounding health and vigor of Old Pine Street church!

—Has not the time come for the consecration of public opinion upon several of our Western States, particularly upon Indiana, in regard to their scandalous divorce legislation? They are demoralizing the whole country. No matter how elevated and Christian the legislation of any other State may be, so long as the citizen may repair to Indiana, and by a disgusting farce procure a dissolution of the marriage tie, the status of that sacred relation is practically the same in the purest of the Commonwealths as in Indiana. The level of sentiment and of security will rise no higher anywhere in the country than where it is the lowest. What are the Christian people of that State doing; what are Synods and associations and Presbyteries doing; what is the pulpit doing to raise public sentiment in that State and to shame the community out of the position of panderer to the gross lusts, vices and disorders of the country at large? Every engine of influence, within and without the State, should be vigorously plied to dislodge it from a position, which practically nullifies the laws of the other States on a matter of such supreme importance. If necessary, we must seek congressional interposition to abate the nuisance of the Indiana divorce laws.

—Father Hyacinthe's reserve is pretty much broken down; and the romance, and we may add the dignity of his position, was somewhat dissipated by his appearance as a lecturer. Well, we suppose he must live, and lecturing is more honorable than monkish mendicancy. He spoke in French, in behalf of the French Benevolent Society, on Thursday week, at the New York Academy of Music. The opening and closing sentences of his lecture, which was on the "Government of Life," are thus given by the reporters:

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: I, too, require to give some explanation of my presence here tonight. I came to seek in this country a few weeks of repose between the struggles of yesterday and those of the morrow. I came resolved to be silent. I came to behold that grand nature bearing an impress of the Deity, the more profound as the hand of man is less apparent upon it. I came to look upon that young and vigorous nation which, if it weakens not, will realize in the future the greatest and the last intentions of God on our race. I came here to listen and not to speak. It happened, however, that in this cosmopolitan city I found France, and was appealed to by the charitable in behalf of suffering France. . . . The foundation of your people is the Bible, the Book that speaks of God, the living Word of Jesus Christ. In an admirable manifesto from your President there shines through his words the Christian faith—a belief in Jesus is at the root of the nation. And when I return I shall tell Europe that I have found here liberty associated with Christianity, and have been among a people who do not think that to be free they must be parted from God. [Great applause]

—The *American Churchman*, of Chicago, says the knaves of Utah are nearly all Yankees, including the "apostles," "bishops," and "elders," and all who get the tithes; while the dupes are mainly very degraded European peasants, many of them from England and Wales, and members by baptism of the English Church. It says: "There never existed but one Mormon Irishman, and a Mormon Irish woman is something totally unknown to naturalists."

FOREIGN ITEMS.

Paris, Dec. 16.—It is reported that the Empress has instructed her Chamberlain to meet Pere Hyacinthe at Havre, and dissuade him from attempting to preach in Paris. Dec. 16.—Letters from Rome report that the Pope urges the appointment of Gallican Bishops on the leading committees. It is generally understood that the object of the recent decree of the Pope, dissolving the Ecumenical Council in case of his death, is to prevent the election to the Papacy of any but an Italian Cardinal.

Madrid, Dec. 9.—In Cortez, to-day, the Minister of State alluded to the assembling of the Council at Rome, and intimated that strong steps would be taken for the protection of Spain, in case the Council should adopt measures hostile to her interests.

Rome, Dec. 16.—The Council has as yet been unable to frame a Commission to regulate the relations between the Church and State and define the rights of each. Several votes have been taken, but they were undecided. The late decree providing for the election of a successor, should the Pope die during the session of the Council, was but a formality. The statement that any modifications will be made in the regulations of the Council is inexact. It is officially settled that no discussion on this point will be permitted.

France, Dec. 17.—The report that France had sent a note to the Holy See, declaring the proclamation of the dogma of Papal infallibility would release France from her political obligations to the Concordat, is a fabrication. Cardinal Mathieu, Archbishop of Besancon, has left Rome, and his departure gives rise to many contradictory rumors. Dec. 18.—The sessions of the Council will be resumed on Jan. 6th. The French bishops have protested against the Pope's interference in the deliberations of the Council. The Spanish bishops, both home and colonial, sustain the Pope. Dec. 19th.—Cardinal Pentini, a native of Rome, died yesterday, aged 72 years. There are now sixteen vacancies in the College of Cardinals. It is understood that the Pope will make no nominations to all the vacancies while the Ecumenical Council is in session.