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THE PRESBYTERIAN.

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THE PRESBYTERIAN

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No. 18

Stand by the Old Standards.

The Presbyterian Church has long been the bulwark of sound doctrine. She has been noted for conservative energy and activity. She has been the defender of truth against all kinds of assault. She has been known for her back-bone. Her ministry has been pre-eminently theological. She has never been afraid of polemics when the occasion has called for them. In all ages her pastors and teachers knew what they believed, and were ready to uphold the Confession of Faith against all comers when assailed. They were trained up to it, and studied it Scripturally and systematically. They were rooted and grounded in it. They found it often misrepresented, but they were not deterred from its defense on this account. Under their loving, masterly and faithful preaching and teaching of its truths and principles, generation after generation of believers in it were developed, and a strong and definite type of piety was fostered and maintained. Household training was encouraged. The children grew up on the Shorter Catechism, and the family altar was a daily educating and sanctifying power. The communities, in which Presbyterians of the Westminster order resided, felt their impress. Elders of staying and controlling character came to the fore. From Presbyterian churches and homes largely came the men of discriminating and intellectual acumen, who filled judicial positions in the State. Everywhere, the force of staid and unflinching Presbyterianism was felt. Efforts were put forth to maintain and extend it, and it gained in influence at home and abroad.

Thus our Church advanced and developed until about ten or fifteen years ago, when Rationalism and Liberalism began their insidious warfare upon her citadel. Her doctrinal position, so long the source of her life and stability, became obnoxious to our "new lights." It was a barrier to "advanced thought." It, hence, became necessary to effect a change of opinion in regard to the Westminster Standards. Much was said about a more liberal construction of them, and larger liberty in holding them. The spirit thus raised grew apace, and found expression in a demand for certain Confessional modifications in regard to the inspiration of the Scriptures, elect infants and predestination. These were regarded as the more vulnerable points of assault. Article after article, and sermon after sermon, were written, delivered or published about the need and the advantage of Confessional changes in these particulars. Many, not at first disposed to take up with this hue and cry, came to think that something might be done to relieve the misconceptions entertained. Soon the door was thrown wide open for flaw-picking in our venerable symbols. Our General Assembly was flooded with overtures upon the subject. Many thought they could improve upon our creed, and were ready with their suggestions. Some even wrote out special creedal forms for adoption. Brethren generally went to work with zest and enthusiasm to try their hand at amendments and improvements, and, as the result, a regular medley of

overtures and modifications was thrown upon the market. At last the General Assembly appointed a large and judicious committee to take them all into consideration, and to report a modified Confession of Faith within Calvinistic lines. This committee deliberated and formulated until almost tired out, and finally submitted to the Assembly their work, which, after discussion, was sent down to the Presbyteries for adoption and approval. Over it ministers and elders wrestled for days and weeks. Point after point was fought over. Some Presbyteries that were most ardent at first for revision abandoned the whole business in despair, and even disgust. Other Presbyteries adopted some of the proposed amendments, and rejected others. A few of them negatived them, one and all. Not a single amendment received sufficient votes for its adoption. Revision turned out a complete failure. It did more harm than good, proving a weakening, disturbing and dividing factor.

Upon its close, arose the Briggs controversy. The Union Seminary professor was then in the zenith of his glory and power, and was looked upon by many as the new leader to inaugurate and propagate a new Presbyterian theology. He rallied around him many of the more advanced revisionists, and some of the aspiring in the younger portion of our ministry. He wrote and talked in a way to create conservative alarm. He was cautioned, but heeded not. He grew bolder and more defiant, until charges were tabled against him for anti-Confessional teaching. He was tried, found guilty and suspended. Dr. Smith took up the guage of battle, and forced once more the issue until he was also ecclesiastically silenced. During all the fierce and protracted struggle, our Church stood up bravely and persistently in defense of the Bible and our Standards.

Next came McGiffertism, and still there was no yielding on the part of the Church. But no sooner had this trouble reached a peaceable and satisfactory stage, than the disturbers of Presbyterian peace revived the old issue of a revised creed. Drs. Hillis and Parkhurst fired off their batteries against the old Confession, when several New York Presbyteries began to overture for revision. Other Presbyteries, East and West, have followed suit. Now the subject is again to be forced upon the attention of our General Assembly.

What means all this continuous, and more or less bitter, attack upon Presbyterian doctrine and order? Is it not indicative of an effort to discredit and break down, not only the old Westminster document, but a distinctively Confessional and truth-bearing Church? Many are asking for a minimum creed. Others are for toning down and eliminating sharply defined tenets. Others are calling for comprehensionism, and allowing all phases of doctrinal interpretation under the Presbyterian aegis. Others still are bent upon radical alterations, if revision is again attempted. The old symbols are to be stormed with bitterness and vigor. Already it is intimated, and even publicly advocated, that the conservative theolo-

A Statistical Correction.

By Rev. Dr. R. M. Patterson.

The statistics of the churches of the United States, by Dr. H. K. Carroll, in a recent number of "The Christian Advocate," are very valuable and worthy of close scrutiny. Coming from Dr. Carroll, they would be unreservedly accepted as substantially correct. We detect one error, however, in the figures of our Presbyterian Church, which it is proper to correct.

The statistics, it should be understood, are limited strictly to the United States—that is, the mission churches and communicants in foreign lands are not included. They give last year, (1899,) the communicants in our Northern Presbyterian Church as 961,334. That agrees with the official tables in the Assembly Minutes. The number in 1890, however, is given as 788,224, and the net growth in the nine years as therefore 173,110. In this Dr. Carroll follows the National census reports of 1890, which he so ably superintended. The official tables in the Assembly Minutes for 1890, however, sum up with a serious difference.

According to those tables the total number of communicants in our connection was 775,903. The number of them in foreign lands was 15,373, leaving 760,530, instead of 788,224 in this country. The gain in the nine years was, therefore, 200,804 instead of 173,110, and nearly 28 per cent. instead of 22 per cent., as stated by Dr. Carroll.

One of the tables arranges in order of strength, thirteen of the denominations which gained in the nine years more than 100,000. It puts ahead of our Northern Church the Regular Baptist (North) with a gain of 195,293; the African Methodist Episcopal, 189,002; the Lutheran Synodical Conference, 185,793; the African Methodist Episcopal Zion, 178,673. But this correction puts our Church above them in the list. The Protestant Episcopal, with a gain of 161,288, closely follows ours in the list in the "Advocate," but the correction, making our gain 200,804, instead of 173,110, places our Episcopal brethren 27,694, instead of 11,822, behind us in the advance.

Our gain in numbers during the nine years is not what we wish it was, but it is well to note that it is better than Dr. Carroll's tables show. Let us hope that this year's reports, which are now being made up for the Assembly, and which will complete the decade and the century, will make a decided spring forward.

Presbyterial Meetings.
REDSTONE.

This Presbytery met in the church at Scottdale, Pa., April 17. Rev. P. Baker was elected Moderator, and Rev. C. D. A. Hoon, Temporary Clerk.

The pastoral relations between Rev. F. M. Silsley and the Dunbar church, and Rev. S. E. Elliott and the Mt. Pleasant Reunion church, were dissolved. Licentiates C. S. Beatty, Jr., and O. C. Crawford were ordained. Mr. Beatty was dis-

missed to the Presbytery of Pittsburg. Mr. Crawford is under appointment as a missionary to China. The license of Local Evangelist W. O. David was renewed for one year.

The Presbytery decided that no change is necessary in the requirements laid down in the Form of Government regarding the reception and examination of candidates for the ministry, but that hereafter candidates for licensure will be examined at a time other than the meeting of Presbytery, and that part of the examinations will be written.

The First church of Uniontown reported increasing the salary of its pastor, Dr. A. S. Mulholland, to \$2,500 and a parsonage.

Presbytery refused to overture the General Assembly regarding the revision of the Confession of Faith. Rev. Mr. Reginimer, a native of Bohemia, who has been laboring half time among the Hungarians, Slavs, etc., in the coke region, gave a report of his work, and was engaged for his full time the coming year.

The fall meeting is to be held at the Reboth church. R. C. Aukerman, P. C.

TROY.

This Presbytery met on April 23 and dissolved the pastorate of Rev. James J. Harrington, at Middle Granville, to take effect May 1st, and dismissed him to the Presbytery of Hudson, where he has accepted the call of the church of Denton. Rev. Hugh B. McCrone was received from the Presbytery of West Jersey, and is to be installed over the Schoonmaker Memorial church of Stillwater, May 2d, the Moderator, Rev. George Dugan, presiding and charging the pastor; the sermon by Rev. T. P. Sawin, D.D., and the charge to the people by Rev. W. M. Johnson, D.D.

A. H. A.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

This Presbytery met in Danville, Pa., April 16. Rev. J. W. Martin was elected Moderator. Rev. E. A. Snook was dismissed to the Presbytery of Baltimore, and Rev. George Warrington to West Jersey. Rev. F. F. Christine was received from Huntingdon. Rev. M. L. Ross, D.D., was released from the churches of Miiffinburg and Hartleton. A standing committee was appointed on the work of the American Bible Society. A committee was appointed to revise the Manual of Presbytery. The overture on Judicial Commissions was answered in the negative. The General Assembly was overtured to take into consideration the re-statement of our Doctrinal Standard.



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Fall meeting to be held at Beech Creek.
J. D. Cook, S. C.

A Rummage Sale.

The ladies of the Presbyterian church are planning a novelty for Philadelphia—"A Rummage Sale," for the benefit of the India Famine Fund and other charities. They desire the co-operation and aid of all Philadelphia. The plan is to get people to send articles which are of no use to the owner and are put away in attics and closets.

This sale will be held during the last week in May. The location of the Rummage Shop will be announced later.

The Philadelphia Institute of Teacher Training will be held every Tuesday evening at eight o'clock in the small Auditorium of Witherspoon Building, under charge of Rev. Drs. Kerr, Boyce, Tupper, and Martin G. Brumbaugh. The lectures are open to the public without charge, and all Christian workers are invited to attend. Enrolled students regularly pursuing the courses of study are expected to pay a nominal enrollment fee of one dollar a term, which is the only means of meeting incidental expenses. The teaching, which is of the highest order, is gratuitous—a royal gift upon the altar of a splendid cause.

The Managers of the Presbyterian Orphanage will receive all friends of the institution on Thursday, May 10th, 1900, from 11 o'clock A. M. until 7 o'clock P. M., at Fifty-eighth street and Kingsessing avenue, in the large school building, where refreshments will be served, and fancy articles, ice cream and confectionery, will be for sale. Religious services will be held at three o'clock in the afternoon, in the Chapel. There will be exercises by the children and brief addresses by Rev. Drs. Davies and Alexander.

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