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14

ORGANIZED ALMSGIVING;

OR,

*A Constitutional Organization for Promoting the
Maintenance and Increase of the Home Pastorate ;
and for the Promotion of Foreign Missions.*

A PROPOSAL CONCERNING THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

A

SECOND PAPER

WRITTEN BY THE

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UNDER THE ABOVE TITLE.

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PREFACE TO SECOND PAPER.—This second paper was originally designed to be read at a public meeting which was to have been held at the Church House and Institute at Lincoln on the Fifteenth of December last, but owing to the indisposition of its author at that time the meeting did not take place. It is now published, together with the third edition of the first paper, in the hope that the two together may render the scheme proposed sufficiently intelligible for initiative purposes, and supply a more emphatic and complete argument in its favour.

EASTER, 1894.

J. B. F.

PAPER II.

THIS scheme is put forward in the simple hope that it may, in some measure, assist the councils of those numerous friends and authorities of the Church of England who are increasingly desiring and looking for a more united, a more responsible, and a more effective way of carrying on the great work of the Church than at present exists.

In advocating such an all-embracing organization as this, it may seem to some that due regard is not given to the agencies of the Church which are now in the field. It may seem that the Societies are deprecated beyond what they deserve. All honour to the Societies for the great things they have done! But for the good endeavours of the Societies the Church must have slumbered on in indifference as to missionary work far longer than she did. We cannot tell the debt which the Church owes to the Societies. But it must be remembered that the Societies are but the handmaids of the Church, and that they are voluntary handmaids; for though they serve the Church they are not subject to her, except by inference. Nor need we think that, because the Societies have done great things, the Church cannot, by acting in all the fulness of her corporate vigour, do even greater things.

If it be asked—“What is the Church for this purpose?” may it not be answered that, for the purpose of *authorizing* a constitutional endeavour to promote her missionary enterprise the Synod is the Church; and for the purpose of *carrying out* that constitutional

endeavour the Board appointed by the Synod, associated with the diocese and the parish, would be the Church? Anyway, it is by the combined action of all these forces that we hope to see created, authorized, and worked some such system as is here proposed for gathering and employing the alms of church people in the interest of the causes specified.

It is lamentable to think of the great number of parishes which do nothing, or, comparatively speaking, shamefully little, for the general work of the Church; and of the thousands, if not millions, of church people who are never at all directly or responsibly approached in the interest of the Church's greater needs. This state of things plainly shows that all the Societies put together are incapable of covering the land with the means of solicitation. And where a society does work the want of status attaching to the very name of "Society" robs its appeal of much of its power. And the fact that the name of the Church Societies is "legion" is a further reason for the weakness of their individual voices, and for the inadequacy of their united voice.

As the chief responsibility in all pastoral matters constitutionally rests with the chief pastors, we look to our Bishops of to-day to lead us into safer and surer ways. We look to them to bring order out of our present chaos, courage out of our present timidity, efficiency out of our present insufficiency. We look to them to give us an authorized and comprehensive system of missionary enterprise. We look to them to give us the opportunity of such combination for practical purposes as will enable us to think less of our differences, if not to forget them, and to realize that, after all, "*Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together.*"

And shall we not ask the Bishops for some such corporate system as the one now under our consideration?

THE PASTORAL BOARD.

A Pastoral Board, fully authorized to deal with the whole matter of providing and maintaining bishops and clergy according to necessity, is certainly what is wanted in England and Wales to lift such

matters into their proper position of urgency and importance, and, as it were, to compel a due attention to them on the part of the Church at large. This Board need not in the least cripple diocesan endeavours; rather it would aim at enforcing the principle of diocesan responsibility, and make its own duty towards the diocese a matter of initiatory and concurrent assistance. And this great central power, charged with a general responsibility, would be necessary, not only for the purpose of giving a general stimulus to the pastoral cause, but also to hold the balance in the interest of the poorer dioceses and so to secure equalization.

And such a board as this is what is wanted to take up such matters as clergy training, and clergy pensions, and perhaps to ameliorate the pressure of the dilapidation acts. In fact this Board might give its responsible attention to the due care of the clergy from the time that they first declare their desire to prepare for Holy Orders to the day of their death.

It is surely most impolitic for the Church to say, as she says at present, to all who desire to enter her ministry—"But you must get yourselves taught first." The Church should herself so supervise the whole matter of clergy training as to see that all candidates for her Orders have the opportunity of acquiring a really adequate education.

How many candidates, for economical reasons, have to be content with an incomplete training! And how many have to spend the best years of their lives in business in order to save up enough money with which to meet the costs of the minimum education required! And how many whose hearts are for the ministry have to give up the idea of Holy Orders altogether because they are not well enough off to "get themselves taught!" Let the Church but be prepared to receive good and true men to train for the ministry, when necessary at her own charges (and also to assure them of a reasonable maintenance after ordination), and the present heart-breaking cry for more clergy, which comes from the mission-field, both at home and abroad, would receive something like an adequate response. There are plenty of men who have the "vocation," and who only want the

ways and means necessary for the preparation. The serious decline in the number of candidates admitted to Holy Orders only last year is a fact which clearly proves how greatly the Church is suffering for want of doing things properly. According to the Rev. H. T. Armfield's returns there were fifty-six fewer candidates in 1893 than in the year before; and the total, one thousand four hundred and seventeen, is the smallest since the year 1880. And judging from Mr. Armfield's returns of the recent Lent Ordinations it appears that matters are still going from bad to worse.

The cruel necessity of begging and praying before society after society, and committee after committee, with his grievance list in hand, as it befalls the poor and afflicted priest of to-day, and the curate who is past work, is a scandal and a disgrace to the Church. The clergy who entrust themselves to the keeping of the Church have a right to be looked after by the Church: and surely it is of the nature of a breach of confidence that, in their hour of need, they are left to seek what they want among the hundred and forty-eight societies, nearly all of them very little societies, which happen to exist in their interest, or else to go to the wall.

And, whilst poverty is a wholesome means of personal discipline, what an immense amount of energy is suppressed, and power wasted among the clergy by depression of circumstances! Put into responsible positions how can they do well on the pay of an artisan? The average net income of the whole of the beneficed clergy is now a little over £240; but fully four thousand of these receive from their benefices less than £150 a year. And the average income of the unbeneficed clergy, of whom there are seven thousand, is about £129; and towards their stipends, the Incumbents contribute no less than £276,000.

Does not the present-day state of things, as regards the clergy, prove beyond doubt that the haphazard society system, though it has done much, is conspicuously unequal to the occasion? Alas! it is the news of to-day that our leading Home Missionary Society finds it necessary to discontinue more than one hundred and seventy grants out of the eleven hundred and sixty-two on its books, and to

considerably reduce the remainder. There is no gainsaying the need of a far more thorough-going and responsible method of dealing with so enormous a difficulty as that of providing a sufficient pastorate with a sufficient maintenance in all parts of England and Wales.

And surely the struggle which we are now making to hold our own in our elementary schools requires to be supplemented by an earnest endeavour everywhere to bring the homes of the children as well under direct pastoral influence. For how often the paramount influence of the home has effaced in the child the religious influence of the school!

When these responsible Boards are in working order, then we shall find the wealthy laity giving their thousands and their tens of thousands for the clergy of the Church, in the same generous spirit as we see them giving now for the fabrics of the Church. Let the Church do her own work, and that in a business-like and permanent way, and she will not lack the support which she requires. Great things will be done for the clergy when the Church as a whole realizes her obligations towards them, and when their interests are constitutionally dealt with.

THE BOARD OF MISSIONS.

The dual Board of Missions which already exists, and which is designed to act as a Board of Reference, and to consider the necessities of the mission-field, and to make reports, will, beyond doubt, render a very great service to the cause of missions. It must create additional, and a more intelligent, interest in the mission-field. And the hope is that the Church, having put her own hand to the missionary plough by appointing this Board of missionary inquiry, will not turn back, but, having surveyed the field, go on to see the necessity of occupying it herself in her corporate right. It is indeed to be hoped that this Board of inquiry will involve the creation of an Administrative Board of Missions; and that the desire for united action which seems to be already prevalent among the missionaries themselves, and amongst their friends at home, will be found suf-

ficiently developed to secure a general appreciation of this conclusion. And such a result would close the door for ever against the probability, if not the possibility, of such a split in the Church as might happen under the present condition of things if a sufficiently untoward event were to occur to provoke it.

And is it not in due sequence that the reformed Church of England should now arrive at this stage of corporate action? During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there were not a few personal efforts made to minister to the emigrant, and to Christianise the heathen. And as those personal efforts multiplied, and the vastness of the work was realized, the need of combination for missionary purposes became apparent, and that led to the formation of missionary societies. And Missionary Societies have now been at work for nearly two hundred years; and whilst they have quickened the missionary sympathies of the Church at home, and met with really astonishing success abroad, they have also shown that the work is yet too vast, and that it is also too responsible, even for their efforts. And now, owing to the good offices of the Societies, it is an increasing conviction amongst church people that the time is at hand when the Church must apply her whole corporate self to the work—a consummation over which surely all churchmen would rejoice, and which would be the crowning glory of the work of the Societies.

It is a significant fact, notwithstanding the abortive response that was first proposed, that the present Boards of Missions are the outcome of the action of S.P.G., who, in 1869, petitioned the Convocations of the Provinces of Canterbury and York “to take such steps as may seem expedient to them for the better support and advancement of Missionary work.”

All honour to those persons who prepared the way for the Missionary Societies! All honour to those Societies which have prepared the way for the Missionary Church of England!

The Bishop of Tasmania, when presiding at the Australian Church Congress, held at Hobart last January, said: “It will be the undying glory of this century that it saw the English Church as a whole become a Missionary Church.”

There are some friends of Special Missions who seem doubtful of the advantage of the amalgamation of missionary managements. But the hand of the Special Mission must be left as free as possible. Such is the amount of interest created at the present day by the raising of special funds for Special Missions that it would not only be unwise but surely wrong to suppress such special enthusiasm. Let the Board of Missions do all it can for the Missions of the Church of England in general, and then if particular Missions find it necessary to seek additional interest and help from their own particular friends at home by all means let them do so. And what is more, let that additional help, being earmarked, be transmitted from the parish to the Missions Board through this general organization, and let the Board transmit it to the Mission for which it is intended. So long as the Board, acting with all due regard for the personal and local interests concerned in each particular case, actually directs the sending forth of the missionaries, and does what it can to support them out of its own resources, the missionaries themselves may well be free to seek additional assistance from where they will and how they will. The earmarked money which the Board transmitted would practically be so much money already allocated for them; and this special offering would, perhaps, correspondingly minimise the claim of the Mission to which it is sent upon the general funds of the Board.

It certainly seems advisable that if a person desires to expend his charity upon a particular spot in the mission field he should not only be free to do so, but that the Board should actually encourage him to do so; just as at home people are encouraged to do special things for special places.

Of course the missions' quarter of the four-fold box would everywhere be rigidly confined to collecting alms for the general fund of the Missions Board; and in this way the friends of Special Missions would be induced also to contribute to the general fund, as they certainly ought to do.

It is more than probable that if the Board were created and at work, and if, under its auspices, all the special interests of church

people at home in the mission-field abroad were directly indulged, the Board, by working the whole country cogently and systematically, would still have a far larger general fund to deal with than all the Societies put together can accumulate now. And with this general fund the Board would be well able to equalize the distribution of the contributions of church people to the mission-field.

Anyway, the door of special friendship must be left open to begin with. And particular Missions might, if necessary, continue to circulate their own periodicals among their own particular friends. And when, if ever, this double system of special and general help really does prove disadvantageous in its working, then would be the time for the Board to readjust matters according to the necessities of that time. But why should not the Board seek to be the agent of the individual sympathizer as well as be the Executive of the whole Church?

There is no other chance of securing unity of action, or of restraining the present tendency to subdivision, excepting by means of an authorized Board of Missions. The Societies have grown up side by side, each with its own distinctive aim, and, as it were, in spite of each other; and therefore it is not to be expected that any one of them, not even the most venerable of them all, can ever hope to bring the others into unity with itself. But a Board of Missions, acting through a well qualified Executive Council; representative not of subscribers but of the Church; designed to deal with every phase of foreign Missions; learning many a good lesson from the Societies; carefully avoiding harsh measures on all sides, and as carefully fostering all consistent sympathies, whether of individuals, parishes, or dioceses; and appealing to the fidelity of the churchman rather than to the genius of the Englishman;—a Board acting thus would in all probability so gain the confidence of churchpeople, that the great majority of them at least, would individually prefer to entrust their missionary alms to the dispensation of so proper and wise an authority, and they would gladly look to it for their missionary tuition. And thus the whole matter would gradually adjust itself to the needs and desires of the time; and constitutional order would be obtained without any undue sacrifice of personal freedom.

It cannot be supposed that the Church of England, the greatest society of Englishmen that England knows, is incapable of constructing a thoroughly efficient and satisfactory Executive of its own. It cannot be thought that a limited number of churchpeople, acting independently and on their own initiative, can do better things than the whole collective wisdom, energy and charity of the Church can do.

There are 13,562 parishes in England and Wales. Of these about 3,350 do not parochially support either S.P.G. or C.M.S. ; but perhaps the 350 contribute to Special Missions instead. So there are about 10,212 parishes which contribute to the two principal Societies, of these about 9,000 contribute to S.P.G. and about 4,000 to C.M.S. Therefore it appears that about 6,212 contribute to S.P.G. only, about 2,788 contribute to both S.P.G. and C.M.S., and about 1,212 contribute to C.M.S. only.

It is evident that something must be done both to create missionary interest in the 3,000 parishes which, from these figures, appear to be indifferent to the cause at present, and to greatly increase the interest in that majority of those other parishes which support missions only to a poor extent.

It is not every clergyman who has the aptitude for being the missionary enthusiast of the parish. And how many of the clergy are so engrossed in their many-sided parochial duties that they are unable to give to the missionary cause that devotion which it deserves. But surely there is some one in every parish who, given the opportunity, would do good things, if not great things, for the cause of missions in the capacity of "Parochial Secretary," and whose help in that capacity would be most valuable to the parish priest.

If this parochial secretary did no more than direct the circulation of the boxes and magazines he would do much ; but, acting in conjunction with his clergymen, he could do more by promoting interest in missions by other means as well.

Let this Administrative Board of Missions be created; let it cultivate missionary intelligence and sympathy throughout the land ; let it collect special offerings as well as general offerings ; let it work with an even and impartial hand both at home and abroad ; and, at the

same time, let the Societies that now exist live on as long as their supporters and clients prefer them; let all this be done, and a movement will have been started giving every promise of bringing about, as regards our responsibilities abroad, a gradual and agreeable change from ignorance to knowledge, from chaos to order, from lassitude to vigour, from niggardliness to generosity, from disintegration to unity, from a state of corporate impotence to a position of catholic power.

THE DIOCESAN BOARD.

The principal idea as regards this Diocesan Board of Trust and Administration is that there may be in each Diocese a Board thoroughly qualified to co-operate with the Pastoral Board in whatever it may require to do, or be required to do, in the Diocese; and also to co-operate with the Missions Board in working the Diocese in the missionary interest. And yet this Diocesan Board would require to be in a position to stand alone, and, in some way, to hold and administer trusts belonging to the Diocese. It would especially set itself to work to make the supply and the financial condition of the clergy in the Diocese really satisfactory. And it should be qualified to take the *initiative* in such matters. The holder, for instance, of a poor benefice is the very last person who ought to be required to beg about for funds for the necessary improvement of that benefice. And yet at the present time if he does not move in the matter no one else will. It is not right that priests should have to beg their own hire, as so many have to do now, unless, from their sense of honour, they prefer to starve in silence. And the poor benefice might be improved conditionally, the Diocesan Board holding the additional funds, directly or indirectly, and exercising such discretion in the matter as donors may wish and discipline may require.

And each Diocese would determine for itself how far this Board should absorb other organizations already existing in the Diocese, or take up other responsibilities than those which have been specified. It would really be necessary that these Boards should be of a uniform character, as to their main construction and purpose, or at least as to their responsibilities, throughout the Dioceses.

IN THE RURAL DEANERY.

The office of Decanal Secretary would be a position of real responsibility ; and in consequence it would be all the more valued, and the more carefully discharged.

IN THE PARISH.

The gain to the parish of such an organization as is here proposed can hardly be estimated. Uncertainty is, perhaps, the greatest bug-bear of the parish of to-day. Everything is left to depend upon the ideas and enthusiasm of the parish priest : and behind him the whole parish must either stand still or go ahead. And as such different men succeed each other in the incumbency a perfect seesaw of methods and interests is the result ; and all this effectually prevents that permanency of purpose and endeavour which is so essential to the steady development of the resources of the Church. It surely is not right that the Church should leave everything in the parish to the independent initiation of the priest in charge. Indeed, it is a distinct hardship that the responsibility as to what the parish does in support of the general ways and means of the Church should fall upon the shoulders of one who has quite enough to do to comply with his ordination vows and with the terms of his institution. And how often this hardship is bitterly increased by the depressing insufficiency of the maintenance provided for this mainspring of the parish himself !

If every parish could have its authorized secretary and treasurer ; and if it could have a continuous circulation of the four-fold box and of the official Church Magazine, as is suggested in this scheme, and if this could go on from generation to generation, by the will of the Church at large, certainly immense benefits would accrue in consequence. Not only would the bug-bear of uncertainty be greatly minimised, but the people would learn that the work of the Church is their work, and they would rise to the responsibility with increasing faithfulness.

It is the parish which has to supply the means for the carrying on of the general work of the Church, and yet it is the parish which so urgently requires to be organized for that purpose. But how can

the parishes of England and Wales be adequately and uniformly organized in the interest of that general work of the Church unless that work is brought into constitutional order? The parish that works for the Church must be free from the bewilderment of societies, and have things brought into authorized order, before its sympathies can be soundly drawn out and constantly maintained.

The power for good of this Parochial Secretary could not fail to be very great. Think of him, in every part of the land, going the round of his parish under the united authority of the Bishops, the Pastoral Board, the Missions Board, the Diocesan Board, his own parish Priest, and his fellow Churchmen in the parish—verily the messenger of the whole Church; think of him knocking at the door of, at least, every churchman in the parish, and putting it directly to the householder himself—whether or no he will accept the use of the church box, and of the magazine that follows it, and use them both as his conscience may direct him? Surely it would not be an easy matter for any churchman who is worth his salt to say “No” to *such* a request *so* brought home to him.

Of course this secretary would see that every communicant in the parish had the opportunity of using one of these boxes. Properly speaking each communicant ought to have a box to himself, as his own instrument of monition, calling him constantly to the practice of self-denial, and exhorting him to give devoutly.

It is not supposed that this four-fold box would collect all the money that would be wanted. By no means. All the usual methods of gathering alms for pious purposes would, in all probability, be still required. But this box would be the key to the whole organization; for it would definitely and individually enlist the sympathies of the people in support of the Church, and it would hold them continually in touch with the four specified branches of her work. Once get a person to accept the use of the box, and you have him on the lists; and when he is once on the lists you can see that he has every opportunity of doing his duty towards the support of the Church's work.

And there are two other great points of advantage in this plan of sending the box and magazine to all alike—its convenience to the poor, and its suitability as a means of reaching the rich. For it would provide the poor with a constant opportunity of contributing their small offerings in a most convenient way ; and it would tend to unlock the sympathies of that great body of wealthy church people who do so little for the Church now. For these wealthy people do little for the Church now, not so much because they refuse to do more, but because the Church has not yet plainly told them what is wanted. No doubt whole crowds of societies have worried these people for alms, and extracted pacifying guineas from them ; but the Church herself has never confronted them in a direct and responsible way, and therefore they are not alive to the claims of duty upon them. People have been more or less irregularly asked if they will be pleased to give, rather than responsibly taught that it is their duty to give, and an unwholesome sense of patronage rather than the more healthy sense of duty is, generally speaking, the practical result.

This parochial part of the organization would practically form a missionary association in every parish ; and it would form an excellent ground-work upon which the parish priest might build in many ways.

For reasons of quietness the boxes might be issued in the the parish with numbers only upon them, the secretary keeping to himself the names of the holders with their box numbers. These boxes should be rigidly confined to the limits of the parishes within which they are respectively issued. This rule would prevent infinitely more inconvenience than it could cause. The parochial secretary would always be at hand to open a box if required.

The parochial section of the box would be of use, in the first instance, for gathering the contribution of the parish towards the cost of the magazine. It could then be used to collect for some need of the parish church or schools, or for some other parochial object ; or it might be used in behalf of some object outside the parish—some particular home or foreign mission ; some particular diocesan institution ; or some charitable institution, such as the Waifs and Strays Society.

In order that those alms which are put into these boxes, and those which are given in any other way than through a church offertory, may be given in accordance with those true principles of almsgiving which are implied by the words of David "All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee," all such alms should be solemnly offered to God before they are applied to their respective uses. The alms designed for use according to parochial intention would be offered in the parish church; but those designed for the use of the Pastoral, Missions and Diocesan Boards should be offered in the Cathedrals of the Dioceses in which they are respectively accumulated. All the offerings should be presented at the time of divine service, preferably at the time of the Offertory in the Holy Communion. And there should be stated Sundays for the purpose;—say the First Sunday after Epiphany, Whit Sunday, and the First Sunday in October. Three times a year would be more practicable than four; but less than three times would involve the detention of the alms for an inconveniently long time.

THE MAGAZINE.

What an enormous power for good the Editor of the Monthly Magazine would have in his hands! What opportunities of imparting information, of enkindling sympathies, and of inculcating self-sacrifice he would have? And how this Magazine, going into every church home in the land, would get behind the present indifference of the press to Church interests! And it would do a great deal towards creating such a demand for Church intelligence as would break up that indifference. And what an opportunity this Magazine would offer for the thorough circulation of pastoral letters;—letters from the whole Bench of Bishops to the whole body of church people; or, the diocesan supplement being added, letters from the Diocesan to all in his diocese; or the parochial supplement being added letters from the parish priest to all in his parish! Under existing circumstances pastoral letters come before but a fraction of those for whom they are intended, whether they are circulated in Diocesan Magazines or in newspapers, or whether they are read in the churches. But this Magazine would carry them into every home, and would give the people the opportunity of pondering them and of treasuring them.

At the present time we are too dependent upon crying into the air, whether from the pulpit or from the platform, for what we want; whereas this official Magazine, being officially supplied to the individual churchman, would carry the required information as to what is done, or to be done, and the appeals of authority for the necessary support, direct to the individual himself; and under those circumstances, if he is one who is inclined to ignore just obligations, he would not find it so easy to turn the deaf ear, or to leave it to everybody else to make the required response, as he does now when he sees the appeal merely floating about, as it were, in the air or in the press; he would not be able to plead either ignorance or unconcern. But most church people would be very thankful to have their ignorance and their unconcern broken up in this way; they would prefer to be properly informed, and to have the opportunity of helping accordingly.

It is such a development of her Ecclesiastical Organization as this which the Church of England now requires, so that she may hush her political foes by the mere aspect of her corporate strength and determination for good; so that she may belie the calumnies of her traducers, both as to her catholic basis and as to her charitable intentions; and so that she may in truth do her utmost, both at home and abroad, against all that is inimical to peace and purity,

By the system of recurrent election throughout this organization the able and the enthusiastic would always be brought, and kept, to the front all along the line; and in their hands there need be no fear of the organization failing in its purposes for want of "go." And that spirit of fellowship which has been such a power with the voluntary Societies will surely not be wanting when we are acting as the Society of Christ. Who can attend one of our Church Congresses without realizing how warm is the heart of the Church of England, and how church people really love to find themselves on common ground? And a Church with a warm heart, and the great majority, at least, of whose members do individually prefer and desire common action for good, may well be trusted to harmonize and direct that action.

And surely the increasing relish of our people for English Church History suggests that as that history does its work the Church should be all the more careful to demonstrate by her outward organization and life, as well as by her books, that it is she of whom history speaks, that it is she whom history traces, in this land, from to-day to the earliest centuries.

And if grace is to join with history in giving to the Anglican Church a world-wide attractiveness, and surely it is beginning to do so already, what need there is for the Church of England to be so equipped as to be prepared to take up the work, whether at home or abroad, of such English-speaking Christian bodies as, under that double influence of grace and history, may become absorbed within her own pale, or perhaps the work of bodies who become otherwise dispersed; for Canon Scott-Robertson's last summary of British contributions to Foreign Missions seems to show that some of those bodies are already beginning to lose their power in the mission field. And what need there is for the Church of England to be able to offer, in her corporate capacity, a truly catholic home, or sympathy, to any who may tire of the excessive demands of Rome; and to be able to succour Churches that require an apostolic friendship.

It may be demurred that the scheme here advocated is too big and comprehensive to be practical. Surely such a thought is inconsistent with the idea of resolute progress. A big need requires a big remedy. It certainly is impossible to exactly measure and time the movements which would be required to perfect so wide-spread an organization, but that is no argument against working towards that end. It is as you go along that the way opens up before you.

Let us but be agreed as to the ideal to be aimed at, and the way to the attainment of that ideal will open up in due course; and we shall be much more likely to secure a general concurrence in the endeavour to reach that ideal if we aim steadily at the whole thing at once. The completeness of the project would gain sympathy and attention where but a partial scheme would fail in its appeal.

A PLAN OF INAUGURATION.

Now if such an Organization as this proves to be the desire of the Church at large, a long-drawn, and merely drifting, transition from the old state of things to the new, would probably prove very injurious to the work of the Church during the time of such transition ; as the present unsatisfactory state of things would be left as free as ever to continue, and that indefinitely, its depressing influence ; and the supplying of the crying needs of to-day would be as indefinitely postponed.

Therefore, a definite plan of action, approximately set to time, and resolutely and generally carried out from the first, would not only maintain, but also increase, the devotion of to-day, at the same time that it would carry us on, during the time of organizing, along an ascending path of energy and hope, until it brings us up to the great day of the Inauguration of the proper state of things.

Let us but be agreed, not only as to the ideal to be aimed at, but, approximately speaking, as to the "how?" and to the "when?"—and then we shall all know how to go to work and get the thing done.

Such are the opportunities for expedition which the present time affords us, and such is our readiness, that we may reasonably expect that such a movement as this can be more expeditiously developed in our own day than could have been possible at any previous time in the history of our Church. So might it not be possible for the course of events to be shaped somewhat after the following plan ?

I. In the first place let the ground be prepared by appealing to the sympathies of the dioceses and the parishes ; and by getting them, as the constituencies of the Church, to evince their desire for corporate organization. This might be done by promoting the consideration of the matter at Diocesan Conferences ; and at Vestry meetings, where the baptized Christian, the unit of the parish, could take his individual place in the movement ; and discussions might be held at Rural-Diocesan Chapter meetings or Conferences. From

now to June 1895 would possibly afford sufficient time for this purpose ; especially as the subject is one which is quite worthy of special meetings, to say nothing of the urgency of the whole matter.

II. About June 1895 let the Convocations of both Provinces, together with the Houses of Laymen, take the matter up from the Diocesan Conferences, and approve the ideal ; and then let them appoint two committees, one to prepare a form of constitution for the Pastoral Board, the other to make a similar preparation for the Missions Board. And by November 1896, these two great Boards, with their Councils, might be fully constituted.

And during this time, from June 1895 to November 1896, each Diocese would, in a similar way, be forming its own Board.

As soon as the Convocations have approved the ideal, the two Archbishops might appoint a small "Organizing Committee," consisting of seven, or at the most of twelve members. This Committee would act as a central and neutral means of inter-communication and adjustment, between the various branches of the Organization during the course of their development ; and it would guide the development of the Organization in so far as it might require guidance ; in fact, it would be a sort of building committee. And this Committee would raise a Preliminary Expenses Fund for distribution amongst the various sections of the Organization in aid of their initial expenses. And when the Organization is fully inaugurated and at work this Committee would cease to exist.

III. From November 1896 to June 1897 the Pastoral and Missions Boards, and the Diocesan Boards, would prepare for business, determining their respective methods of work, etc. And during this time the Diocesan Boards would direct the formation of their Decanal and Parochial branches of the Organization.

And during the setting up of the parochial part of the machinery the intentions of the parishes, as to their support of the Societies, would be so ascertained as to enable the Committees of the Societies concerned to make all necessary preparations for the inevitable transfer to the Boards, after the day of Inauguration, of so much of

their responsibilities as they appear likely to be unable to discharge under the altered condition of things.

IV. On June 10th, 1897, let the whole organization be solemnly inaugurated by a great Service at St. Paul's Cathedral, followed by a joint meeting, for congratulatory purposes only, of the two great Boards. The impressiveness and auspiciousness of this occasion would be greatly enhanced by the presence of the great number of Anglican Bishops from abroad who will be in England at the time for the Lambeth Conference,

And on this same day the boxes, and the first issue of the Magazine, might be distributed in the parishes. And perhaps appropriate services might be held throughout the land in celebration of the event, either on this day or within the Octave of St. Barnabas' Day.

V. From the day of Inauguration, June 10th, to July 12th, let a Thanksgiving Fund be gathered; the whole Organization being employed for the purpose. And this Fund, being equally divided between the Pastoral and Missions Boards, may well be calculated, taking into consideration the exhilarating circumstances under which it would be gathered, to supply each of their exchequers with a good substantial commencement fund.

If some such programme of effort as this were adopted by tacit consent, the mere prospect of so near an approach of such an improved order of things would put people into such good heart that the present Agencies of the Church would reap the advantage of their growing interest, and that the work of those Agencies would be increased rather than lessened during the interval.

Anyway, the whole matter should now be taken definitely in hand by some means or other; for it is plain to see how that whilst we are all promiscuously groping about for what we want, the game, in some of its most important respects at least, is going heavily against us.

AN APPEAL FOR ACTION.

In England we have the immense advantage of insular compactness, with its consequent convenience for spontaneous action and prompt intercommunication : the stage of the Church is now practically cleared, and is ready for this work of organization : there is a wide-spread desire amongst church people to see the Church pull herself together and do things as they ought to be done ; all seems ready and prepared ; and we *can* succeed if we *will*,—Why need we faint ? Why need we hesitate ?

Let this movement, which has really been gathering body for some time, now take definite shape. And to that end might not this scheme serve the useful purpose of being something definite to talk about ? For the assurance of the Bishops let the clergy and churchwardens of the parish, and, where practicable, the church people of the parish with them, consider this proposal, and if they are in favour of its general principle let them formulate a resolution to that effect, and send that resolution to their Bishop. Let the Rural Deanery hold its Chapter Meeting and do likewise. And let the Diocesan Conference plead in the same strain. And let the cry for more order and thoroughness at home come in from all parts of the mission-field as well. And if all this is done there need be no doubt that our Synods would gladly take up the whole idea, shape it aright, and carry it into reality.

And let the Church but resolve in her entirety that she will try to be free from such sloth and disintegration within as cripple her power for good ; that she will struggle to be free from such impediments so that she may prosecute her sacred duty, both at home and in the outer world, with greater efficiency ; let this resolution everywhere pervade her, and, observing her good will and her good works, the wise will say to the unwise, with increasing emphasis and effect, "Touch her not, for a blessing is in her." And thus the way will be cleared, through Province and through Parliament, for her progress in management and in work.

As she proceeds to set her house in order, the Church of England will, of course, look to her daughter Churches in America

and in the British Dependencies for example and for warning. And encouraged by the compacting and invigorating effects which combined action has had upon the Church of America; touched by seeing the Church of Canada, notwithstanding her great drawbacks of poverty and expansiveness of region, forging ahead in the direction of ecclesiastical completeness; and learning lessons from Africa, Australia, India, Japan, and elsewhere abroad; and with desire for practical missionary association with Ireland and Scotland nearer home,—shall not the Mother rouse herself, and so employ her wisdom in the matters of synodical enterprise and missionary organization, that she may the more fully justify that veneration which the daughters love to give her, and that she may the more fittingly preside as the Mother of Many Churches?



SUGGESTED RESOLUTIONS.

- I.—It is the opinion of that it would greatly help church-people in general to take a due interest in Home and Foreign Missions, and also in the work of their respective Dioceses, if the whole of these interests could be promoted by an authorized and comprehensive system, based upon, and co-extensive with, the entire Ecclesiastical Organization of the Church of England.
- II.—The missionary work of the Church of England, both at home and abroad, urgently needs combined action, under the corporate direction of the Church herself: and in order that that work may be adequately supported, an authorized system of cultivating missionary intelligence, and of collecting alms, extending to all Dioceses and Parishes alike, is required.







