

# The Canadian Independent.

"ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST, AND ALL YE ARE BRETHERN."

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## THE CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

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THE Free Methodist and Bible Christian Conferences of England, were in session at the end of last month and the beginning of this, the former in Sunderland, and the latter in Truro.

WE have heard with sorrow of the death in Africa of the Rev. Dr. Mullens, Foreign Secretary of the London Missionary Society. He had gone to Africa, with two missionaries, to establish a mission near Lake Tanganyika.

THE Bristol Institute, of which the Rev. E. J. Hartland was principal until recently, has at once found a head. The gentleman selected for the place is the Rev. J. P. Allen, M.A., of Gloucester. Mr. Allen will also be the pastor of the Sneyd Park Church, Bristol.

It is likely that Professor Robertson Smith will be a candidate for the chair of Mathematics in Glasgow University. If he is elected, he will be rid of the trouble which he has borne for some time past. Probably, he is becoming weary of fighting. It is somewhat remarkable that the man should have no liberty even in matters of historical criticism. Professor Smith's offence has been of the mildest character even when tried by a pretty orthodox standard.

THE Rev. Dr. Crosby expresses, in the "Christian at Work," his protest against the nude in art. "God has clearly shown us," he says, "that the human body is to be covered. Art comes forward and declares in direct opposition to God that the human body shall be stark naked. Christians leave God and follow art. Then when we tell these Christians that they are aiding vice, they ridicule our verdancy, and call on the world of culture to join them in the laugh."

OUR readers must have seen something of the work done by the Rev. R. W. McAll in Paris. He has been very successful in preaching the gospel to the workmen of that metropolis. Now, he has begun to do something in Lyons, which he regards as "the metropolis of Ultramontane intolerance." Four evangelistic stations have been opened, with seats for six hundred persons, and already more accommodation is needed. Several conversions have occurred and the work is going on very well.

It is worth while to call attention to the progress of Christianity in Japan during the last seven years. There are now 43 Protestant churches in the country,

with a membership of 1,500; 54 Sunday schools, with 2,000 scholars; 3 theological schools, with 175 students; 81 missionaries, 93 native assistants, 10 native pastors, and 150 preaching places. Much of the work done in the Empire has thus far been of a preparatory character; but the results have been very gratifying, and there is no doubt that they will be more so in the future.

"THE SALVATION ARMY" is the title of an organization that is making some stir in England just now. It is under the leadership of a man calling himself "General Booth." It has its stations in all parts of the country. The members of this army give themselves to evangelistic work, chiefly among the ignorant and degraded classes. Their literature and methods are of a very peculiar character. They could not well be otherwise, for the men engaged in the work are "converted" clowns and fighters and so on. It would not be right, however, to say that they are doing no good. They may benefit men and women who cannot be reached very easily by other means.

COLONEL INGERSOLL'S attacks on the Bible have called forth many replies from the advocates of Christianity. One of the best, if not the very best, is an address delivered by the Rev. S. V. Leech, D.D., in one of the Methodist Episcopal Churches of Baltimore. Dr. Leech takes up the Colonel's objections to the Scriptures point by point and disposes of them pretty effectually. If there is anything that mars the address, it is a little tendency to approach to Colonel Ingersoll's own spirit of bitterness and scorn. We Christians can well afford to leave that to our opponents. We can well afford to treat the Colonel and every one like him, as the late Dr. Alexander Clark did, with pity for their errors and follies and tenderness toward themselves.

"SUNDAY EXCURSIONS"—this was the "heading" in large, distinct letters. The sub-headings were "A Fight," "Drunkenness and Profanity." A little further down is a description of the "Fight," which was accompanied with a flood of "obscene language." On another boat a drunken man was knocked down by the "bar-tender." On another there was fighting "all the time," and one man "fatally shot." This is the Sabbath as it is spent in the waters around New York. A traveller in Scotland, whose words have just met our eye, describes the scene quite the reverse: "Here one realizes the proverbial sanctity of a Scottish Sabbath morn, as you see the people from distant parts gathering in groups around the church, and then joining in worship just as their fathers did a hundred years ago." Which of these is to be the Sabbath of Canada?

ON the 24th ultimo, the English Wesleyan Conference, meeting in Birmingham, received a deputation of non-conformist ministers headed by the Rev. R. W. Dale. In an address delivered before the Conference, Mr. Dale referred to the Methodist class-meeting, and stated that he heartily wished that the institution could be transferred to the soil of Congregationalism. We are ready to echo his wish. It seems to us that something of that sort would answer well in any and every section of the Christian Church. And, then, there is another feature that we wish we could transfer from our Methodist brethren, and that is, their successful use of the lay element in church work. But, by the way, would it not be a good thing for us to look over the fences which divide us, and see what good things there are to be found among our neighbours? There has been a great deal of the other thing going on, a watching for some defect and something to condemn. Suppose we try to go on the other principle for a while.

## ESTHER AND RUTH.

There are two books in the Bible which bear women's names Esther and Ruth. Different in their cast and their scenery, they possess in common one striking peculiarity, in teaching the most important religious lessons without any profession of doing so.

The peculiarity of the book of Esther in omitting all mention even of the name of God, has been suggested to my mind in looking over the map of North America. Wherever the Spaniards settled, we find such names as *Vera Cruz*, or "True Cross;" *Trinidad*, or "Trinity;" *Santa Fe*, or "Holy Faith;" *Santa Maria*, or "Holy Mary;" and a multitude of saints' names, as *San Francis*, or "Saint Francis." Wherever the English settled, on the contrary, we find mostly only unconsecrated names, secular, or of heathen origin; only here and there a name like Salem or Providence. But when we look for religion, we do not find it chiefly where the religious names are found. The *thing*, as contrasted with the name, we find not in Spanish but in English America.

The Jews, for reasons of their own, hold the book of Esther in high esteem, according to an old saying of the rabbis, that when all their other sacred writings have perished the book of Esther will remain.

May we not also accord a high rank to this book in the sacred volume for its teaching a lesson so needful at all times, and still as needful as ever, against that tendency to be influenced by names more than things, which is the bane of religious life? It strikingly illustrates God's control of events without mention of His commandments, or even His name. It is held by theologians to be an inspired book, while looking precisely like any piece of secular history. In fact, Luther condemned it as full of "heathen unnaturalities." It carries none of those phrase-marks by which it would now-a-days get into the "religious department" of a denominational newspaper, rather than the "secular department." And yet it is a part of Holy Scripture.

Such a book reads us the lesson to depend less on labels and more on conscience; to read the lessons of religion in all history and all science as well as in manuals of devotion; to recognize religious truth outside of the catchwords of our own creed. . . .

In the light of this book the common distinction between "sacred" and "secular" is worth remarking on. This is a proper enough distinction, if properly used. "The law is good, if a man use it lawfully." But in the nature of things this distinction is accidental and temporary, serving merely to educate our thought to penetrate the profounder realities, where all secular things become sacred, as all controlled by God, working under His providence towards ends divine, and sanctified in the regard of religious souls. And yet how easy to forget the educational intent of this distinction, and to use it for a permanent mark between what is God's and what is not God's. So men give the name of "divine service" to stated exercises of worship, but not to their daily calling. They put religion apart from business and recreation, in a way that makes heathen through six days, and hypocrites on the seventh. They regard the church as consecrated by and for stated public worship only, and desecrated by the admission of any innocent and wholesome entertainment; making curious distinctions between the degrees of sacredness which belong respectively to the lecture-room and the main auditory, as formerly to the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies in the Jewish Temple. . . .

Against this false discrimination, against the human tendency to place the distinction between sacred and secular in forms, phrases and names, the book of Esther utters so strong a protest, that we might well