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OF

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE LOWER PROVINCES.

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REVIEW OF THE YEAR.

The year 1870 has closed, and all acknowledge that it has been eventful. It was ushered in by a week of prayer very extensively observed. It was noticeable how prayer generally for the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ, connected itself specially with earnest petitions for the confusion of the plans of men assembled to consult how they might best hinder the progress of Biblical truth and human freedom.

The week of prayer to an unusual extent was tinged with a feeling of anxious regard for the safety and progress of Protestant truth and interests.

For this anxiety and for these special prayers there was a cause. A great gathering of the dignitaries of the Church of Rome had already taken place. We had been duly informed of the grand opening, of the impressive appearance of more than a thousand ecclesiastical Princes (for so they were regarded), and of the presence of 90,000 persons in St. Peter's. We had been forewarned by the Syllabus which had placed under a common ban the vilest forms of atheism and the noblest fruits of spiritual thought. The *Schemata* had been submitted, condemnatory of Protestant truth and free government, and the declaration of Infallibility was anticipated. It was announced with authority that the Session would be short, and it was expected that in a few weeks the Pope would be declared infallible, civil governments reduced to their proper position of subjection to canon law, the pestilent errors of

modern society condemned, and the march of Protestantism and freedom arrested.

What has the year revealed? It has at least shown that what was intended to be a demonstration of strength has been an exhibition of weakness, and that what was designed to be an imposing show of unity has proved in fact a display of hopeless division and strife. The concerted measures were indeed carried, but not without such a use of craft, falsehood, and spiritual terror in over-awing and over-riding the minority as must yet ensure a terrible reaction. And so by a majority vote, an Italian priest has been proclaimed amidst storm and tempest, thunder and lightning, alternating with the cannon of St. Angelo, **INFALLIBLE**, so that "he as God sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that he is God."

Though sentence against an evil work is not, in the ordinary course of Providence, executed speedily, yet in the present case the thunders of war quickly followed; the French troops are as a consequence withdrawn from Rome, and the Italian army is quickly at its gates. The Pope at least is not omnipotent, and Victor Emanuel's army now holds the Eternal City, with the King's apology to the holy father for the occupation, that if he did not possess the city the people of Rome would establish a Republic over his head, without any of the guards for his protection and freedom which he now enjoys.

How quickly has the God whose glory was publicly insulted, cast to the ground the impious claim to infallibility! For