

## Topics of the Week.

—St. Louis, with a population of 353,000 has only 97 evangelical churches, with 50,579 sittings and 17,989 members.

—The various memorials presented to the Cambridge (England) University in favor of conferring the B. A. degree upon women have been signed by or represent 10,000 persons.

—The Roman Catholic Church in the United States lost, between November 20th, 1879, and November 16th, 1880, one Bishop, the Right Rev. A. D. Pellicer, of San Antonio, and ninety-eight priests.

—The Regular Baptists of the United States, according to the forthcoming Baptist "Year Book," made astonishing progress during the past year. The net increase is 163,293; the total of members is now 2,296,327.

—In introducing the bill rendering primary instruction compulsory and non-religious before the French Chambers, M. Paul Bert said that notwithstanding the progress made of late years, one seventh of the children of France receive no kind of education.

—Mr. Gladstone's name has undergone a change within the last century like that of Wesley, now Wellesley. A century back, or less, it was spelt Gledstones, or Gladstones, *Gled* being the Lowland Scottish for a hawk, and *stones* meaning rocks.

—While Mr. Beecher has a salary of \$20,000 a year, Dr. Hall, \$15,000, Mr. Talmage \$12,000 and Dr. Storrs \$10,000, Booth the actor is said to earn \$100,000 a year. Southern \$150,000, and Joe Jefferson \$120,000. And yet some persons believe that ministers are better paid than people in any other professions.

—The contention about organs in the Irish Presbyterian Church still rages. A congregation in Belfast recently ordered an organ. The organ came, and the builders were ready to put it up, when further proceedings were stopped by the threat of an injunction in chancery.

—The Roman Catholic Church has gained in England in the past thirty years six bishops, 1,136 priests, 117 religious houses of men, 578 churches and chapels, and 180,755 children in schools. There was a total in 1880 of 14 bishops, 1,962 priests, and 1,175 churches and chapels. The Catholic population is estimated at 1,250,000.

—The Pope, in an address to the Cardinals recently, which the *Catholic Review* prints with the distinguishing marks of capitals to the pronouns referring to His Holiness, bewailed his deplorable condition, in that he has neither true liberty nor real independence, of which the Holy See has been despoiled by the usurpation of its civil power.

—Says the *Catholic Visitor*: "The Catholic Church or infidelity are now the two alternatives." This is not quite as bad as the doctrine of the colored preacher, who, in the course of his sermon, said: "Brederen, dere are two roads: one ob dem leads to perdition, de oder to damnation." "If dat be de case," said one of the alarmed hearers, "dis chile will take to de woods."

—It is reported that Father O'Connor, of the Independent Catholic Church, New York, has received during the year more than three hundred persons who have professed conversion from Romanism, among whom were eighty ex-priests and ten monks or students from Romish colleges. These people discard the authority of the Pope and read the Bible for themselves.

—A table of general religious statistics for England and Wales states that there are 170 different denominations, which have 45,000 places of worship, with upward of 14,000,000 sittings. There are 36,000 stated ministers, of whom 23,000 are clergy in the Church of England. The communicants number about 3,000,000, and the average Sunday attendance at church is 10,000,000.

—Since 1870 the quantity of fermented liquor manufactured and consumed in the United States has more than doubled. In 1870 the amount of liquor returned for taxation was 6,574,000 barrels of thirty-one gallons each, while for the last fiscal year there were 13,347,000 barrels, or nearly 414,000,000 gallons. This, with an assumed population of 50,000,000, would give a consumption of eight and a-quarter gallons of fermented liquor to every man, woman, and child in the country.

—A horrible story comes from Guatemala of the public execution of a Catholic priest, Father Henry Gillett, for no other crime than being a Jesuit. It seems that there is a law in force in the Republic banishing Jesuits under penalty of death. Father Gillett, who was an Englishman, entered the country not as a priest or missionary, but simply for the benefit of his health. As soon as it was discovered that he was a Jesuit he was arrested, compelled to march barefoot a hundred miles over mountains, and publicly shot after three days.

An indignation meeting of several hundred colored citizens of Baltimore was held there lately to protest against the action of the school board in refusing to employ colored teachers. The discussion brought out a curious fact in regard to two colored schools in charge of white teachers. The ample front entrances are reserved for the use of the teachers, who enter and issue thence in solitary state, while all the colored pupils are obliged to find ingress and egress through narrow and filthy alleys. The exceeding absurdity of this performance does not seem to strike the Baltimoreans.

—That was an amusing discussion of hymn books vs. psalms which took place at the last meeting of the Edinburgh Free Presbytery. Mr. Balfour and Dr. Begg felt it their duty to make an unavailing protest against the new hymn book just prepared for the Free Church, and Mr. Balfour offered a motion repudiating it. His speech was full of precious nuggets. It was to be expected, he said, that God would Himself provide the psalter for His Church; because, being "fearful in praises," not one else could tell how He wanted to be praised. Further, it is a fact that many hymns are written by women, who in that way got the opportunity, if hymns were admitted into public worship, to do what St. Paul did not suffer them to do—viz, to speak in the Church.

—The French Protestant deputation in behalf of the Basutos were very kind-

ly received by the English colonial secretary, Lord Kimberley. The deputation represented that the Basutos accepted the British government, understanding that they would retain their arms and under a distinct pledge that they should be separately governed. They are now fighting to keep their arms and to avoid the wholesale confiscation of their lands, with which, the missionaries say, the colonial secretary has threatened them, but if their grievances were redressed and an amnesty granted, they would yield. Lord Kimberley said that he was desirous of peace in South Africa: but there had been so much excitement that a reasonable policy was made most difficult.

—An interesting incident is narrated in connection with the alterations now being carried on at Exeter Hall, in the interest of the London Y.M.C.A. A large number of men are employed by the well-known contractors, Messrs. Higgs and Hill. At the commencement of the works, "the man" with the inevitable "beer can" took his rounds at stated intervals for the supply of that beverage, which unfortunately fails to quench thirst, but, on the other hand, materially excites it. Mr. Brady, the indefatigable clerk of the works, with the full sanction and approval of Mr. Pite, the architect, suggested and arranged for coffee and tea cans to go round, without at all interfering with the original purveyor; and now we understand a woman goes regularly with good, warm coffee, which is nourishing and stimulating, and far more comforting and refreshing than the beer, and we are glad to know that the coffee has almost entirely superseded it. We have no doubt the men find themselves much better off at the end of the week, and we shall be much surprised if the contractors do not benefit also, both in the quantity and quality of the work done. We sincerely hope that this example may be followed wherever there are large and very dusty works to be carried on.

In a late paper on "Recent Assyrian and Babylonian Research" Mr. Hormuzd Rassam describes the most remarkable fact of the survival of the name Nineveh on the very ground itself: "The site of the city of Nineveh has never been forgotten in the country, because both tradition and historical records point out Kuyunjik and Nebi Yunis as the spots where the capital of the old world stood. Nebi Yunis, which means in Arabic the 'Prophet Jonah,' is a mound within half a mile of Kuyunjik, and contains a mosque dedicated to that prophet, in which is shown the shrine of Jonah. It was formerly a Chaldean church, but, like many other old churches in Asiatic Turkey, they were preferred by the indolent Mohammedan conquerors to convert into mosques than to go the expense of building new ones. Though this mound is generally called Nebi Yunis, after the Prophet Jonah, officially it is still called 'Nineweh,' and this I learned when I wanted to make some excavations there, and had to enter into an agreement with the guardians of the mosque to allow me to do so, as all the land belongs to it. They merely mentioned the word 'Nineweh' in the document, and, when I asked them them for the reason of omitting the common name of Nebi Yunis, they said that the former was the only legal name they could use.

Professor Robertson Smith's lectures on "The Elements of Biblical Criticism" are well attended in Glasgow. There are to be twelve in the series, and they are to be heard also in Edinburgh. In his first lecture in Glasgow he said to his hearers that he had undertaken to deliver a course of lectures to them not with any polemical purpose, but in answer to a request for information. He was not there to defend his private opinion upon any disputed question; but to expound as well as he could the elements of a well established department of historical study. Biblical criticism was a branch of historical science, and he hoped to convince them that it was legitimate and necessary. The first business of the Protestant theologian was not to crystallize truths into doctrines; but to follow the manifold inner history which the Bible unfolded, until he realized its meaning. In the Bible, God and man met together and held such converse as was the abiding pattern and rule of all religious experience. In that simple fact lay the key to all the puzzles about the divine and human sides of the Bible, about which so many were exercised. Now, we heard people speak of the human side as if it were something dangerous, that ought to be kept out of sight; but that was un-Protestant, un-Evangelical and a revival of the medieval exegesis. The first condition of a sound understanding of Scripture was to give full recognition to the human side; and, indeed, the whole business of scholarly exegesis lay with that side, as all earthly study and research could do for the reader of Scripture was to put him in the position of the man to whose heart God first spoke.

Preparations are making in Scotland to have the Rev. Narayan Sheshadri hold public missionary meetings in the larger towns in behalf of the Free Church Native Pastors' Sustentation Fund of India.

—The *Church Missionary Intelligencer* says of the slave trade in Eastern Africa, that its horrors beggar description. A poor slave woman who went to the missionaries for safety (who cannot of course to any great extent shelter these slaves, when caught by her master was trampled to death by several men. A man had his toes burnt off by a slow fire. At Frere Town the majority of the 450 people are liberated slaves rescued some five years ago by British cruisers. The results in education are remarkable. The people are industrious and many have become Christians.

—A Buddhist priest in China, fifty years old and a man of means, has come 300 miles to Kalgan, to be instructed at his own expense for three to five years, with the hope of fitting himself to preach. He thinks Buddhism a fraud and desires to become a Christian.—Rev. Daniel McKay, of Pekin, says one boy in the school at a recent examination performed the almost incredible feat of memory for anybody but a Chinaman, of repeating the whole New Testament without missing a single word.

The following from Mr Spurgeon is of interest:—

"To the Editor of the *Christian World*.  
"DEAR SIR.—Some of your readers may like to see it under my own hand that though I am extremely weak I am much better. I have no thought of going away to Australia, Mentone, or anywhere else; but if the Lord will permit I hope to preach twice next Sunday, whatever the weather may be.

I thank you much for your kindly interest in my welfare.—Yours truly,  
C. H. SPURGEON.  
Westwood, Beulah-hill, Upper Norwood,  
January 25, 1881.