

The Provincial Wesleyan

Published under the direction of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of Eastern British America.

Volume XXII. No. 2

HALIFAX, N. S., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 1870.

Whole No. 1066

JOY IN HEAVEN.

A Sermon by the Rev. A. W. Nicolson, of Windsor, N. S.

There is joy in the presence of the Angels of God ever as one that repenteth.

Luke, xv, 10.

For many generations the tendency of the religious mind has been toward spiritual and symbolic study. Biblical subjects—Prophecies, Parables, Principles, Purposes—have been pondered with a view to their higher significance. Christ's Nature and Mission have been subjects of endless writing and discourse; but until recently they have been surveyed chiefly from a spiritual standpoint. Heaven, also, its subjects, location, exercises, enjoyments—has employed the pens and elicited the opinions of the first writers and preachers in different ages. But the results are not such as might have been expected. No definite notions have been formed of Heaven; no creed has been agreed upon, respecting this profoundly interesting subject, between members of any Church. The representations have been altogether ethereal, and the minds of hearers or listeners have refused to accept any precise theory. Our general reflections on Heaven are vague and indefinite.

We have reached a period when religious thought appears to be passing to another extreme. Learned critics have fastened on the subject of Christ's Nature and Mission with astonishing tenacity. His humanity is the problem now. His divinity is thought of little moment in the investigation. Before the modern critical test of Christ's examiners, the sublime evidences of His Godship sink into insignificance compared with His human traits and His natural principles. It is the same in regard to Heaven. Turning from the weary and dying Nazarene to the future Kingdom of which he spoke, modern writers flout at the faith of their fathers and construct a Heaven of their own. "A new Heaven" it is in reality; one in every way suited to the modern human taste and inclinations. Every gratification of the present is to be reproduced in the future. The indistinct and spiritual must give place to the grossly material. Our fathers dreamed of a floating, ethereal existence in eternity; their children look for an existence in which Heaven will be a continuation of Earth—a walking, working, planning, playing state, where all that has been denied here will be afforded us in full enjoyment.

Alas! for the discovery of these modern views. Mahomet was far in advance of them. The North American Indian had reached it centuries ago without a Revelation. East and West a material creed had been accepted and cherished, which was only more definite and distinct than this crude speculation of the nineteenth century.

The great mistake appears to be in adapting the future state to our human conceptions and tastes. A more rational course would surely be that of adapting our future nature, inclinations and habits, to the home provided for us. No one reasonably doubts that other worlds may be inhabited. Yet science has proved that creatures in other worlds must be differently constituted from the inhabitants of this. One planet has no atmosphere; the sun pours down his fiercest rays without any modifying, soothing medium. To us this would bring speedy death. Another world has no water. If these are bodies in those spheres, they must be formed of substance differing from flesh and blood and bone. Yet these existences are doubtless holy and happy.

It does not yet appear what we shall be. We only know that Jesus is preparing a place for us, and that "we shall drink endless pleasures there." This mortal shall put on immortality, in every way adapted to the immortal joys and exercises of which we become heirs in regeneration.

These remarks must not be understood as a rebuke to devout meditation on the coming state. The wonder is that we do not enquire more diligently on the subject. If some authorized messenger called at your door to say, that at a given date you must remove for all future life to some golden city of the West, I can conceive of your interest arising in your mind which would be only increased by frequent pilgrimages to every oracle who could give information on the subject. What of this city—its privileges—its inhabitants—its climate—its immunities? These are questions which would occupy the mind day and night. This all applies to every Christian's relation to Heaven. He who had the clearest views of it longed to depart and be with Christ which is far better.

The conversations of our Lord give us occasional glimpses of Heaven, like rifts in the clouds revealing the blue sky beyond the tempest, like the casual opening of a door inside the bodies in those spheres, they must be formed of substance differing from flesh and blood and bone. Yet these existences are doubtless holy and happy.

It does not yet appear what we shall be. We only know that Jesus is preparing a place for us, and that "we shall drink endless pleasures there." This mortal shall put on immortality, in every way adapted to the immortal joys and exercises of which we become heirs in regeneration.

These remarks must not be understood as a rebuke to devout meditation on the coming state. The wonder is that we do not enquire more diligently on the subject. If some authorized messenger called at your door to say, that at a given date you must remove for all future life to some golden city of the West, I can conceive of your interest arising in your mind which would be only increased by frequent pilgrimages to every oracle who could give information on the subject. What of this city—its privileges—its inhabitants—its climate—its immunities? These are questions which would occupy the mind day and night. This all applies to every Christian's relation to Heaven. He who had the clearest views of it longed to depart and be with Christ which is far better.

about the space of half an hour." What the opening of that seventh seal was, we are not told. The awful suspense of some we approaching the earth; the first crash of Nature as our world burst away from its moral orbit; the anguish of the son of Mary—the last humiliation of the son of God as He stooped to conquer; or that preadamic horror of rebellion in Heaven (for it is difficult to distinguish prophecy from fact in that great apocalyptic vision)—some such event produced a brief suspension of happiness among the glorified, as if the almighty hand had been laid instantly on harp and lute which had been vocal with praise and hushed them to silence. And kindred feelings must have been yours yonder have occasionally as they stand beside us and watch our reckless tread on the brink of destruction, as they see the finer lineaments receding before the coarse, brutal traces of passion and indulgence; or behold some companion of early promise finally led away "captively by the devil as his will."

Our very natural thought of sainted friends is, that they must be absorbed with their views of Heaven, with the glory of God and the Lamb of God, and the shining throng of seraphim and cherubim. Let it cheer us with tender revelation of their condition and sympathies, and with loving exhibition of His faithfulness who sends them to earth, that they are around us and with us every hour of every day. God does not call spirits from earth never to return. This world will attract them; strange if it would not!—nobles forget their birthplaces? Is it like a true heart, when it has become rich and great to forget and forsake its poorer kindred? Mrs. Browning had the popular notion that she wrote, "I think this passionate sigh, which half began, I stifle back, may reach. And stir the plumes of God's calm angel standing in the sun."

The sigh does not go so far. The concentration is more intimate than links so far apart as the earth and the solar body. Heaven is very near us; at least heavenly spirits are, and so is God, which one would think quite enough to constitute Heaven.

It is no cursory glance which our sainted friends bestow on us. They have a minute knowledge of our affairs. They know all our throbs of anguish. They see every footstep which has left traces of blood on life's rugged and thorny path. When we sit down to weep and sigh, they are beside us. Do we believe this? Is the figure too finely drawn? Think for a moment.

1. It is one sinner they are said to rejoice over—a single sinner. That a suppliant nation, a returning multitude, a repenting city should arrest the attention of Heaven, might not be surprising. But this is different occurrence. Some man long held in transgression, shielded with armor of self-sufficiency or atheistic indifference, is pierced to the heart by an arrow from the bow of Christ's intercession, and angels follow him away from the crowd and din of life to the closet or cave, and whisper as they surround him: "Behold he prayeth!" Some woman whose charity was a proverb, sees her heart laid open, and shivering before the unimagined vileness, falls like a wounded bird out of the flock, and angels bear her tenderly away for her grief and her repentance. Some dear child, whose innocence had never been questioned, wakes in the night to weep over a word harshly spoken to guardian or mother, and angels by God's command smooth her pillow and "give his beloved sleep."

"Ope sinners that repenteth"—and yet how lightly do we estimate the return of a single sinner to God!

2.—It is the repentance of a sinner over which they rejoice;—that sharp and painful conviction of sin; that serious apprehension of danger; that mental abhorrence and renunciation of the vile and sensual, which fill up the pungent throats of the Spirit's sword into heart and conscience. To our vision there is nothing more deceptive than that "sorrow of the world"—the offspring of fear, which builds its hopes on future obedience rather than on the atonement, and can consist with an aversion to God and His law, leading ultimately to a despicable form of religion, or a fatal relapse into indifference and indulgence. The "very elect," changed to know "the secret of the Lord," which "is with them that fear Him," are deceived by the hypocrites and impostures of their fellowmen. But angels see and judge the heart and motive. Is there any explanation of this mystery of angelic insight to human character? We offer an opinion which would not originate with a love of vain speculation, but is to our mind both rational and scriptural.

Matter offers no obstruction either to the vision or operations of angels. Philosophers assert that what assures to our view the appearance of gross material substance, is only composed of minute particles, no two of which touch each other. The finest marble and the most solid metal, are only a few degrees more closely compressed in their particles than earth or sand. Both marble and metal are porous, and may contain myriads of animated creatures so minute as to defy the sight. Matter is created for a purpose,—to sustain vegetable animal and human life; but spirits are independent of, and superior to, all laws of matter. The soul of the miner whose death has been caused by sudden crush of earth or fierce explosion of fire-damp, rises triumphantly through a mile of clay and mineral, till it finds its genial element above. The earthquake which engulphs its victims does not hold their spirits in thrall; they but enter another abode and move in a different atmosphere.

This is the only theory by which we can explain the facility with which spiritual beings dispose of matter when it suits their purpose.—The angels removing the stone from the sepulchre; the angels entering Peter's prison and releasing him from restraint of guards and dungeon; the visit of Christ to the closed room in which his disciples worshipped. Would not God but open our eyes as He did those of Elijah's servant at Dothan, it would be seen that wood-pane and granite walls do not exclude our neighbors of the spirit world.

And our bodies are only matter. Blood and flesh and bones form no obstruction to the vision of angels. They see our spirits as a man sees the faces of his friends. They read our hopes and fears, our pure thoughts and evil passions as we read Fair or Foul on the index of

the Barometer. Omniscience alone can go beyond the knowledge of angels. Nature, mind, matter, have no secrets which they cannot unlock. When the Apostle assures us in respect to "the Father of Spirits" that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do," he affords us also a glimpse of the keenness of observation with which He has endowed his angelic children.

Yet are there limits to angelic knowledge and vision. The Romish calendar of saints, are based on the supposition that they are omnipresent as well as omniscient. These are divine attributes; angels have rejected such honours as was associated with this undue estimate of their character in human minds. Each saint cannot know every instance of prayer or penitence which occurs in our world. The circle of Christian influence and result is widening rapidly. Missions and ministerial work; Sabbath schools and Tract distribution; Bible societies and Young Men's Christian associations, with numerous kindred institutions, are constantly bringing sinners to God. Joy in Heaven ever simer that repents would be simply a perpetual festivity for this one cause, shutting out all emotion over other events.

This leads to a most interesting thought—each human angel has its own sphere of guardianship—perhaps of guardianship—for "are they not all ministering spirits? &c.—Left behind, we are not left alone—over the families they loved, and the congregations in which they worshipped, our glorified friends, perpetually hover. The keen pang of penitence which brings tears to us only brings joy to them. And in turn we shall be exalted to similar spiritual oversight.

We have thus reached several conclusions:—1.—The spirits of our loved ones who have died in Jesus are always about us. Let the thought recur us often when the laser portions of our nature would rise superior to the purely spiritual. In addition to the awful recollection "Thou God see me," let us carry with us this conviction—Our glorified kindred see us also. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, &c."

2.—There are seasons when our "dead in Christ," are more especially interested in our existence. All the promises are conditional; not only our faith but our necessity endears us to God and to angels. "Grace to hold in time of need." Troops of angels hasten to ally our irritations and soothe our fears when the true Christian conflict begins. Christ agonizes in the garden—an angel steps out of the gloom and ministers to Him. The beggar dies—angels are his immediate attendants. A sinner repents—angels come to refresh his heavenly lyres.

We once stood by a privileged death bed. The man of faith had just relinquished earth; put away from the throne of his affections the supremacy of wife and children, consigning them to a lower but not less honoured place. Christ ascended the throne. "Whom have I chosen but Thee; and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." These were his exultant words. And then Heaven was unveiled to him. A man of strong mind, giving no sign of mental wandering, he yet looked at us in astonishment when declaring that the angels, which he said were everywhere about him, were by us unperceived. True, we cannot always say what is real and what illusory in such cases; but admitting it to be only a vision, the result on the beholders mind may be as cheering as was Jacob's vision to the patriarchal subject of divine manifestations.

3.—Our periods of repentance are those of the warmest sympathy in Heaven. This must be owing to certain knowledge possessed by the angels. They have a correct estimate of the misery from which each penitent is rescued.—Abraham saw and conversed with the Rich man. Heaven and Hell are not far separated. The condition is everything in eternity.—the joy of regeneration and adoption, having attained to full fruition. "to the company of the firstborn"—this is Heaven. The recovery of the rebellious life,—of persistent rejection of Christ and mercy, this is Hell. "So remember," were Abraham's emphatic words. Seeing the unmitigated sorrows of the damned, angels rejoice when the penitent through grace escapes them.

And they have experimental knowledge of the bliss to which the penitent hastens. Passing under the cloud, they see his way into the sunshine. Bearing the Cross, they see His Crown in prospect. Weeping by the way, they know the tenderness of a Hand which will soon wipe away his tears. May we all join in God's good time that holy, happy throng!

Religious Miscellany.

THE COMING YEARS.

BY CARL SPENCER.

The glorious coming years—

The strong victorious years—

Our prophets see them far upon the way;

With timbrel and with song.

Before the doubting throng.

They bear the standard of the welcome day.

The grand millennium years.

So sure to blossom when we shall not see.

Contented we forego.

If each one seed may sow.

Which in that century shall be a tree.

O world of what wrong!

O world, despairing long!

Our hopes are strong for thee, our hands are full.

Our prayers, with labor wrought.

Have golden answers caught!

The promise is so vague and beautiful!

For every hopeful plan—

All help from man to man—

Room, where the hosts of true reform advance;

The names of Right and Good—

Though little understood—

Shall keep their armies safe from some mischance.

Than every throne'd King.

Our faith sits higher still—

High as the Throne where Right with God aspires.

So lifted over fate.

So strong to work and wait.

Are they who count on the Hours of Years.

—Hours at Home.

WORK FOR GOD NOT LOST.

God's promise is that his word shall not return to him void. It shall accomplish his pleasure, and "it shall prosper in the thing whereto it is sent." In other words, "Work done for God, it dieth not." Probably every Christian's life can furnish illustrations of this most cheering fact. The incident below occurred under the writer's own observation, and it is perfectly reliable.

In March, 1854, Bishop Simpson and myself were passing up the Columbia River from Portland, Oregon, to the Dalles. It was before the keels of noble steamers had vexed the waters of the Upper Columbia. At the Cascades, seventy miles from Portland, we took passage in an Indian canoe for the Dalles, fifty miles distant. The whole country was a wilderness, unoccupied save by a small company of United States military at the Dalles and a few daring whys, adventurers, and some of them men of dissolute habits and depraved morals. Besides these the Indians were numerous. Our crew in the canoe were two Indians and three or four squaws. The passengers, besides the Bishop and myself, were two or three Indian dogs, and two white men more depraved than the dogs. Their hides—the men's—were full of mean whisky, and each had a quart bottle full to replenish from an evaporated diminished supply they had imbibed.

Their mouths were full of cursing, bitterness, and obscenity. Their foul dialect, employed for the purpose of irritating their clerical fellows, was very annoying. Once or twice a stern reprimand rose to the lips of the writer, and it was almost half uttered, but at a signal from the Bishop it was repressed. After awhile one of the drunkards fell off into a condition of insensibility. The other became silent. At length the Bishop very kindly inquired of him whether his mother was still living. He eagerly answered that she was. Another question, "Is your mother a praying woman?" "O yes," "Do you think she is praying for you every day?" "With deep feeling the answer came, "I have no doubt of it." Finding that he had struck a chord that vibrated, the Bishop continued, "Do you suppose your mother knows the kind of life you are leading?" The sensibilities of the dissipated youth were stirred. The fountains of tears were unsealed, and with sobs and flowing tears the young man replied that he "would not have her know it for the world."

The subject was followed up by the Bishop with an earnest, feeling exhortation, which was gladly received. The day passed away, and at length an Indian camp, and the next morning parted with our white-skinned fellow-passengers. The Bishop has probably never seen those men since; but the seed he sowed there by the way-side brought forth its harvest in Christ's own good time, as the writer learned more than ten years afterward.

In October, 1864, as I was coming down the Upper Columbia in a splendid steamer, one of perhaps a hundred passengers, a well-dressed, respectable looking gentleman, introduced himself to me, informing me that he was the young man to whom the Bishop put those searching questions on the canoe in March, 1854, and that that interview had been made a life-long blessing to him. "For," said he, "I have drank no more whisky; I have led a sober, industrious life; I have a respectable family, and I have amassed a competence, and I am trying to live a religious life." He ascribed it all, under God's blessing, to the faithfulness of the good Bishop.

Who will say that "bread cast upon the waters" may not be gathered in its due season? We shall not witness the germination of the seed in our lot, but it will germinate whether we see it or not. It was not until June, 1868, more than fourteen years after the labor was bestowed, that Bishop Simpson learned of its result. Tell on, Christian worker, since thy labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Thou shalt not toil in vain.
Gold, heat, and moist, and dry,
Shall foster and mature the grain
For garner in the sky.

THOMAS H. PRANDE.
Knocville, Tenn., Dec. 12, 1869.
—Christ. Advocate.

THE IMPERFECT COPY.

"I have set the Lord always before me."—Psalm xvi, 8.

"Always busy at your drawing, Edwin" said his elder brother Henry, as he entered the school-room one morning.

Edwin looked up for a moment with a smile, and then went on tracing with evident pleasure the outline of a face. His brother came behind him and looked over his shoulder. Edwin listened for his remarks, though without ceasing to draw.

"You are taking pains, I see," said Henry at last, in a kindly tone; "but I am afraid that you will have to use your Indian rubber here and here; these lines you may perceive are not in good drawing."

"I don't see much wrong in them," replied Edwin, suspending his pencil, with something of vexation in his tone, for he had expected nothing but praise.

"If you compare them with your study you will perceive that all this outline is incorrect."

"Where is the study?" continued Henry looking in vain for it on the table.

"O, it's somewhere up stairs," said Edwin.

"I remember very well what it is like, and can go on without looking at it every minute."

"Would you oblige me by bringing it?" said his elder brother, who perceived that as long as Edwin merely drew from memory he would not see the faults in his sketch.

Edwin went up stairs rather unwillingly, and soon brought down a beautiful study; a face most perfect in form and expression.

Henry silently put the two pictures together. Edwin gazed with bitter disappointment on his own copy, which but a few moments before he had thought so good. Not a feature was really like; the whole looked crooked and cramped; even his partial eye could not see a thousand faults in his sketch.

"I shall never get it right!" Edwin exclaimed, in a burst of vexation; and snatching up the unfortunate drawing, he would have torn it asunder had he not been prevented by his brother.

"My dear Edwin, you have doubly erred; first, in being too easily satisfied, and then in being too easily discouraged."

"I shall never make it like that beautiful face," cried the disheartened boy.

"You need patience, you need help, you need above all, often to look at your copy. A perfect resemblance you never may have, but you may succeed in getting one which will do credit both to you and your master."

Edwin took up the pencil which he had flung down, and carefully and attentively studied the picture. He found very much in his copy to alter, very much to rub out; but at last he completed a very fair sketch, which he presented with a little hesitation to his brother.

"I shall have this framed and hung up in my room," said Henry.

"O, it is not worth that!" exclaimed Edwin coloring with pleasure and surprise.

"Not in itself, perhaps," replied Henry; but it will serve often to remind us both of an important truth which was suggested to me when I saw you laboring at your copy." Edwin looked in surprise at his brother, who thus proceeded to explain his words.

"We, dear Edwin, as Christians, have all one work set before us, to copy into our lives the example set us by our heavenly Master. It is in the Bible that we behold the features of a character perfect and pure. But how many of us choose rather to imagine for ourselves what a Christian should be like! We aim too low; we are content with little progress; we perhaps please ourselves with the thought of our own wisdom and goodness, while every one but ourselves can see that our copy is wretched and worthless."

"What are we to do?" said Edwin.

"We must closely examine the study set us in the Bible; we must compare our lives with God's law, and we shall then soon find enough of weakness and sin to make us humble ourselves before God. When we read of the meekness and gentleness of Christ, we shall be ashamed of our own passion and pride; when we find how holy was our great example, we shall be grieved to think how unlike to him we are."

"We can never make a good copy," sighed Edwin, we may just give up the attempt at once."

"You judge as you did when you wished to tear up your picture in despair as soon as you saw how imperfect it was. No, no, my dear boy, I say to you now, as I said to you then, you need patience, you need help—help from the good spirit of God; and above all, you need to look often at your study, to keep the character and work of your Lord ever before your eyes."

"But if I do my best I shall still fall so short!"

"I know it," said Henry gravely; "but this feeling should not prevent your aiming at perfection. God will complete his work in the hearts of his servants; not on earth, but in heaven. There, your copy, which is now below, shall be made a likeness indeed! For what says the Word of God? 'We know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.'"

WATCHFULNESS.

The subject comes very near to those who have been overtaken by sins and fermenting follies. There are many men who have been caught by wrong, and are honestly striving to break away from it. There are persons who are seeking from depths of wickedness. They should never again even look back to the ground from which they have fled. When God called Lot's family from Sodom, and told them to flee for their lives, he said to them, "Look not back." It was dangerous for a person fleeing from Sodom even to look back. It is a grand lesson of history hung out as a warning to us. Such lingering looks cast back are perilous; they tend to lead people again to that which is evil. It is very bad for a man, in leaving his old sins and temptations, not to break with them so that they are his enemies.—H. W. Beecher.

LOTOLA, LUTHER, AND CHALMERS.

These three great men passed through peculiar religious experiences which Dr. Hanna, the Biographer of Chalmers, thus compares:—

Loyola's great effort was to tread the world beneath his feet, and to rise into a mystic region of idealism, where high spiritual intercourse with the unseen world might be enjoyed. The main stress of his struggle was to mortify the desires of the flesh and of the mind, to spiritualize the carnal nature.

Luther's great effort, prompted by an urgent sense of guilt, was to reconcile himself to an offended Deity; and the main stress of his struggle was to bring into a state of right adjustment his personal and immediate relationship with God.

Dr. Chalmers' great effort was to prepare for an eternity felt to be at hand, by discharging aright the duties of time; and the main stress of his struggle was to bring his dispositions and conduct towards all around him up to the requirements of the Divine law.

Loyola busied himself mainly with fasting aright the ties, and maintaining the communion which bound him to the spiritual world, as that world was conceived of and believed in.

Luther busied himself mainly with his legal standing before the High Judge of all the earth, and was still trying over and over again the question of his acceptance or his condemnation before the bar of Eternal Justice.

Dr. Chalmers' busied himself mainly with the state of his affections and behaviour towards his fellow-men, with all of whom he tried to be on terms of perfect and cordial amity ere he passed into eternity.

The devotional element predominated with the first, the legal with the second, and the moral and social with the third; but with his severe and prolonged struggle Loyola found his exit by casting himself up to the bosom of the Church, and giving himself up to the devotions which she prescribed and the services which she demanded; and of their struggle, Luther and Dr. Chalmers alike found their exit by casting themselves into the bosom of their Saviour and giving themselves up to all the duties of life, spiritual and social, as those who have been ful-

ly and freely reconciled into God through Jesus Christ their Lord.

EFFECTIVE CHRISTIANITY.

In regard to that Christianity which the world most requires to-day, Bishop Huntington very truly remarks:—

We want in you, Christianity that is Christian across counters, over dinner tables, behind the neighbour's back, as in his face. We want in you a Christianity that we can find in the temperance of the meal, in moderation of dress, in veracity and simplicity in mixed society. Rowland Hill used to say he would give very little for the religion of a man whose very dog and cat were not the better for his religion.

We want fewer gossiping, slandering, gluttonous, peevish, conceited, bigoted Christians. To make them effectual, all our public religious measures, institutions, benevolent agencies, missions, need to be managed on a high-toned, scrupulous and unquestionable tone of honor, without evasion, or partisanship, or overmuch of the serpent's cunning. The hand that gives away the Bible must be unspotted from the world. The money that sends the missionary to the heathen must be honestly earned. In short the two graces to the church—justice and mercy—must be stretched out, working for man, strengthening the brethren, or else your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN 1869.

The year 1869 is of more than ordinary importance in the history of the Christian Church. It is not every year that we are enabled to refer in our annual review to events like the conversion of the Queen of an important pagan country, or the meeting of an Ecumenical Council, or the union of two so important ecclesiastical bodies as the Old School and New School Presbyterians. The new year opens with prospects which are to the Protestant Christian unusually bright.

PROGRESS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY.

The reports of the eighty odd mission societies, which are at present engaged in the work of planting Christian Churches in pagan countries, were, on the whole, very satisfactory. The harvest they have reaped is copious. By far the most important fact, in the missionary history of the year, is the conversion of the Queen of Madagascar. For nearly half a century this country has been almost the centre of great hope or great fear. Christianity has been several times on the eve of a great victory, or on the brink of total destruction by fierce persecutions. At the beginning of the present year, the last has finally decided the struggle. The altars of Paganism are crumbling to pieces. All the influential men of the country are making haste to declare in favour of Christianity.

Though the missionaries exercise proper care in receiving those who seek to enter the communion of the Christian congregations from worldly motives, their number is scarcely sufficient for teaching those who are eager to obtain the necessary instruction in the Christian religion. The London Missionary Society, which has established and thus far conducted this interesting mission, intends, therefore, to send out more missionaries; and other missionary societies think of likewise entering the field in support of the London Society. The Roman Catholic missionaries, who muster in large force in Madagascar, and have the vigorous support of the French Government, will make great exertions to obtain a large share of the hundred thousands who may now be expected soon to embrace Christianity; but, according to present appearances, the great bulk of the people will accept Christianity in that form in which the missionaries of the London Society, most of whom are Congregationalists, have preached it to them.

Violent outbreaks against Christian missionaries and their mission churches have occurred repeatedly in China. A considerable portion of the Chinese are evidently filled with a fanatical hatred of Christianity, but the Government has remained true to the pledges which it has given in the new treaties to the Treaty Powers, and made earnest efforts to uphold religious toleration. The ratification of the treaties, concluded by Mr. Burlingame, with the Governments of the United States and England by the Imperial Government, seems to be a new guarantee that the profession of Christianity will be tolerated, and, if necessary, protected.

The important internal changes which during the past year have taken place in Japan, and which have introduced that country into the number of constitutional monarchies, will be favourable to Christianity. Though the laws against Christianity have not yet been formally repealed, religious toleration has actually made great progress. After the model of China the Imperial Government of Japan has established learned institutions of a high order, which are under the management of Christian foreigners. The beginning of Protestant congregations has been made, and Christian literature acquires large number of friends.

The progress of Christianity in British India, though joyous, and therefore not generally known, is nevertheless of the most gratifying character. Churches, schools, and other institutions are springing up in all directions, and Christianity begins to be felt as a power among the natives. India is rapidly approaching the time when it will be a Christian country.

As regards the spread of Protestantism in Roman Catholic countries, Mexico has furnished the greatest results. We published a few weeks ago the details of the advance of Protestantism during the present year, which are marvellous. The country in which only a few years ago no Protestant service was celebrated now has over one hundred Protestant congregations, with the best prospects of a rapid increase. The Argentine Republic now receives every year several thousand Protestant immigrants, and annually adds to the number of Protestant churches and schools. In Spain Protestantism is consolidating itself on a safe basis.

THE MOVEMENTS IN THE PROTESTANT WORLD.

As the progress of Christianity was on the whole, most gratifying during the past year, so was the condition of that part of the Christian world which we generally comprise under the name of Protestantism. The main branches of American Protestantism all report the usual progress; and as statistical investigations have conclusively shown, Protestantism, both here in the United States and in the world at large, is rapidly gaining upon the Roman Catholic Church. The population connected with the Protestant Churches of the world now exceeds one hundred million, and shows annually a large increase; especially in the Old World, Christianity has to fight hard battles with a new kind of anti-Christian opinion; but thus far the power of Christian opinion in society has nowhere suffered any serious decline.

The conflict between the evangelical school of Protestantism and the Rationalists has been severe. The celebrated Colenso case was, for all practical purposes, ended by the appointment of another bishop for the diocese of Natal, who, though not recognized by the State, has gathered under his jurisdiction the larger portion of the clergy and laity, leaving to Colenso an insignificant party, which will of course cease to exist with the death or resignation of Colenso. Another Rationalistic clergyman, of the Church of England, Rev. Mr. Voysey, was also deposed from office. On the other hand, the appointment of the Rev. Dr. Temple, one of the seven authors of the *Essays and Reviews* was looked upon as a concession to a school which is generally regarded as, at least, leaning on the more fully developed Rationalism of other churches and countries. In Germany the Rationalistic party has been recognized in the "Protestant Union," which holds annual meetings, and fully controls several of the minor Church governments, as, for instance, those of Baden and Saxo-Coburg. In France and Holland, orthodox and Rationalist still dispute with each other the ascendancy in the State Churches, and the prospects of orthodox appear to be steadily improving.

The connection between State and Church, or rather the enslavement of Church and religion by the State, is rapidly drawing toward a close