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Frank Weotten, Proprietor, & Publisher,
Address: P. O. Box 2640.
Office, No. 11 Imperial Buildings, 30 Adelaide St. E.
West of Post Office, Toronto.

FRANKLIN B. BILL, Advertising Manager.

LESSONS for SUNDAYS and HOLY-DAYS.

DECEMBER 25th—CHRISTMAS DAY.
Morning—Isaiah li. to 6. Luke ii. to 15.
Evening—Isaiah vi. 10 to 17. Titus iii. 4 to 9.
1st SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.
Morning—Isaiah xxxv.
Evening—Isaiah xxxviii.; or xl.

THURSDAY, DEC. 23, 1886.

CHRISTMAS DUTIES.—As a natural outcome of those devotions which we are called to at the Christmas Festival, and as a proof that the observances of the Church's order have not been vain and heartless, there are duties which are just as pious in their nature when the impelling motive is right, as the services of praise and supplication. First amongst those Christmas duties is the sharing our store with those less happily blessed with this world's goods. The sentiment or principle at the core of Christmas is brotherhood, the Word was made flesh to bring back humanity into harmony with the Father, to restore the family unity, peace and love. How dwelleth in any man the Christmas spirit of brotherhood in Christ, who forgets the needs of his poorer brethren at such a season? For the mass of the poor the season is a severe trial to their finances. Work is scarce and fuel is dear, hunger is enlarged by the frost, while the means to buy meat to satisfy its cravings are lessened. To most persons in humble life, a mere keeping body and soul together by a bitter hand to hand fight with the wolf at the door, is all they can hope to secure. Enjoyment of warmth, good meals, some sense of relaxation and, ease some innocent and wholesome merriment in social life, are unattainable blessings. To the rich and the well provided for it should be a joy and a source of thankfulness, to help their poorer neighbours to a brighter Christmas than they unhelped will have. Give them something to move their gratitude to the Lord and Giver of Christmas, and many weary, sad and doubting souls will be drawn to God's altar on Christmas Day to render thanks for such mercies. Another Christmas duty is loving, grateful remembrance of those who watch for our souls, teaching and admonishing and ministering in their office as priests and pastors, through evil report and good report, for little earthly recompense beyond the power to maintain the conflict of the physical life, to keep the wolf at bay. In the ministerial life the rewards are great if there is vivid faith and resistless hope. The sphere of labor is the unseen, and the fruits of it are alas! too often kept within that obscure region. Love and reverence, and appreciation, and gratitude are the burden of pastoral care, but if there are no out-

ward and visible signs made by the members of the flock of these inward and spiritual virtues and feelings, they might as well be extinct, indeed they *will be*, for outward expression alone will keep alive and active these generous emotions of the soul. That their clergyman is miserable underpaid is known to most laymen, in such cases Christmas is a God-given call and opportunity for refreshing his spirit by a larger recompense of reward, but if he is not pinched by want or humbled by needs, still the Christmas call is to manifest affection and gratitude to him who ministers to us in spiritual things.

THE PROTESTANT SPIRIT AROUSED.—The articles which appeared in our issues for 2nd and 16th December, the first entitled "The New Protestantism," and the latter "No Surrender," have brought us such a demand for copies as seldom falls to the lot of a Church newspaper to be called upon to supply. Had we foreseen the favour with which these protests against Romanist aggressions would have been received, we should readily have disposed of extra editions of several thousand copies. This demonstration is intensely gratifying, because it shows that in spite of our unhappy divisions, and in spite also of demoralisation in the religious sphere caused by mere party politics, some politicians forgetting their God and Church and country in their blind zeal for a party leader, still the people of Ontario are sound at heart in their love of the civil and the religious liberties, which are protected and assured by the principles of Protestantism—the principles of the oldest enemy of Rome—the Church of England. We cannot give up a whole issue to publishing letters commenting the articles alluded to, but give one below which fairly represents a mass of correspondence asking for extra copies, bearing from one dozen to one hundred. The writer is a citizen of prominence and high social position in his County, he is not a politician and not a member of our Church. He writes:

To the Editor Dominion Churchman.

DEAR SIR,—Allow me to congratulate you on the manly, straightforward, Christian course you have taken in your paper of the 2nd and 16th December. I do not belong to the Church of England, and when I say that I was pleased to see the way you came out, I not only express my own sentiments, but those of the large class of people belonging to all evangelical Churches. If you can send me 100 copies of your paper of 16th Dec., please do so by mail, if you cannot send as many, send all you can as soon as possible, and greatly oblige, Yours etc., etc., K.

THE COUNTRY PARSON.—Bishop MacLagan in a recent address said:—

"I am persuaded no one can go through our diocese without gratefully acknowledging that spiritual life is awake and a work and astir in every deanery. To speak of our rural districts first, of which our diocese so largely consists, you, my lay brethren, know well that you could take one from parish to parish where the clergyman is spending himself and being spent for his people. He is their friend and brother, as well as their pastor. And his wife simply mothers the parish. Thank God for the clergyman and wife and daughters; and in many a locality we have equal cause to thank God for a Christian squire and his household, and for Christian yeomen and theirs. And when you come to the larger numbers congregated in our towns, you find that the work of God is in most cases being carried on with increased energy and force, and this although in most of the town parishes, as in not a few of the rural districts, the income of the benefice is altogether insufficient to meet the urgent claims of pastoral ministrations. The love of Christ and the love of labouring for souls whom Christ died to save, constrain faithful men, often at great personal loss, to give themselves up to this service. I know this spiritual

life does not characterise all rural or urban cures. There are parishes in our own diocese which it makes the heart bleed to visit and ache to remember. And even in those parishes which are most diligently worked, the pastor and his helpers will often be the first to admit there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed; many things still are there which are the subjects of frequent lament in their converse one with another and of heartfelt confession at the Throne of Grace. If these things are so, 'Life more abundantly' is the very watchword we need as a diocese.

"We are often told that the Prayer-book is above the comprehension of the poor, but I am persuaded that as a rule there are no prayers which the poor like so well. The strong nervous Saxon grasps them. Words from the Latin are generally explained on the spot, as in the Exhortation—acknowledge and confess, dissemble and cloke, humble and lowly. Only do not let the reading be too fast, or the tone too dreary, or the singing too elaborate."

Another dignitary speaking of the country clergy said:—"Recently at the funeral of a country clergyman he inquired of a farmer the secret of his popularity. The farmer replied that the deceased 'was not much of a parson, but he was such a wonderful man to make peace between neighbours.'"

THE INCARNATION.—It will not, we presume, be questioned, says the *Church Quarterly Review*, that the Incarnation is the cardinal doctrine of Christianity. The whole faith turns upon the fact that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, that the Son of God became the Son of Man; or as it is otherwise expressed, that when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons. But the question has sometimes arisen, "Why such humiliation? What end could justify such means? What object would clear such infinite condescension from the charge of disproportion and excess? Are we prepared to answer this enquiry on any broader ground than that occupied by St. Anselm, viz., the impossibility of an atonement, reconciliation and salvation for man without a divine intervention in human form? Is there nothing in the intended method and character of the salvation itself which would furnish an additional answer, at once less abstract and more practical an answer from results? Our very familiarity with the mystery in question, its place in our creeds and holy offices, and the fact that all our hopes of eternal life are based on it, have probably prevented our realizing the desirableness of such further reply or studying the subject with a view to it. That the Word was God, and that the Word was made flesh, being truths accepted by us from infancy, they may have caused us no serious questioning, no anxious thought. But it has been otherwise, unless we greatly err, with many a gifted mind in Christendom, and far otherwise with many a heathen hearer of our evangelists; of whom some have deemed so great condescension excessive if not impossible, whilst others, with truer conception, of sin and of God, have felt the reasons commonly assigned for it insufficient, though still wishing it were true. It was not, perhaps, that they doubted the infinity of God's love, or the just demands of his law, but that they failed to see in the popular statements of the ends of the Incarnation any due proportion between Divine humiliation and its intended effects. Unless we can meet the alleged objection, we can neither understand the will of the Creator nor the destiny of the creature, the proper aim of life nor the highest object of prayer. For the same reason we shall remain ignorant of the extent of the divine compassion, ignorant of God's loving foresight and preparation for man's recovery, and ignorant of the sublimest work of God the Holy Ghost in carrying Redemption to its proper issue.