

THE

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THE REV. JOSEPH S. CHRISTMAS,

FIRST PASTOR OF THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,  
IN MONTREAL.

Joseph Stibbs Christmas was born in George Town, in the State of Pennsylvania, on the 9th of April, 1803. He entered Washington College at the early age of thirteen, and when he graduated, in 1820, he received the first honours of his class. Whilst in college, and when about fourteen or fifteen years old, he first became interested in the subject of religion. Although he seemed to himself and others to have undergone a radical change of heart, he was never able to refer to any month or day as the time, or to any particular circumstance as the occasion, of his conversion. His mind became so deeply and continually interested in the concerns of religion, that he determined to devote himself to the ministry of the Gospel. He did not, however, come to this determination, until he had, in obedience to the wish of his father, entered upon the study of medicine. Having attained his maturity, he felt that parental authority should not interfere with the claims

of conscience. He entered the Theological Seminary at Princetown in 1821, and continued there till April, 1824. During this period he kept a Diary, which, like that of Brainerd, abounds in records of self-examinations, self-abasements, solemn dedications, meditations, prayers, resolutions, and Christian exercises. His reading at this time appears to have been exclusively chosen with a view to personal religion, to growth in grace, and preparations for usefulness in the ministry. Thus early was he convinced that deep and experimental piety is indispensable in one who would make full proof of his ministry.

He was licensed by the Philadelphia Presbytery in the spring of 1824, and was immediately invited to visit Montreal, to preach as a candidate for settlement in the American Presbyterian Church recently formed in that city. For some time his mind had been set upon a mission among the scattered and destitute Protestant Churches of France; and so strong