

## The Canadian Independent

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TORONTO, FEB. 10th, 1881.

To overtake the press of matter, we this week give an eight-column Supplement to the INDEPENDENT. We trust this will be acceptable to our readers.

## NOTICE!

Mr. Wm. Revell has kindly undertaken the business management of the INDEPENDENT. In the future, therefore, all remittances and letters about the subscription, or complaints, should be addressed to him, Box 2648, P.O., Toronto, and all articles for insertion, news of churches, &c., to Managing Editor, same address.

## THE McALL MISSION

Pastor George Fisch, D. D., of the Free Church in France, presented a paper at the Presbyterian Alliance (the report of whose proceedings is noted in our literary column), on "Recent Evangelistic Work in Paris." That paper is taken up for the most part with an account of the McAll Mission in Belleville there. In the *Canada Presbyterian* of 21st ult., Dr. Reid, the agent of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, acknowledges, among moneys received, "for McAll Mission, Paris—Western Congregational Church, per Mr. Silcox, \$9.80." It must be pretty well known that Mr. McAll, himself a Congregational minister, is also the son of a Congregational minister, who again was the son of a minister in the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. If the mission of Mr. McAll is in any sense denominational it is Congregational also, and therefore it has struck us as rather anomalous that a semi-official report thereof, and contributions thereto, should be made through Presbyterian channels and the Congregationalists virtually be silent thereon. We have no fault with our Presbyterian brethren for their taking that most successful mission under their wing. Nay, we admire their catholicity in so doing, but we assuredly ought not to lose sight of our brother, who, we may say, single-handed entered upon Christian work in a most unpromising field in the gay, tumultuous capital of France. We again draw attention to this work. Hiring a little shop on the *Talieu Lacoux*, Mr. McAll put up a linen sign on which these words in French were printed: "To the anxious! Come to hear a friend who will speak to you of the love of Jesus." He bought sixty straw chairs, they were soon filled. He opened other shops; the work grew. As the places became too small halls were engaged; these were filled. Our friend, unrestrained save by the love of Christ, entered upon and continued his work with a due appreciation of the life-long association of others. As Pastor Fisch tells us, friends from other nations bring too often their native soil with them, forgetting that they themselves are the foreigners. They address a Papal or infidel audience as they would a nominally Christian audience in London or New York,

speaking a Protestant language, which is no more understood by their hearers than Chinese. Mr. McAll knew that the Parisians among whom he was called to labour detested religious *sermon*; he therefore abstained from giving his appeals or meetings the form of a service; he did not carry a limp Bible even under his arm, or pull it out before his auditors and take a text. He eschewed cant in word and action. It was to him the substance, not the form, and he willingly let the form go according to the prejudices of his hearers. The amazing success of his work proves that he was right.

Much use is made of singing in these meetings. The songs "are swift, keen, full of impetus," not funeral dirges; hundreds who have sung little else than common songs and bacchic measures, not only join in the song of the meeting, but repeat the same at home, or whistling by the way. The present number of the meetings during the week is thirty-five in twenty-four places. About 8,000 adults listen there weekly. 80,000 children and 95,000 young men have been reached by this mission. Dr. Bonar's son-in-law, Rev. G. M. Dodds, and a M. Rouilly are associated in the work, which has few paid helpers, but finds speakers from Parisian laymen and ministers of all denominations. "This work is an evangelical alliance on practical grounds," each meeting now being under the oversight of a Parisian minister, who also conducts a Bible-class there.

The mission is now extending, opening halls in Bordeaux, Lyons, and others large towns, and as it extends some of the energy has to be directed in such simple organization as will utilize labour, preserve unity, and carry the prestige of the mission to other districts. Others are stimulated, and Christian work in all quarters is being strengthened hereby.

Last spring Mr. McAll hired for several weeks a dancing-hall, which was haunted by the worst part of the dwellers in that ill-famed district. It was a daring enterprise, but the experiment succeeded and the work still grows: very many have entered the narrow way, profligate habits are being abandoned, and one who confesses himself to have been guilty of every sort of crime has now the care of a meeting hall.

The Rev. M. Gibson, a well known Methodist minister, has taken a daring step in hiring for Sunday evening a hall devoted to scientific and literary lectures. This hall is attended by an *élite* of three hundred from the educated class. That hall is filled and evangelical lips proclaim the simple story of the cross; one of the favorite orators is M. Réveillaud, an advocate, and a convert from Roman Catholicism.

Dr. Fisch, from whose report in the volume above-mentioned these facts are taken, is well known in England and America as one of the most devoted and evangelical pastors of the French Free Protestant Church. He speaks as a Parisian of a work with which he is not ecclesiastically, but sympathetically connected, and his closing appeal may, *mutatis mutandis*, be urged in all our ears, to all our hearts:

"When a fortress is the key of an enemy's territory, a good general un-

derstands that he must storm it at any cost. When Germany invaded France, Moltke saw, with the eye of genius, that to take Paris was to conquer. Paris was impregnable. Never mind! he formed the gigantic enterprise of famishing a city presenting a line of defence of seventy miles. He did it with so much decision and patience, that after twenty weeks the capital surrendered, and the war was at an end. I ask now, will our Christian brethren do less for the kingdom of their Master? Will they not besiege Paris with the same energy and firmness of purpose? Will they not effect, by their prayers and Christian efforts, that sooner or later this immense city may fall into the hands of Christ, and become an unspeakable blessing for the world."

## IONA.

Off the Western coast of Scotland, at the south-eastern extremity of the Hebrides, lies a rocky isle, in length about three miles, and breadth from one to one and a-half, around which many memories cluster, about whose early inhabitants much controversy has raged. About one-fourth of its two thousand acres is under cultivation, and its crops mature somewhat earlier than in most parts of Great Britain. It has many ruins, the largest, though not perhaps the oldest, being those of the Cathedral or St. Mary's Church, which was the seat of the Bishop of the isle. In the burial ground one or two old stone crosses still survive the elements and the more destructive hammer of the vandal tourist. The Cathedral walls are standing in a fair state of preservation; the tower, which is square, about eighty feet high, is over the centre of the transept; there are remains of the old chapter-house and monastery near, the whole presenting a picture of rugged desolation, contrasting vividly with the ivy-mantled ruins such as Dryburgh and Tintern, on the main land of Scotland and England. These Iona ruins are comparatively modern, dating not earlier than the latter part of the eleventh century, about contemporary with the older part of the Abbey at Westminster. The real interest of Iona to the ecclesiastical student dates much earlier, and associates inseparably the island with the name of Columba. To this day among the Hebrides the legend lingers how yearly from out of the misty west, in the pale light of the full moon, a boat without oar or sail, bearing a solitary and mantled man, glides silently on down through the seas, by Skye, Ronan, and her sister isle, under the shadow of the giant crags of Mull, past Fingal's Cave to Iona's shore, into the old chapel of St. Oran. The slumbering dead in those lone sepulchres come forth, mitred abbots, cowled monks and mailed vikings accompany, and there at the high altar, ruined, St. Columba stands to implore heaven's blessing upon the Isles, that evermore—

"Plenty, and peace, and Christian love,  
Might smile on every shore,  
And that their mountain glens might be  
The abiding places of the free."

How, when, or by whom Christianity was first introduced into Britain and the Isles are questions, we fear, hopelessly involved in legend, fable, and controversy. It is strong presumptive evidence against the authenticity of legends which

modern churchmen seek to respect regarding the apostolic planting of the Church in Britain, that the old Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and Bede's Ecclesiastical History go no further back than A.D. 167, as the time when "Lucius, king of Britain, sent letters to Rome, praying that he might be made a Christian. And they, (*i. e.*, without doubt, his subjects), continued in the right faith till the time of Diocletian." There is probability in the suggestion, according to the evidence nothing more, that, in the persecution under Diocletian, British Christians were scattered and planted the cross where they had been driven for refuge, among the Celtic tribes in Ireland and the Western Isles. Columba was born, A. D. 521, of royal parentage, and Christianity was known in Ireland, where he was born, at that time. If we may credit the historical reality of St. Patrick's life, that saint had brought over the story of the cross at least a century before. Columba, or, as he was called, by way of distinction, Columbkille, or Columba of the Churches, became a devoted missionary monk, founding two centres of mission work in the monasteries of Dair Calgach at Lough Foyle, and Dair Magh, or Derry in Leinster. When in life's prime he went on his mission to North Britain, receiving from the Christian king of the Scots, Conal, the island of Hy or Iona, where he founded a monastery, and thence went forth to the heathen kingdom of the Northmen or Picts. It is difficult to separate even in his biography by Adamnan, who a generation later was Abbot of Iona, the fabulous from the real, but it seems certain that all the North of Scotland, through his labours and those of his companions, were brought to own allegiance to the crucified One.

Among these who—is it for lack of personal faith in the truths held?—are ever seeking ecclesiastical pedigrees, there has been long and bitter controversy as to the precise form of faith and polity held by the monks of Iona, who have been identified, but apparently without good reason, with the Culdees. There appears, however, no good reason for impugning Bede's account which we give. The italics are ours to draw attention to facts which seem to indicate either the oriental origin of the Celtic Church or its planting before the Latin Church assumed its distinctive form. "The island has for its ruler an Abbot, who is a priest, *to whose direction* all the province, and *even the bishops*, contrary to the usual method, *are subject*, according to the example of their first teacher, who was not a bishop, but a priest and monk, of whose life and discourse some writings are said to be preserved by his disciples. But whatsoever he was himself, this we know for certain, that he left successors renowned for their continency, their love of God, and observance of monastic rules. It is true *they followed uncertain rules in their observance of the great festival Easter* by reason of their being so far away from the rest of the world; wherefore *they only practised such works of piety and chastity as they could learn from the prophetic, evangelical, and apostolical writings.*" Only! Of course an ecclesiastic of pedigree wrote that "only." Would that even in Protestant Christianity, only those prac-