

## The Canadian Independent

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Remittances to be addressed to THE CANADIAN INDEPENDENT, Box 2618, P. O. Toronto. All communications for the Editorial, News of Churches and Correspondence Columns should be addressed to the Managing Editor, Box 2614, P. O. Toronto.

TORONTO, JUNE 2, 1881.

### 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 2618, P. O. Toronto, and all articles for insertion, news of churches, &c., to Managing Editor, same address.

Mr. A. Christie, 9 Wilton Avenue, will continue to attend to the business of the Congregational Publishing Company, including arrears for the INDEPENDENT and the Year Book.

We would call the attention of our readers to their labels. All whose subscriptions expired Jan., '81, or earlier, are now due another year. Will they please remit.

We want as many items of news of the churches as possible, but will our correspondents be BRIEF; our space is limited, and we dislike to cut down.

### THE LONDON DISASTER.

The old Hebrew conception of God in everything, must be the conception ever of the religious world, and from that standpoint we would read a few lessons from the roll written within and without by the late London disaster, with lamentation and mourning and woe. There are many events from which comfort may be drawn; the cherub boy removed to anchor our affections more firmly in heaven; the aged friend taken, a shock of corn fully ripe, to fill the garner of God; the loss on the battle field, from which heroism and patriotism may be enkindled, or, when smitten by pestilence, the submissive cry may be wrung, "Not my will, but Thine be done." It seems impossible to read such lines as these in connexion with this London calamity. They who mourn can only look back upon pleasure thoughtlessly pursued, and carelessness which seems to rise even to criminality. No rising of the elements, simply neglect in many ways, tending to the ruin. Who was to blame? Was the boat a coffin ship? If so, where was the inspector? Yet if we enquire as to our own discharge of duties which involve the rights of others, how perfunctorily it is done. We may well stay condemnation. Is the captain to blame for permitting the acknowledged overcrowding? Yet were we of those who were left behind by the captain's adherence to principle, and the boat had got safely home, would we not then rather have cursed him for his obstinacy? Are the steamboat companies to be blamed for their avarice? Crowds are the exception, and companies only provide for general traffic, nor would they unwillingly submit to provision for safety. It is not avarice that crowds the street cars of this city at certain hours. Were the people to blame? Not one of us, we suspect, ever stayed off from a crowded street car or excursion boat from principle. Fear may have turned us away in such cases, when did the mere sense of right prevail? True, we believe there ought, and trust that there will be a more careful discharge of steamboat inspection duty,

greater feeling of responsibility on the part of captains and of companies, less eagerness, too, on the part of pleasure seekers; there are other principles, however, which may be profitably touched. Why should God write this roll of lamentation?

The truth should be realized. God has a controversy with us, with the spirit of the age where each seeks his own, and, to the enquiry regarding our relation to each other, is ever ready with Cain's scornful reply, "Am I my brother's keeper?" We may escape the catastrophe, but be fostering similar tendencies to those which culminated in the dread crash on that London holiday eve. The commercial spirit, which builds with regard to interest on capital, not respecting the claim of humanity, the eagerness of each to get his turn served and not give up his chance to another, the reckless determination of life to have one's own way, and, gain one's own end, provided our tracks may be covered, the intense self-seeking spirit the world evinces, all these tendencies, encouraged by too many of us day by day, are the true causes of calamities such as that which has filled our sister city with mourning and loss.

Perhaps we may tarry a moment to listen to the declaration this and every misfortune makes. *God is not to be trifled with*; forbearance has a limit, to Him definite, beyond there is no remedy. Pharaoh hardened his heart once too often, and the first-born fell, once more and in waves and quicksands Egypt's hosts sank like a stone; limits of safety were passed by the ill-fated *Victoria*—childhood's bright eye and golden curls, youth's innocent merriment and buoyant heart, homes which needed—how much, none can tell—a mother's heart, a wife's care, the anticipated joy of newly wedded life—not one or all combined could enter a prevailing plea. In one moment the crash came. Tender youth and manhood's prime, maiden blush and infant glee, with boisterous mirth and thoughtless daring, alike werewhelmed in one dire ruin. Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

We desire not to dogmatize upon such a subject as eternal punishment or death, but we do desire that our readers should calmly consider the fact of the Providence under which we live. There are limits beyond which the overstrained cord gives way no matter how great the destiny which hangs thereon. There are men under the pressure of habit who can truly say, "I once could say no, but now it is beyond my power." Sentiment is good, but may mislead; sentiment may say, "God will not permit men to throw themselves away," but facts declare God *does* permit men to rush to ruin, and His laws falter not, His mandate knows no change. There was no holding back or faltering, though two hundred and fifty hearts must cease to beat in the *Victoria's* overthrow. The logic of fact is a surer guide: whereby to read the revelation of God than a sentiment which will not meet the actuality of life.

This realized, we need to walk circumspectly. Was the boiler imperfectly fastened? or a damage imperfectly repaired? Yet the workmen meant no evil: only did what thousands do unchallenged—slighted their work. Let us say, life is

too earnest, death too solemn, to trust rotten planks or to embark on faulty vessels, or to trifle with those many springs of life by which some other voyager over life's ofttime troubled sea may be wrecked. It cannot be too earnestly considered that we need a conscientious performance of duty ever, not knowing the consequences which may hang upon a single act or word.

What life can endure the strain of such responsibility? Our answer is simple. Of duty, as of heaven, it may be said, it is not in the heights to be brought down, nor in the abyss to be dragged up, but nigh thee, *now and here*. Do the work of the hour! Have principle for action, be guarded by truth—not selfish expediency, by things eternal rather than by things seen, and if these lessons be more deeply impressed, the London disaster will not be an unmitigated evil.

We cut both the following paragraphs from the New York *Independent*. We have not seen the book, so cannot say more than they tell us of its contents.

The Congregational Year Book has at last appeared, and it promises to be more punctual hereafter. The net increase of members in 1880 was very small, being only 1,792. The total is 384,332. The churches number 3,745, a gain of 71. The total of ministers is 3,577, of whom 2,412 are in pastoral work—872 as pastors and 1,540 as acting pastors. Of the 3,745 churches 945 are vacant. The total of benevolent contributions was \$1,032,272; of home expenditures, \$3,446,489.

We do not wonder that the Congregational Year Book is so belated. Now that it has appeared, while creditable in its execution, it presents anything but a creditable showing of denominational increase. The gain in churches is only 9 over last year; and in members, 1,792, or about half a member to a church, being the smallest gain since 1865. This, though bad enough, is not so bad as a Boston correspondent of *The Sun* represents, who says that in New England alone the Episcopalians had 2,868 confirmations, or "1,076 more additions than the Congregationalists record for the whole country." He has confounded net increase with additions. The Congregationalists report 4,486 additions by confession in New England in 1880.

Does the following extract from the *Congregationalist* fit any of our churches? If we are correctly informed, such a thing is not altogether unknown.

Can any better specimen of credulity be found than is sometimes exhibited by a supply committee, or even by a church itself, in calling to its pulpit permanently or even temporarily a man whom a competent and impartial council has decided is unfit for such a position? Yet just such cases occur from month to month, far more confidence being placed apparently in the "smart" manner and "eloquent" sermons, or the statements of the candidate himself, than in the opinion and the testimony of neighboring ministers who have no possible motive to do the man injustice. A letter now before us cites one of these instances in which a man holds a unanimous call to a church in Vermont, and yet the facts are such that no fairly called council would or a moment indorse him as a fit man for the pastorate. A burnt child dreads the fire, and the number of grown-up people seems to be legion who are slow to learn till actually singed themselves.

## Official.

### CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF ONTARIO AND QUEBEC.

**Reduced Fares.**—The Grand Trunk and Great Western Railway Co's. will grant return tickets to those attending the meeting, on presentation of certificates signed by myself, at a fare and a third. The Richelieu and Ontario Navigation Co. will give return tickets at the following rates, which include meals and berths:—Port Hope, \$3; Cobourg, \$3.50; Kingston, \$7.50; Brockville, \$9.75; Prescott, \$10.25; Cornwall, \$12; Montreal, \$15; Quebec to Montreal and return \$3, (meals extra); Hamilton to Toronto and return, \$1, (meals extra); Bowmanville, do., \$2.

The Ogdensburg Line will carry at the following rates, including meals and state-room Prescott or Brockville to Toronto and return, \$7.20, Kingston do., \$5.85. Tickets by this line at the reduced rates named, can be procured *only by remitting the amount to me*. Boats leave Prescott Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays at 3.10 p.m.; Kingston, about 9 p.m.

The annual meeting will be held in Zion Church, Toronto, commencing June 8th at 7.30, when the Annual Sermon will be preached by the Rev. J. L. Foster, of Montreal.

The earnest attention of pastors and deacons is again called to the 12th Standing Rule of the Union (*Year Book* for 1880-81, page 59), which requires annually from "each church" in connection with it, a collection for its funds. Last year only forty-six out of seventy-eight churches on its roll of membership conformed to this requirement, and \$4 in consequence had to be deducted from the claims of each minister and delegate present. Such a deficit, if repeated, will seriously interfere with the success of the Union, and of all the societies which annually meet along with it, and it is earnestly hoped that every church connected with it will take up a collection on its behalf, on or before June 5th, and forward it to the Secretary-Treasurer at the meeting in Toronto.

JOHN WOOD,  
Sec. C. U. of O. and Q.  
Ottawa.

The committee of the Union (for names, see Year Book, page 57) will meet in the vestry of Zion Church, Toronto, on Tuesday evening, June 7th, at 7.30 o'clock, to receive the Report, and prepare business for the Union. A full attendance is requested.

J. WOOD, Secretary.  
Ottawa, May 20th, 1881.

### CONGREGATIONAL COLLEGE OF B. N. A.

The annual meeting of the Congregational College of B. N. A. will be held in Zion Church, Toronto, June 10th, at 11 o'clock, A. M.

GEORGE CORNISH, LL. D.  
Secretary.

Montreal, May 21st, 1881.

### CANADA CONGREGATIONAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The annual meeting of this society will be held in Zion Church, Toronto, on Thursday, June 9th, at 3 p. m.

A meeting of the General Committee of the Society will be held in the vestry of the same church on Wednesday, June 8th, at 3 p. m.

SAMUEL N. JACKSON,  
Home Secretary.

Kingston, May 19th, 1881.

### CANADA CONGREGATIONAL YEAR BOOK.

In order to bring out the edition of the Year Book for 1881-2 in proper time, it will be necessary that the reports and proceedings of the various societies should be in the hands of the Editor immediately after the annual meetings in June. Will secretaries and others interested, kindly remember this, and if possible furnish me with their MSS. at the close of the Toronto meetings, and greatly oblige

SAMUEL N. JACKSON,  
Editor C. C. Y. B.

Kingston, May 19th, 1881.