

# The Record.

TORONTO, DECEMBER, 1857.

## A DAY OF HUMILIATION AND PRAYER.

Since our last issue we have been called upon as a community to pause for a brief space amidst the duties and engagements of everyday life, and humble ourselves before the great God of Heaven and of Earth. The call we could earnestly hope, has been willingly complied with by all, for certainly if ever there was a time a time when it became us specially to recognize the most High as the God of Providence,—the supreme governor among the nations, to acknowledge His authority and to seek His forgiveness for our multiplied and aggravated transgressions against Him, the present is such a time. Viewing ourselves as part and parcel of the Great British Empire, we have seen one sanguinary war following another during the past three years,—first the Russian, then the Persian, then the Chinese, and now the Indian. This last has been marked by features of a peculiarly sanguinary character. Its suddenness, its extent, and especially the atrocities with which it was accompanied, extending not merely to the male sex, but to helpless women and unoffending babes, have marked it with features peculiar to itself. It is true the tide is now turned, the fury of the tempest has spent itself, the crisis appears to be past, and in the capture of Delhi, and the relief of Lucknow, we have what we may regard as a pledge of the speedy suppression of the mutiny. For this we cannot be too thankful. But still we are not to let the event pass, as if it had been a mere accidental occurrence, which we may forget as soon as it is over. Undoubtedly we should look upon it as a dispensation from God, intended to rebuke us for our unfaithfulness and for our many sins. God forbid that we should, like some of the popish organs in Ireland glory in witnessing such a heavy judgment sent on our beloved country and nation. But still we are not to shut our eyes to the fact that there has been on the part of Britain, and especially of those entrusted with the management of the affairs in India, enough to call down severe judgments from a righteous and holy God.

For a time Christian missions were almost entirely prohibited, while down to the present time they have been in a great measure discountenanced, and indeed forbidden so far as the native soldiers were concerned. The fact stands recorded that a native soldier who had been converted to christianity, and had sought admission to the church by baptism, was expelled for no fault, but simply his profession of the christian faith. Expediency and temporizing measures have taken the place of steadfast christian principles, and direct countenance even has been given to the idolatries of the Hindus. Most righteously then have we been punished for our unfaithfulness, and when we

consider the whole circumstances of the case, we may well wonder that God should have exercised so great forbearance, and that our sins have not sooner called down His righteous indignation. Now that the chastisement is inflicted with severity, yet with mercy too, it becometh us to humble ourselves before God. Confessing our sins as individuals, as families, as churches, as a community, let us deprecate the displeasure of the Lord, and implore His Spirit to be abundantly bestowed on all intrusted with the management of affairs, that past errors may be amended, and that decided straightforward principles may take the place of that timid worldly expediency which has hitherto guided the conduct of our rulers with reference to India. If such be result, what has hitherto taken place may fall out rather for the furtherance of the gospel, and what appeared at first to be a curse may really turn out to be a blessing,—a blessing both to Britain and to India.

If we direct our attention to our own position in this colony at present, we may find abundant cause also for deep humiliation before God. Owing to a variety of causes, commerce is in a state of the greatest depression. Not a few of the wealthiest amongst us have been obliged to bow before the storm, while anxiety and care press on many a breast, and fill many a heart with heaviness and trouble. Here again God is rebuking us for our worldliness, our haste to be rich, our forgetfulness of Him, and of our obligations to Him. Worldly men may exercise their shrewdness and ingenuity in finding out causes to account for the present position of business matters. But it can only be satisfactorily accounted for by referring it to Him, who controls all issues, and in whose hand are our times,—our times of prosperity and adversity, of joy and sorrow. It well becometh us then to lay these things to heart, to acknowledge our guilt before God, and to return to Him, not feignedly but with our whole heart. It is written of King Uzziah that "as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper." There is a real, an inseparable connexion between godliness and prosperity.—We have in these days in a great measure lost sight of this truth. We have been dreaming of prosperity *apart from an earnest seeking of God*. Now our dreams have been rudely interrupted, and we been made to see and feel the uncertainty and vanity of worldly prosperity, without the favour and blessing of God. Well will it be, if henceforth we never again try to separate what God himself has joined together, but resolve to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, believing that all necessary things will be added to us.

Thoughts like these we trust have been exercising many hearts during the late season of humiliation and prayer. Let them be duly pondered, and let them exert their proper influence on our future conduct. While gratefully acknowledging the many mercies which we still enjoy, and hopefully trusting God for the future, let us with greater earnestness than ever seek Him, and the realities of eternity

and of heaven. We have had a shaking time, God has been shaking the earth. The blast of His nostrils has levelled with the ground many a high and towering fabric. The lowest foundations of the social edifice have been shaken. But blessed be God there are *things which cannot be shaken*. There is a kingdom which cannot be moved. There is a foundation which is sure and steadfast, and against which the winds may blow, and the floods rise, and the storm beat in vain. There is a portion which cannot be taken away. There is a treasury on which we can ever draw, and which can never be exhausted. Let all build on this tried foundation. Let all seek this portion. Let all seek an interest in Christ, and then when the elements themselves shall be dissolved, they shall be safe, and shall be the heirs of an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading in the heavens.

## HOW ARE WE TO OBTAIN A SUPPLY OF YOUNG MEN FOR THE MINISTRY?

A short time ago the *Banner of Ulster* contained the following statement:—

"We beg to furnish our readers with some statistics calculated to impress all parties concerned with the nature and urgency of the present crisis. In the year 1842, the number of students who entered the College through the Assembly's entrance examination committees amounted to *fifty*; in 1852 the number was reduced to *five*! In the years 1843, 1844, and 1845, the numbers were respectively *fifty-three*, *fifty-one*, and *fifty-one*; in 1853, 1854, and 1855, they stood at the diminished figures of *thirteen*, *twelve*, and *twelve*. It is admitted on all hands that from *thirty-five* to *forty* students should enter every year, in order to maintain a moderately sufficient supply for vacant pulpits at home, and for the various missions. Home, Foreign, Jewish, and Colonial; whereas the present proportion of entrants is *below one-third* of the requisite number. The statistics we have furnished present, unhappily! no improvement for the years 1856 and 1857."

The state of things described above as existing in Ireland, is not peculiar to any one country or Church. We believe at the present day, there is almost in all churches a falling off in the number of promising, well educated young men, who come forward to devote themselves to the work of the ministry. It is true we have not had to mourn a decrease in the number of students. *But we should have had an increase*. The population of our country is rapidly increasing; the field is widening in extent, as well as becoming white unto the harvest: the demands are multiplying, as is evident from the reports brought before our Home Mission Committee from time to time. In these circumstances we should have had an increase,—and the absence of any particular increase in the number of devoted, and properly qualified young men, should attract attention, and excite enquiry, and lead to the employment of suitable means,—especially prayer to the Lord of the harvest, that He would thrust out labourers into the harvest.

There is, no doubt, a combination of causes leading to the result to which we have advert-