THE PROTECTOR

AND CHRISTIAN WITNESS.

"RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION: BUT SIN IS A REPROACH TO ANY PEOPLE."—Prov. xiv 34.

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The Protector and Christian Witness,

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KIRWAN'S LETTERS TO BISHOP HUGHES.

SECOND SERIES.

LETTER III.

The pretended Sacrament of Penance described—No Scripture Warrant for it—Its Absurdities—A personal Inquiry.

My Dear Sir.—With your leave, I will proceed with my statement of the reasons which prevent my return to the embrace of your Church. Permit me to ask, in the present letter, your consideration of the reason which I deduce from your sacrament of *Penance*. It presents an objection as strong as your sacrament of extreme unction, which, without meaning to be irreverent, I have already pronounced extreme nonsense.

As but few even of your own people understand this sacrament, I will give a brief statement of it, and from your own authors.

Penance is a sacrament by which the sins committed after baptism are forgiven. Your doctrine is, that original sin is washed away in baptism, and that penance secures the forgiveness of all sins committed after baptism! Where is this distinction taught in the Bible? Do tell us.

On the part of the penitent, penance consists in contrition, confession, and satisfaction. Contrition is a hearty sorrow for sin, with a resolution to sin no more; confession is a full and sincere declaration of all our sins to a priest; satisfaction is a faithful performance of the prayers and good works enjoined by the confessor. So far as to the penitent.

On the part of the priest, it consists in the absolution which he pronounces by the authority of Jesus Christ. The form of absolution is in these words: "I absolve thee from thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The effects of this sacrament are thus stated in the "Poor Man's Catechism:" It remits all the sins of the penitent without exception, restores him to the grace he had forfeited, replenishes his soul with the greatest peace, tranquility, and spiritual delights, and reinstates him again in the friendship of God, as the prodigal son, after his return, was restored to his former honors in the house of his father." Wonderful results from such causes! May I ask here, if the parable of the prodigal son meant to represent the way of return of a sinner to God, where did he stop to make confession and receive absolution? Do tell us.

None but a priest can grant absolution; and the power of the priest to absolve you draw from John, xx., 22, 23: "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained; and from Matt., xvi., 15—19.

Such, sir, in brief, is your sacrament of penance. Let us now look at it in the light of Scripture and reason.

And let me first ask you, How do you make a sacrifice of penance? Look at Challoner's definition of a sacrament: "It is an outward sign or ceremony of Christ's institution, by which grace is given to the soul of the worthy receiver." Now, what is the outward sign of penance? It has no outward sign, no external [illegible] according to your own rules. Your absolution is a different thing from your penance.

Again: two of the constituent elements of penance, confession and absolution, have no foundation in Scripture. Of confession I have already spoken. I have shown it to be a priestly device of the most fatal influence upon human liberty; its tendency to the corruption of morals is acknowledged. There is on my table a book called "The Garden of the Soul," bearing on its title-page your own name; and such a garden! Now conceive yourself sitting in your confessional, and whispering through the little hole in its side in the ears of a modest or immodest young girl of eighteen, or an amiable young wife of twenty-one years, the questions on pages 212 and 214! Sir, I dare not quote them here. I strove to read them to a friend a few days since, and before I got half through he cried out, "Stop! I can hear no more." The polluting confessional is a part of your sacrament of penance. Of absolution I shall speak in the sequel.

Look at the texts, for a moment, which you quote as teaching your power of absolution. It seems to me that if they were capable of any other interpretation than that which you give them, you would prefer it, in order to get rid of the monstrous power with which it clothes your priests. But, alas! it is for the sake of that power that you pervert them. As there were various opinions entertained as to who Christ was, we hear him in Matt., xvi., 15, asking his disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter replies, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replies, "Upon this rock" (that is, the confession of Peter that he was the Son of the living God) "I will build my Church." How simple and common-sense!

Addressing Peter, and through him the other disciples, he says, "I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Need I tell you, sir, that by "the kingdom of heaven" here is meant the Church of Christ? Can such a master in Israel as you are be ignorant of this? This being so, "the keys of the kingdom" simply means the power of admitting proper persons to the Church, and excluding improper persons from it. Keys, you know, were the ancient emblems of authority. How simple and common-sense is all this!

Continuing to address Peter, and through him the other disciples, he says, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." To bind and to loose here are equivalent to bidding and forbidding, to granting and refusing, to declaring lawful or unlawful. The apostles were endued with the Holy Ghost, that they might infallibly declare the will of God to mankind, and determine what was or was not binding on the conscience—to show what persons ought or ought not to be admitted to the Church, and to decide on the characters of those whose sins were or were not forgiven; and whatever in these or similar things they bound or loosed on earth, would be bound or loosed in heaven. This is also the meaning of John, xx., 22, 23, already quoted. This, sir, I believe to be the common-sense, the fair and just interpretation of a passage on which your Church has built up a priestly power that has overshadowed the earth and enslaved nations. Where now, sir, is your supremacy of Peter, your power of the keys, your power of absolution? Gone like the morning cloud before the sun. Blessed be God, you have not yet turned your keys upon the common sense of the world!

Now, sir, look for a moment at some of the absurdities connected with your interpretations of the above texts. They are sufficiently startling.

Your Church is built upon Peter. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I build my Church." So that your Church is built upon the *person* of Peter; ours is built upon the truth declared by Peter. Is, sir, your rock as our rock?

Is your Church built upon Peter? Now turn from the 19th verse of the 18th of Matthew, which we have been considering, to the 22d and 23d verses of the same chapter. Peter is represented as rebuking his Lord for the intimations he had given of his approaching death. But the Master, turning upon Peter, thus addressed him: "Get thee behind me, Satan." So that, on your principles of interpretation, your Church must be built upon Satan! Do not get vexed; I am reasoning with you on your own principles.

What your priests, however profane or wicked, bind or loose upon earth, is bound or loosed in heaven. Now here is a wicked man absolved by a priest: does he go to heaven? Here is a good man bound by a priest: does he go to hell? It must be so, on your principles. But you say he must be a sincere penitent to gain any benefit from absolution. But if truly contrite, he can get to heaven without your absolution.

Take another case: the man bound by the curate may be loosed by the parish priest. I take the following illustration from a book before me: A penitent is enjoined to abstain from breakfast every morning until his next confession. Christmas day intervenes, and he eats breakfast, not thinking that that day could be included. On confessing this at his next confession, the curate drove him from his knees, declaring that he would have no more to do with a person that so trifled with his commands. On the borders of despair, he went to the parish priest, telling him the whole story. "Do not mind it, my child," said the kind-hearted father; "I will confess you." He did so, and absolved him. Here one priest binds sin on his soul, and another unbinds it. He dies in this state. What becomes of him? Does the binding of the curate send him to hell, or does the loosing of the parish priest send him to heaven? What becomes of him? Is he suspended somewhere between heaven and hell? Do explain this matter to our comprehension.

But let us look at the *satisfaction*, which is a part of the sacrament of penance. "It consists in a faithful performance of the penance enjoined by the priest to whom we confess, whether as to restitution, or prayers, or alms-deeds, or fasting, to make some reparation by these eminent good works for the injury done to God." The penance enjoined by the priest is an "exchange which God makes of external punishment, which we have deserved by sin, into these small penitential works." I quote from Challoner. And, without satisfaction like this, the sinner cannot be saved.

Now, sir, will you tell me where this is taught in the Scriptures? Where are we told that the blood of Christ is not sufficient to cleanse from all sin? Where is authority given to ministers or priests to establish an exchange-office, where, for a compensation, "eternal punishment is exchanged for small penitential works?" Where does the Bible make a difference between antebaptism and post-baptism sins?

Take another view of this thing. Penance means punishment; and "prayers, fasting, and alms" are enjoined by the priests as penance—that is, as punishment; so that your Church makes prayers a punishment to atone for sins! What the Bible makes a privilege, you make a punishment! The fasting which is beneficial is that to which we are led by a sense of our sins; you enjoin it as a punishment! And can alms-giving be a punishment, save to the worshipper of money? What are the prayers or alms worth that are offered or given as a punishment?

The penance enjoined and the austerities voluntarily practiced are sometimes very singular, when considered in the light of making atonement for sins. Sometimes they consist in a set number of "Our Fathers" and "Hail Marys" counted on the beads or fingers once or oftener a day for so many days; sometimes in fasting for a given time, on given days, from meat, eggs, &c; sometimes in a short pilgrimage to Saint John's Well or Saint Patrick's; sometimes, in Ireland, in going to the Seven Stations, and walking on bare knees on the ground from one station to another. The penances enjoined by the priest are optional and multiform, and are modified according to his own prejudices and the dignity of the confessing peuitent. Some of the voluntary austerities are curious enough. St. Dominic, when a child, would leave his cradle and lie upon the cold ground. I have seen many an urchin do this whose name is not yet, and is not likely to be, in the calendar. St. Francis used to call his body Brother Ass, and whip it as badly as Balaam did his. Saint Francis Loyola put on iron chains and a hair shirt, and flogged himself thrice a day. He deserved it all! St. Macarius went naked six months in a desert, suffering himself to be stung with flies, to atone for the sin of having killed a flea! Now, is it not a wicked burlesque upon the religion of God to make ignorant people believe that in these and similar ways they secure an exchange of eternal punishment? Language supplies no words in which to [illegible] Picture to yourself, reverend sir, this whole thing. There is a papist who has sinned grievously after baptism: how can he get to heaven? Through the sacrament of penance. It is not sufficient that he repent of it; no, he must confess to you; then he must perform all the austerities that you enjoin; and then, taking up the key that hangs by your girdle, you open to him the kingdom of heaven. So, then, it is in your power to say who shall and who shall not enter heaven. What blasphemous assumption, when the divine Savior tells me, and proclaims to all men, that "he that believeth on the Son hath life." Such assumptions are only worthy of the world's scorn.

It is amazing how men pretending to be religious could contrive such a sacrament. It is amazing how rational men can believe it. But it is not amazing how men believing it, and in the power with which it clothes you, should fawn at your feet as spaniels. It is no wonder that they pour their treasures into your coffers as water.

I believe in repentance, and hope I am not a stranger to it. I reject penance as a priestly device to rob the people of their money and ruin their souls. Your Church must lay aside this terrible sacrament before I return to her embrace.

Before closing, let me ask you one question: Do you believe that none go to heaven from New York but those to whom you and your priests, with your keys, open its gates? It takes a hard heart and a soft head to believe this. I charge you with neither.

With respect, yours,

KIRWAN.

TEMPERANCE LAW.

Just as we go to press, the *American Temperance Journal* comes to hand, containing a letter from Hon. Neal Dow, giving the cheering intelligence that Maine has assumed her proper place again, her legislature having passed a Prohibitory law, for the suppression of drinking houses and tippling-shops. Mr. Dow predicts that it will be adopted by a very large majority of the vote which it may call out. We give a few extracts from this letter.

"Our new Liquor Law has been passed through both Houses of our Legislature to be engrossed, and will not be changed from its present form.

"The bill, as it stands is very nearly the same as the original Maine Law in its penalties. Like that, it is thoroughly prohibitory, it permits liquors to be sold only for medicinal, mechanical, and sacramental purposes, and that only by agents appointed for the purpose by the municipal authorities of the several cities and towns.

"The penalties for the unlawful sale of strong drinks are fine and imprisonment; and all liquors intended for unlawful sale may be seized, and are to be forfeited.

"Places where liquors are unlawfully sold are declared to be nuisances, and may be indicted and abated as such. And, by the provisions of another law, the owners of all shops used for such purposes, with their knowledge, may also be punished in the same manner as the rum-seller.

The Territorial Legislature of Kansas has passed the following stringent license law.

The bill provides that before a man can procure a license, two thirds of the citizenship in which he intends to pursue his traffic must decide by an affirmative vote that they are willing to allow the sale. The license fee is large, and he must furthermore enter into bonds of $5000, with three property holders as sureties, that he will be responsible for all damage that may ensue from his business.—He can be sued by any wife, or minor, through a guardian, for damage caused by the husband or father neglecting his family or business in consequence of the traffic. He is held liable for the support of any pauper, lunatic, or criminal, proved to be caused to be such by the business in which he is engaged. Heavy penalties, in the shape of fines and imprisonment for violations of the law, are provided for.

A Temperance Bishop.—Bishop Bayley, the Catholic Bishop of New Jersey, has issued a manifesto, saying that he is determined to make use of the most severe measures against all who are addicted to the scandalous and destructive vice of intemperance; and if they continue in the practice of it, they must do it as outcasts from the Catholic church, who have no right to the name of Catholics while they live, nor to Christian burial when they die. His letter has been read in all the Churches, and he suggests to each pastor that he should keep a list of the drunkards and liquor dealers in his church.

THE BISHOP OF JERUSALEM AND THE BRITISH CONSUL.

A most untoward event has occured at Jerusalem, which might almost have appeared incredible, had not the information on which it rests been undoubted. The Protestant Bishop of Jerusalem has been arrested, and, at the date of the last arrivals from the East, continued the prisoner of the British Consul! Those who know the character of Dr. Gobat will not easily suppose that he has committed any overt act likely to justify such an outrage. It would appear that it is merely one of those "fantastic tricks" which are too often played by "man, vain man, dressed in a little brief authority." On the present occasion the rest of the quotation is most apt, for it is indeed enough to "make the angels weep," to see the character of British Christianity and British Protestantism thus sullied, in the face of Jews, Turks, Romanists, and infidels, by an official who hoists the British flag and who represents the British Queen.

It has become much too notorious that the Episcopal Mission at Jerusalem was sadly damaged by the opposition raised against the Bishop by English influence. We do not merely allude to the attempts made by the Bishop of Oxford and the Popish party in the English Church to rouse against Bishop Gobat the enmity of the Greek patriarchs and the distrust of the British authorities. But unhappily, even at Jerusalem, there is a room for the play of petty faction as bitter, although not so dangerous, as ever animated those great hostile sects which continued their animosities even till Jerusalem and its temple were wrapped in flames. Since the appointment of Bishop Gobat, many things done by him have been viewed in a jaundiced light by the British Consul, and whoever had a grievance, or thought he had one, found sympathizers in a quarter from which the Bishop should have chiefly looked for support, It is not to be supposed that even a Nehemiah or an Ezra could have conducted his operations so as to escape censure, and still less is it needful to suppose that on all occasions the acts or decisions of Bishop Gobat were the dictates of absolute wisdom. It is enough to know that he is a man of sound sense, tried character, of deep piety, and animated with a desire to promote the great cause to which he has consecrated his talents and his life.

There have, indeed, been occasions on which the Bishop has been enabled to uphold the honour of the British Protestants, when, in certain State processions, the Mohammedans and Jews would have taken precedence of them and walked behind the Greek and Romish authorities. In the present instance we learn that the dispute which has arisen is the result of a protest addressed to the Consul, Mr. Finn, by the Bishop, Dr. Macgowan, Mr. Atkinson, and a fourth British gentleman, remonstrating against Mr. Finn's appointment as deputy, during his absence, of a certain Prussian subject, a converted Jew, who combined the offices of an innkeeper, a dragoman, and *valet de place*, and did not therefore appear to be a fit person to represent Her Majesty Queen Victoria. It seems that Mr. Finn resented the interference, threatened the Bishop and his friends with an action for damages, and wrote home for authority to have the matter investigated before his Court. This authority was heedlessly given, and the Consul, concealing, as it would appear, the fact that he was so empowered, proceeded to summon the Bishop, Dr. Macgowan, Mr. Atkinson, and the other British resident. Believing that the Consul had no authority thus to drag the Bishop into court, they resolved to disobey the mandate, upon which the Consul placed them all under arrest, refused to sign the passports of Dr. Macgowan, who was coming home, forbade them to go without the walls of the narrow city, but, as an act of grace, allowed his episcopal prisoner to take exercise for two hours each day.

[illegible] the justice of his objection to Mr. Finn's deputy. We also learn that the matter has been represented at the Foreign-office by the Earl of Shaftesbury, and that orders have been sent out by the Earl of Malmesbury, commanding the arrest to be immediately withdrawn. The matter cannot rest where it is; for, whether the Bishop was right or wrong in disobeying the Consular summons, the violent act of the Consul must be reprobated by all thinking men.

THE BIBLE SOCIETY.

We take the following from the London *Church Chronicle*, a new paper, apparently conducted on sound principles:—

For some weeks past, we believe, it has been generally known that a great and important change has at length been effected in one of our greatest and most valuable religious societies—we refer to the British and Foreign Bible Society. For more than half a century the members of its Committee met regularly together, week by week and month by month, for the express purpose of sending forth to different lands the Word of God; and yet, during the whole of that period, no public or united prayer was offered up to the most High for His effectual blessing to rest upon their labours, without which we know all merely human effort is in vain. It certainly does seem strange that Christian men, working together in so glorious a cause, should have been so long content to transact the business of this great Institution without either the deep confession of their own unworthiness, or that earnest supplication, with thanksgiving, by which we are to make known our requests unto God. Had the Bible Society been simply a commercial undertaking, having no reference at all to the spiritual wants of the great masses of our fellow-beings now lying in darkness and the shadow of death, such a mode of procedure would have been all very well; but when its chief object was to spread abroad those glad tidings of salvation which the Holy Book alone reveals; when its highest aim was to scatter the good seed of the Kingdom of Heaven, surely it was even something more than a grave omission of plain and positive duty to neglect the full acknowledgment of our entire dependence upon God, and our own constant need of His preventing and assisting grace.

The public Anniversary Meeting, too, has been held, year after year, and the friends and subscribers to the noble work have felt pain and sorrow that this should be the only gathering of Christians to tell to each other what things God hath wrought, and to be stirred to holy thankfulness and energetic labour in His service, where the knee remained unbowed, and where no voice of prayer or praise ascended up to the Father of all mercies. Of late years this feeling of regret has gradually increased; so much so, that on the last Anniversary the Bishop of Winchester and the Dean of Carlisle, in earnest and glowing language, referred to the absence of prayer at the opening of the Meeting, and expressed a strong hope that, for the future, their proceedings might be hallowed, not only by the Word of God, but also by prayer.

At length, we believe, this most Scriptural suggestion is to be carried out, and the coming Anniversary in May is to be the commencement of a new and more excellent state of things in the management of that truly great and glorious Society. We are sure that the hearts of thousands of Christians, throughout this and other countries, will thankfully rejoice in the late Resolution of the Committee; and we may earnestly hope that a still larger measure of success will attend the Society's labours, as the result of fervent and common prayer offered up through the great High Priest of the Church, whose own sure word of promise is, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you." There is, we think, in these days of practical working and constant excitement, special need to realise our true position, simply as instruments in the hands of God. We are too prone to think that, when a useful and efficient machinery is set on foot, the work is done. Hence the failure and disappointment which so often attend our favourite schemes. We have rested too much on the frame-work, and have vainly imagined that, with the scaffolding erected, the building was complete. In short, we have trusted too much to worldly influence and human instrumentality, forgetting that to render these of effectual service the presence and blesing of God the Holy Ghost are absolutely required; and that though a Paul may plant, or an Apollo water, that it is God only who "giveth the increase." We shall do well to bear this great truth in mind, as the Anniversary Meetings of our various Religious Societies draw on. It will serve to humble our pride, to quicken our diligence, and to strengthen our faith. High indeed is the privilege, which, as Christians, we enjoy, of being called to labour in the vineyard of the Lord, and of being employed by Him as ministers of His purposes of mercy to a ruined world; let us be careful, however, that we do not pervert it by attaching to ourselves or our work an importance which they may neither of them claim; and as fresh instances of successful effort are brought before us to cheer our hearts and encourage us to go forward, let us thankfully accept them as evidences of His secret presence with us, who in his own way, and after the counsels of His own will, maketh His Word to prosper and His blessing to descend.

To return to the Bible Society, there is yet one question demanding grave consideration and prayerful thought, and we trust it may speedily be answered in a true, straightforward, Scriptural manner. How long shall it continue to circulate on the Continent of Europe, *as the Word of God*, versions of the Scriptures which have been tampered with and perverted by Popes and Cardinals, to uphold the fatal error of the great superstition! The subject is one the importance of which it is impossible to overrate. We purpose recurring to it at no distant period.

LETTER FROM THE REV. DR. EDGAR.

The following letter, from the Rev. Dr. Edgar, of Belfast, Ireland, to the Rev. Dr. Murray of Elizabethtown, New Jersey, will, we have no doubt, be interesting to the readers of the Protector. It is copied from the *New York Observer*.

Belfast, February 18th, 1858.

Dear Sir,—Aided by benevolent ladies, I have raised for Connaught, since 1846, £15,600. Part of this saved many from death by famine; but the chief part promoted industrial, literary, and scriptural education, to which has been added, colportage. Till the late failures, those taught in our schools were earning £25,000, annually. These attended in spite of the priest, and many learned so to prize the Bible, that their connection with Rome ceased. Their condition, and that of the Province, has greatly improved, Many Presbyterians are settling, and doing much good; agriculture is improving, wages have risen, liberty and enterprize are abroad. The poorest are not the hopeless creatures they were. They imitate their new neighbors, think for themselves, profit by education, and show such a spirit of independence and enquiry, that a priest says, the end of the world is at hand, because every one has new notions on religion, and Romanists who mix with Protestants are unmanageable.

Presbyterian teachers, scripture readers, colporteurs and missionaries have done much to effect such a reformation on the wild west, that travellers can hardly conceive what it was a few years since. The Presbyterian Church, which in 1846, had only six congregations in Connaught, has now thirty. Reformation thus begun, is an earnest of larger blessings still; and the success granted to giving and working, bids us give and work much more.

Three great agencies, now at work, must be strengthened and enlarged. One of these is *Missionary Schools*. No agency says one of our Missionaries, is better for the Romanists, in the Mission district, than schools. Deprive me of my schools, and I am crippled and mained; my door of access, to homes and hearts, is sadly closed. Well taught children are missionaries at home, the youngest find delighted audiences, as they prattle over the recollections of the school, and a zealous teacher is a good tract distributor and scripture reader, a light and guide, while visiting the homes of his pupils. In one small district, we have 200 Romanists under the scriptural training, and a female teacher of great worth, has a hundred more.

Another system prospering in Connaught is Colportage. A colporteur is not a mere hawker of cheap books, [illegible] speaking, and prayer, in Romanist families. I have examined, says a missionary, the journals of our colporteurs, and I see they have a free and kind reception every where. My Colporteur, says another, has sold many Bibles to Romanists, and he finds a ready sale for such books as the Pilgrim's Progress, and Abbot's Works. A person taking meal from a poor man's barrel, turned out a Bible. I heard the priest, said its owner, so often talking against it, that I bought one to see what made it so bad; and for fear his Reverence should see it, I hid it in the meal.

Our Colporteurs have travelled widely, but they must be increased in number, and well supplied with cheap, useful, pleasing books, to create a thirst for knowledge.

As education advances, people will read; and if we don't give good books, they will find bad. In a small poor Romish district a hundred copies of the Monthly Messenger, Children's Herald, British Workman, and Band of Hope, are subscribed for,—this success arising from carrying the periodicals to the people's houses. To visit every house, should be the aim of colportage. Let us not rest till we have offered every Romanist a Bible.

The people of the west must be gathered into churches, and churches will exercise a sacred powerful influence. Many in Connaught are wishing for the formation of churches, and erection of houses of worship. I preach, says a missionary, to three congregations, all of which must have pastors. In one of these, are above thirty Presbyterians, some of whom have not been in a Presbyterian church for years, and most of whom can only attend twice a year, at sacramental times, twenty miles away.

My conviction, says another, has long been, that our church might have good congregations and places of worship, in all the chief towns in Connaught. We have only to begin, and it is done. Presbyterianism has a place in some of the chief towns; it must occupy them all. Besides a new house for increasing numbers at Ballaghaderin, we must erect churches in Roscommon, Boyle, Castlebar, Collvoney, and other places, where congregations are waiting for a church and fixed ministry.

Plans and specifications for churches have been furnished by one to whom the cause of missions owes much; and sites have been generously granted, the work will proceed forthwith.

Many good ladies are working and collecting for these three great reforming agencies. The field is large, the expense heavy, and their own resources small; they therefore invite their Christian brethren to aid them in a cause so good, and great, and eminently blessed.

I am your's, faithfully,

JOHN EDGAR.

THE RELIGIOUS AWAKENING.

HOW THE WORK PROGRESSES.

In the Reformed Dutch Church in Fulton street, on Thursday, there were three prayer-meetings at the same hour in different rooms on as many different floors of the building. The two lower rooms were crowded to overflowing, so that persons to get a seat had to go to the room at the top of the building, which was soon filled with a goodly number. The meeting in the upper room was conducted by Mr. J. C. Holden. A gentleman in this upper meeting stated that this was the original room where the prayer-meetings were first held. It was here in this "upper room" that, six months ago, they gathered for prayer, and then they could only get *three* persons to meet together, and had to wait a long time even for them. But now there was not room enough to hold those who wished to come; and we might look all over the country and see prayer-meetings every where crowded, and we should thank God for what our eyes now see.

Prayer and the singing of a hymn followed.

Another gentleman stated that he heard a very interesting experience of a man in Philadelphia a few days since, of an old man, who had been well known in that city, bearing a character somewhat similar to that which "Awful Gardner" formerly bore in this city. The old man, in relating his experience, said that for years his conduct had been wicked to an extent which no one but himself could imagine; all this while a good wife at home had been praying for him. At last his troubled mind drove him to the prayer-meeting, and from one meeting to another till at last he found that peace which he sought while at work at his lathe. He wanted to say to that meeting that as long as such men as "old Joe Bryant" could find a Saviour, there is hope for any one, no matter how erring and lost they may appear.

A gentleman stated that we all had talents of some kind, some one, and some ten, and we should all use the talents we have, use them in our every-day life for the glory of God. He cited the case of a man who had a large farm, but who was out at the elbows, and in debt. One day a missionary called upon him and told him he ought to change his course and begin to serve the Lord. It made such an impression upon him that the next day he marked out a piece of land and consecrated it to the Lord. From that hour he prospered, and all went well with him.

A gentleman at the end of the room asked the prayers of the meeting for himself and two of his friends.

Prayer was accordingly offered. Another hymn was then sung, the Rev. Dr. Wood pronounced the benediction, and the meeting was dismissed.

One of the pastors of Hartford, Conn., says that within the last four or five weeks more than one thousand persons have called on him to converse on the subject of religion! This reminds one of Whitefield's week in London, when he received a thousand letters from persons anxious about their souls.

In Cincinnati, every hour in the day has its prayer-meeting, commencing at sunrise and ending at bed-time. At a Union prayer-meeting held at the Frst Presbyterian Church in that city a few days since, Prof. O. M. Mitchell, opened the services by reading a portion of the 104th Psalm and Christ's Sermon on the Mount. Near the close of the services Bishop Mellvaine of the Episcopal Church, arose and advanced to the altar. *The Times* says: "There was a stillness throughout the entire congregation as he did so, every one seemingly anxious to hear every word which should drop from the eloquent prelate's lips."

The following is a portion of his address:

"Brethren and Friends: My official duties have prevented me from being present at any of these meetings until this morning. In experience in religious matters, including the great Revival of the present century, I have perhaps, the advantage of the great majority of this vast assembly, extending back, as it does, about fifty-five years. I must say that the present Revival is essentially different from all others that I have witnessed in that time; because in them a large amount of human machinery was manifest, while in these human agency seems to be entirely ignored, and the spirit of God alone, it would appear, is the moving power."

The Revival.—The *Examiner* (Baptist) reports the conversions during one week as 17,000 among their own denomination, and 20,000 among the Methodists.

The only papers opposed to it are the N. Y. Herald, the Churchman, the Catholic Herald, the Freeman's Journal, and one or two Universalist or Unitarian papers. The Episcopal Recorder, Protestant Churchman, and other papers of the same Evangelical stamp rejoice in the Revival.

Letter from Lady Havelock to the Mayor of Birmingham.—The Mayor of Birmingham has received the following letter from Lady Havelock, in reply to a vote of condolence passed by the Birmingham town council:—

Bonn, on the Rhine, March 11, 1858.

Sir,—I have this week had the honor to receive your letter, accompanied by an address of condolence from yourself, the alderman, and burgesses of the borough of Birmingham, [illegible] that of my fatherless children, by so large and respectable a body, and the elegant and very delicate manner in which this address has been conveyed to me, has quite overpowered me, and I cannot find words to express all I feel.

The high encomiums you have all been pleased to pass upon the heroic deeds of Sir Henry Havelock, as a soldier and a general, and the exalted terms in which you have spoken of my beloved husband as a *man*, are like sweet incense to my broken, afflicted heart; not merely because the praises of those we love are ever precious to us, but because I am so well aware that the portraiture of his almost perfect character, is by no means overdrawn, and the experience of more than eight and twenty years of domestic happiness only serves to strengthen this opinion. But I thank my Heavenly Father that, even in this crushing and unexpected bereavement, I have many sources of comfort. Our gracious Sovereign has provided bountifully for my wants, my sons are nobly following the bright example of their father, and my two daughters are my best earthly treasures.

A shade of regret might intrude, if I were to reflect on the altered prospects of my fatherless children, but I cannot for a moment indulge in vain regrets, for our Heavenly Father ordains all things for the best, and I have too much confidence in my husband's countrymen to suppose that they can ever cease to take an interest in the children of Henry Havelock. May I beg you will do me the honor to convey my heartfelt thanks to the Corporation of Birmingham, and to believe me, with every feeling of respect, to be, yours very gratefully.

Hannah S. Havelock.

J. Ratcliff, Esq., Mayor of Birmingham.

This eloquent and touching epistle, so characteristic of the late soldier's goodness and faith, was read at the town council on the 16th, and was received with great approval.

CHINA.

There is no later news from China, but we have the details of the previous advices.

"The Allied Embassadors proceed northward in about three weeks from this date—that is to say, it is so reported. At present, their excellencies, in conjunction with the United States Commissioner, Mr. Reed, are busy at Canton in settling the details of a Custom-House establishment. As a measure in which the Americans can join us, without a compromise of neutrality, it is more than likely that an inspectorship, similar to that obtaining at Shanghae, will be the form adopted."

Martial law had been proclaimed at Canton. The Hong Kong correspondent of *The Times* says that good hopes were entertained of a speedy settlement of affairs, papers having been found which indicated that the Emperor was by no means averse to an amicable adjustment.

The special correspondent of *The London Times*, writing from Canton, says:

"In a former article, I suggested the possibility that the early Spring might see all the great civilized powers in co-operation. This has happened. England, France, America and Russia are now in cordial accord.

"Ten days ago, the American and Russian embassies were settled at Macao, doing nothing.

"Soon after the intention of raising the blockade was announced, it became known that Mr. Reed had made preparations for departure northward, and it was suggested that his object was to be out of the way while points of difficulty arose, and to allow them to fructify during his absence. Again, a little while, and they who were curious in watching symptoms noted that the Hon. F. Bruce, the Secretary to the Embassy, was absent. It was not difficult to learn that he and the French Secretary to the Embassy proceeded in a gun-boat to Macao, had an interview with Count Putiatin, then, finding that Mr. Reed had left and was already so far on his way as Hong Kong, started for Hong Kong, and after seeing the American Minister returned to Lord Elgin at Canton. Following up this chain of public incidents, which were known, or might have been known to every man in the fleet, we saw that after this interview Mr. Reed immediately returned to Macao and set his house in order, gave up all thoughts of his immediate journey northward, sent the Minnesota up the river as far as she could go, and went on to Canton in the Antelope (a steamer of light draught which he has hired) and visited Lord Elgin on board the Furious. About the same time a special courier arrived from Count Putiatin, and great activity was observable [illegible]y.