

## The Canadian Independent

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### PRESIDENT GARFIELD.

The hopes of a nation—we may say of the Christian world—have been disappointed. The prayers that went up from so many thousands of lips, earnest, faithful, heartfelt prayers, have not—we will not say been answered, but not answered as those who prayed sought. President Garfield died at Long Branch, at 10:35 on Monday evening, 19th September. Stricken by the bullet of the assassin on the 2nd July, for eighty days he maintained the struggle against death, aided by the skill of the most eminent physicians, and the loving devotion of one of the grandest of wives. But recovery did not come. "Only a miracle can save him," said his physicians some time ago. "Then that miracle will be performed," said his heroic wife: but it was not to be. The law of life and death took its course, the frame was strong, and the will stronger still, but both had to succumb, and to-day a nation mourns with the truest sorrow a chief, whom the noble Christian endurance of these weary days and nights of pain, has done more to enshrine in its heart than would, perhaps, the four years of a most successful administration. As neighbours, as brethren, we sorrow with the bereaved people, and can now only pray with them that this dark providence may prove a blessing, that the memory of the dead President may be a bond of unity, healing their dissensions, uniting them more thoroughly in the great work before them, and binding up the still open wounds between the two great sections lying North and South. Should this result follow, even in a degree, the America of the future will find that this cloud was fraught with blessings, and that the prayers unanswered in their direct application have been answered a thousandfold in God's own way. We copy from the *New York Tribune* a short tribute to Garfield:—

"After the struggle which has kindled admiration in his heroic manhood, President Garfield has gone. Worthier men than Lincoln and Garfield this country has never seen in high station, and each was taken in the early term of his power, and in the prime of manhood. Toil and poverty, hard life and iron fortune, had not put out the fire of genius; foul disease had spared them, the deadly bullets of many battles had missed the life of Garfield, but the shot of the assassin took each from a sorrowing nation, the goodness of the infinite Father to this nation being so great that even in

speechless sorrow and wondering the people can only bow, submit, and faintly strive to learn the lesson which their great loss teaches, blessing meanwhile the power which has given to this nation so grand a specimen of true manhood to be an example for all time to its youth. The President's death will cause less shock, but far more sorrow, than if he had been shot dead on the 2nd of July. There has been time to learn that the Government cannot be shaken by the death of any man, however high, great, or good. But there has been time, too, to learn how great and good a man was lifted to the Presidency by the votes of last November. Eleven long weeks fifty millions of people have sat by him as he lay in the presence of death, watched each pulse and breath, and caught each word that fell from his lips. No man has ever been better known by the people than the President whom they have just lost, and none has ever been more loved. The President has shown himself so grand, so true, so patient, and living so brave and faithful, that the pain of losing him is infinitely greater to-day than it would have been when first he fell. A great nation holds him in its heart of hearts, and there he will live forever. The President held the helm only four months, but the work done in that short time will bless the land for ages. No other administration has ever done more for the good of the country than this which has just begun. The cold and passionless verdict of history, though it may find fault or flaw, will more than satisfy those who loved Garfield most, and will place his name far toward the highest in the list of human rulers."

### THE YOUNG MAN PROBLEM

"More than four-fifths of the young men of America are not under the immediate influence of the Church; and more than half of them are not under the direct influence of Christian or even moral homes." Such is the report made to a Lutheran Synod by a committee appointed to examine the facts. One feels like asking, Can it possibly be true? And yet it cannot be seriously questioned. Our observation, at least so far as our cities are concerned, corroborates the report. Let any one who wishes to acquaint himself with the facts go out into the streets while the churches are at worship, and he will find them thronged with young men intent on their own pleasure, as if there were no church-doors open, and no privileges of Christian worship in which they might profitably engage. Let him visit the wharves and watch the numbers of young men crowding upon the Sabbath excursion boats. Let him visit the week-evening meeting for prayer, and count the young men there, and then let him compare this sparse number with the multitudes disgorged by the manufactories each evening, and he will begin to see how small a percentage of this class love God's house and its soul-transforming and life-helping worship. The facts of this Synodical report will be found true; lamentably true, yet true.

How can it be accounted for? What is the reason that the hearts of so many of our young men, at the time when it would seem that Christ's religion should win their respect and love, turn away from the religious life and from the society of the godly, and give to the devil of self their strength of desire and service? The reasons are many, but plain. Many parents, unfortunately, have not taught their boys religiously, have

not built up in their souls a love for the house of God and the Christian life it teaches. Parental compulsion (we use this word in its best sense) has not been laid upon the boys to attend Christian worship, but pretexts—of which the boy mind is somewhat prolific—have been listened to, and they have been excused from attendance at God's house. Then, so many young men in our cities have crowded in from the country, leaving behind them the restraining associations of home and friends, and been thrown, as strangers, in the midst of a large population, where they will pass about without the glance of a friend's eye, or the touch of a friend's hand. Then there is such a feverish pressure in our week-day life, and such a plethora of pleasure provided by the ungodly for the Lord's day, that the young men think they are justified in yielding to the offers of pleasure, and neglecting the summons to religious duties. Besides these, there are other reasons obvious enough not to need enumeration.

Now what can be done to remedy this alarming state of affairs. If a remedy be not speedily found, then consequences most disastrous will follow. These young men are rapidly moving along from youth to maturity. They will soon be husbands and fathers; they will be voters; they will adopt some line of business: perhaps some will be legislators. And the question sweeps in upon Christian churches and the thoughtful in every society, can you afford to let four-fifths of these young men drift into irreligion, and rank with the enemies of the Christ? That question comes with a terrible incisiveness to every Christian heart. Every Christian pastor should hear it, and try to attract the young men by his preaching. Every Christian parent should hear it, and endeavour to furnish every young man's heart with good principles. Every Christian young woman is implored by it to speak of Christ to the young men of her acquaintance. Every Christian matron must make her house a resort of young men for the sake of Christ. Every Christian employer must say something to the young men in his employ about the Christian life. And there must be no jealousy between the churches and the Y. M. C. A. What! jealousy, when four-fifths of the young men are becoming entangled in the snares of the devil! Never! And journals which have a spark of common-sense remaining must cease alluding to the efforts of the Y. M. C. A. as a "religion of gush." A religion of gush and sensationalism is a thousand-fold better than no religion at all. Every agency must be called into service for the rescue of this endangered four-fifths.

Mr. Spurgeon was once asked, "Will the heathen be saved if we do not send them the gospel?" And he answered, "Will you be saved if you do not send them the gospel?" And the question strikes home to every Christian, Will I be saved if I neglect to do my duty towards these four-fifths?

### CONFIDENCE.

One thing which the Congregational Churches of Canada now need for their peace and prosperity is con-

fidence—faith in, and with one another. It is said of the late Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, that he inspired confidence in his pupils by his own exercise of confidence in them. The boys feared to tell him a lie because they knew he would believe them. The philosophy of that great teacher was as wise as it was successful. Confidence begets confidence, the want of it begets the want of it. Words alone will not produce it, for they may be a mere vain covering meant to deceive. It is only where the thing itself lies at the bottom of the homily—the life of our confidence breathing through our words, as the life of the plant through its leaves—that it becomes effective. Our real confidence may be misplaced or abused. It may be so even in the high-toned honour of our Congregationalism. We have not yet arrived at that state of perfection when it may be reasonably supposed that instances will never occur in which it will so transpire. But we trust there are few amongst us who would not greatly prefer to be the abused than the abusing party.

Many know the disastrous influence of the want of confidence in commercial circles. In every worldly industry and enterprise it is essential to prosperity. How much more so to that of the Church of Jesus Christ!

Other denominations partly compensate its lack by civil enactments; but the Congregational denomination assumes its existence as a Christian virtue, and throws itself upon its genuineness as a main artery of its existence. While the life blood courses through it, there will be the corresponding normal upbuilding of the body; but let it be severed, and, in proportion, it must ooze away.

With us mere forms of worship, theological thought, or denominational organization are not essential; they may vary, and vary widely. But confidence in one another as Christians is absolutely essential; in the Church, in the Union, and in missionary work. Behold the man! "I call you not servants, but friends: for whatsoever I have received of my Father, I have made known unto you."

The evil to which the following paragraph from the *Montreal Witness* refers, is unfortunately not confined to Montreal. It is rampant in Toronto, and in other cities and large towns; some gardens are so systematically stripped of fruit that the owners have concluded it is not worth while to have the labour and expense of raising fruit to fill the pockets and stomachs of the hoodlums. Every Sunday, going and returning from our school in the afternoon, we do not fail to meet gangs of boys making for the suburbs, with just one idea to rob any orchard they find unwatched; it is but right to say that they bear stamped on their features, as it comes out in their talk, that they are principally of one nationality, and presumably of one church:—

"This is the season when small boys may be seen, at any time of day, making their way down all the streets which lead to the mountain with noticeable artificial paunches, the result of shirts loaded with apples. Some substitute sacks which they carry home in open