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OTTAWA, WEDNESDAY, OCT. 17, 1906.

A Thanksgiving Day with God left out is like an unlighted candle—an opportunity without a blessing.

Thanksgiving has missed its place in our lives if we have not made another more cheerful to-day than he was yesterday.

Rev. J. G. Shearer, the General Secretary of the Lord's Day Alliance, has just returned to Toronto from a two-months' trip through the West. He says the new Lord's Day Act is popular out there, that the United States settlers appreciate the quiet Canadian Sabbath, and the way in which Canadian law is enforced. They are especially pleased with the Northwest Mounted Police. Mr. Shearer thinks so much of them himself that he would like to see them introduced into all the rural districts of Canada. Apparently Mr. Shearer sees no symptoms of the Americanizing of the Northwest.

A few weeks ago we noted the closing of the Opera house in Malta, in which Rev. John McNeil, was holding evangelistic services, at the instance of the Roman Catholic bishop, who, in his correspondence with the Governor on the subject, adopted a tone most offensively dictatorial. Lord Elgin, the Colonial Secretary, as a result of the recent discussion in Parliament of the Roman demands, has informed the governor of Malta that all religious denominations must be treated with perfect equality, and that no objection must be taken to the holding in public of the religious ceremonies of any denomination, provided they are not demonstrations intended to give offence. While hoping that the people of Malta will recognize the principle of toleration, he adds: If, however, disturbances should be caused by evil-disposed persons, they must, of course, be repressed, if necessary, by the whole power of the government, and the persons causing them dealt with in accordance with law.

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### THANKSGIVING: THEN AND NOW.

The story of the shepherd sheiks, the patriarchs, has unfailing charm. All have felt the fascination of the Scripture narrative. One characteristic of that truly simple life was the habit of considering God as the immediate author of prosperity. If their flocks multiplied, it was God who had given increase. If there was pasture, it was God who had caused the grass to grow. If rain filled the pits, it was God who had given water. Each good was ascribed to God. They were correspondingly thankful and dependent.

Certain circumstances of patriarchal life were favorable to this habit. For example, in those early days and in localities where the necessities of their hands led them, they were brought into contact with nature in its primeval form. Such contact is favorable to devotion. The American Indian, in solitude of forest, in shadow of canyon or spray of cataract, was sensitive to the immanence of the Great Spirit. So the patriarch, as he pitched his tent on primeval plain, under starry canopy, was filled with thoughts of God different only in that they were more distinct. He had no ghostly concept. His idea of Deity was that of Father and Friend.

The migratory life also contributed to the spirit of dependence. These shepherds relied upon the spontaneous production of the earth. God must guide to pasture and water. So immanent was God to the patriarchal mind that it was as if God spoke in very articulate words, and his communications were transmitted orally from generation to generation.

These were the conditions which contributed to the grateful and trustful spirit of the patriarch. He considered God as the direct Author of his good. He was happily ignorant of second causes. "It is God who hath done it. Praise his name!" was his devout exclamation. In sacrifice and oblation he further showed his thankfulness.

Current life is in violent contrast to patriarchal life. This is not an age of sparse population, leaving vast areas of solitude. The shepherd's tent has given place to the permanent dwelling, the roving tribe to the settled community. Contact with primeval nature is rare. Again, in the settled life the equal and universal application of law is more apparent. Success seems resultant upon obedience to law. Under these changed conditions the age is of realistic and self-reliant. The patriarchal spirit of dependence upon God, the habit of tracing prosperity to him as the Source, is in danger of being obliterated.

One of the surprises of the Bible is the deliberation with which it ignores second causes. It uniformly ascribes things to God as their immediate Author. "God created" is the initial declaration. No allusion is made to the primordial forces which co-operated in the building of the world. God causes the familiar phenomena of nature. He makes rain, gives dew, sends frost, hail and snow. He sets his bow in the cloud. He causes change of season. In the sphere of human affairs also the Bible represents God's influence as direct. He exalts one, abases another, overrules human designs, re-

strains wrath, delivers from affliction, sends changes of fortune.

Though the Bible thus ignores second causes, it does not deny them. Many of them are incidentally referred to and figuratively described. Yet as a rule it must be conceded that the Bible ignores second causes and ascribes things to God as Author and Source. And the Bible is right! For example, we have in common speech personified the human hand. You say a man is a "good hand" at such and such a thing. But the hand is nothing if there is not a will and a mind back of it to direct it. In the final analysis it is not the hand that does anything, but the living spirit back of and through the hand. Now, second causes and natural laws are God's hands. They would be nothing if His will and Spirit were not in them. Natural law is God's way of doing things. Is it universal? It should be, for he is everywhere. Is it unalterable? It must needs be, for he is without variableness. To stop with law and attribute success to it is a species of refined idolatry. It is worship of a creature, not Creator.

Again, to change the figure. Second causes are God's paymasters. In a well-regulated establishment a date is designated as pay-day. Employee steps to cashier's desk and receives his envelope. Is there any confusion in his mind? Does he not know that the money comes from his employer—that the cashier is only an intermediary? So the farmer sows his seed. Through second power causes, viz., germinating power of the grain, fructifying power of soil and sun, he gets his increase. He ought to know that it is not by natural laws, but God through them, that he gets his harvest. The same is true in every line of business and every human pursuit. Success comes in our obedience to law, but God is none the less the author of it. The patriarchs were right therefore when they traced temporal prosperity directly to God, thanked him as the author of their good, and expressed their dependence upon him. What this age needs is a revival of the spirit of the patriarchs. The current materialistic spirit needs to feel that God is near and is a rewarder. With this sense of the immanence of God a national Thanksgiving Day has use and advantage.

A Buddhist writer in Pekin publishes a remarkable letter in a Pekin paper advocating the establishing of the "Jesus Religion" in China, so as to secure to that great Empire all the good there is in that religion. A Chinese Christian minister in San Francisco publishes a letter in Shanghai advocating that a Church of Christ be established in China in which the Chinese Christians would have full control. It is a circumstance that indicates progress in China that a Buddhist, and a converted Chinese should advocate so great a change.

Mr. Thomas McJanet is the unanimous choice of the Ottawa teaching staff as a candidate for the Advisory Council of Education. It is to be hoped that he may be elected. His ability, excellent judgment and long experience well fit Mr. McJanet for the position.