

The Record.

Toronto, February, 1860.

THE PRESENT ASPECT OF THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

There is much that cannot but be deeply interesting to the christian at the present time, whether we direct our attention to the state of the Church, or of the world at large. It cannot be denied, yea, it is ground for humble and hearty thanksgiving to the Great Head of the Church, that there has been manifested throughout christendom a revival of true religion. In some places the movement has been more marked than in others. In some parts of the Church there has been something like a pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit. Regions that have been formerly dry and parched, have been refreshed and watered, and even covered as with a spring tide flow of spiritual influences. The tide too seems to be setting in at the same time on various and widely separated lands. Not to speak of the revival which has been so marked in Ireland, and in other parts of the British Isles, we observe that in Australia, India, and in other places, there are symptoms of revival. Christians are drawn together for prayer, and mutual encouragement, and a spirit of earnest inquiry is manifested. Even in our own land there appears at present a spirit of more than ordinary earnestness and christian union. We believe, that in accordance with the invitation of christians in other lands, the second week of January was generally observed as a season of special prayer. We have heard of many such meetings, both in towns and in country places, and we believe that the season has been one of peculiar interest and spiritual enjoyment to christians. We have heard ministers remark that they have never been enabled to preach with such freedom and power. Never, perhaps, has the attention of the Church been more intently fixed on the necessity of more earnest effort for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, both at home and abroad.

We earnestly trust that the present impressions and feelings may not pass away as the morning cloud, and the early dew, but that there may be a growing, deepening spirit of earnest prayer, and of christian effort. It may be that the present indications are the heralds of a bright and glorious day of progress.

In respect to the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, there is much to encourage and to stimulate. We do not perhaps dwell sufficiently on what has been done already, either to plant christianity in

distant lands, or to prepare the way for its rapid dissemination. A paper on our table, the *Christian Instructor*, in adverting to this subject says:

"Although the difficulties that lie in the way of the final and complete success of the church are greater than our readers are accustomed to suppose, yet it is our belief that there is much more to encourage than is generally understood. Without attempting at all to do justice to a subject, so great in its importance and so vast in its range, let us direct attention to three or four considerations touching the present state of the world and the church.

The first thing that strikes the lover of Zion, is the fact that the world is now generally open to the missionaries of Christ. The herald of salvation can go even further than the merchant. While commerce is bidden to stand outside at the door of China, the missionary is welcomed, at least by solemn treaty, to the very heart of the empire. No doubt the prejudice against foreigners will, to some extent, render the provisions of the treaty null and void, but we are greatly deceived, if wise and brave preachers cannot soon, if not now, travel over that populous land. English and American ships are found in almost every seaport from pole to pole. So certain and so rapid are the means of communication, that one can in a few months make the tour of the world. We feel that we are beginning to know the world, and that if we desire it, can have speedy access to nearly any portion of its inhabitants. Even central Africa can scarcely be considered any longer a sealed book. If the opportunities to preach Christ continue to increase as they have done for the last fifty years, only a few years will roll round, before the missionary will be perfectly safe in any city on the globe. If we consider China and Japan open to the gospel, there is not any considerable nation on the earth from which we are now entirely excluded. Surely this is a cheering fact. If the great highways of travel and commerce that connected all parts of the Roman Empire, contributed to the rapid spread and early triumphs of the gospel, the present condition of the world, in this particular, unparalleled as it is in all former history, is a ground of strong hope.

"Another fact, one that we think is not enough dwelt upon, is, that the Bible is translated into all the chief languages of the world. It has not yet been translated into many of the smaller dialects, and many years may elapse before every remote and barbarous tribe can have it in its own speech. But the great majority of mankind have the Word in their vernacular tongues. Glance at the map of the world. It is found in the principal language of our own continent. Every European nation has it. It has been rendered into Arabic, the spoken language of some 80,000,000. It can be read to-day by the teeming millions of China. In a word, it is now found in 166 languages—ten times as many as were heard spoken on the day of Pentecost. More than one hundred of these translations have been made since 1800. Of course we cannot say positively how many, but after carefully considering all the statistics within our reach, we believe we are safe in saying that not less than 800,000,000,

or four-fifths of the whole human family, might, on the first of January 1860, have heard the word read "in their own tongue, wherein they were born." We do not say they so heard it, but so far as translations are necessary, there was nothing to hinder it. This fact is one of vast significance. The Bible has had a powerful on every people where it has been enjoyed in the native tongue."

The writer specifies also the wealth of the Church, and its ability to supply the requisite number of labourers. It appears then, as if everything were in readiness, and all that was wanting was the outpouring of the Spirit from on high. This alone can advance the work either at home or abroad, either in christian lands, or in heathen countries. The most liberal appliances, the most brilliant talents, the best organization will not avail without this. But with the effusion of the Spirit, weak things would be made strong, difficulties would disappear like snow before the genial gales of spring, and pure and undefiled religion would be mightily advanced. How loud the call, then, to all to plead earnestly and perseveringly that the Lord would arise in His power, and work gloriously as in days of old, and as in former years.

THE CARDROSS CASE.

The Spiritual Independence of the Church.

We referred to this case some time ago at considerable length. A decision has now been given, not indeed on the merits of the case, but on the preliminary defences given in by the Free Church. In these defences the ground taken was that the civil courts had no right to demand production of the documents in the case, inasmuch as the church courts were spiritual and independent. The church, therefore declined to produce the documents, and these defences have been repelled by the unanimous decree of the first division of the Court of Session. The decision has been given on the preliminary defences, and did not refer at all to the merits of the case. But in reality, it involves the entire question of the independence of the ecclesiastical courts. For it is difficult to see how the church could comply with the order for the production of the documents, without admitting the right of the civil courts to sit in judgment on ecclesiastical decisions. If the civil courts can call for the sentence pronounced against Mr. McMillan, and the terms of the contract between him and the Free Church, of which he was a member, it is difficult to see on what ground they may not judge of the sentences themselves, and reverse them, if not approved of. The Edinburgh *Witness*, in announcing the decision, says:—