

an extreme case, where a church fellowship felt, on its being put to them by the pastor, that they were not in a fit state to sit down together to remember their dying Lord at His table, there was hatred and strife in their midst. This may be extreme, but we have known of many cases where one member of a church has refused to commune with another because of some real or fancied wrong-doing. Should these lines fall into any such hands, may we not ask that this peaceful season shall be a time of reconciliation and the good-will Christ's ingeth shall prevail amid us, and that the distinctive Christian people may still say "love one another." May the great influence of the coming of Christ flow like gentle dew upon every heart, may every breach be healed, and may all our churches have the experience of the Apostolic churches, "then they had rest (and there can be no rest with internal divisions) and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

These last lines of ours before Christmas day, last lines of the weekly issue of the INDEPENDENT, we would desire to carry our sincere wishes to all our readers, and we wish them, in the highest and truest sense, "a Merry Christmas," the joy and gladness which comes from the entrance into the heart of

"Peace and Goodwill."

GARFIELD.

The life of the late President of the United States illustrates the truth of the lines—

"It is not all of life to live,
Nor all of death to die."

By his death, James A. Garfield's life was made to speak, effecting issues which perchance the longest life had not overtaken. His life has been published and widely read—not too widely—and we, taking for granted that it has been read, purpose to draw attention to a few features therein illustrative of practical Christian life.

First, if, as undoubtedly they do, the sins of the fathers reach on in their effects to the children of the third and fourth generations, we find therein but the results of a merciful provision which has become sin-perverted, for there are noble, even Christian hereditaments as well. The Garfields were of an old Puritan stock, and Eliza Ballou, the heroic mother, was descended from a Huguenot refugee. No nobler blood could run in any man's veins than was found in that Ohio home—better far than Norman blood! The ancestry was from men no dangers could daunt when truth had to be maintained, whose will no adversities could subdue, whose reliance being placed upon God, no seeming disappointment could weaken. The fires of persecution only branded into the very continuity of life those characteristics of patient endurance and unconquerable perseverance which have associated with Puritan and Huguenot the most heroic struggles of modern Europe. We may bless God for the very furnace of persecution which has bequeathed to future generations the noble heritages of those representatives of the reformed faith. Gar-

field had a noble ancestry, and manifested much of its spirit and fire.

Another point may be noticed. Abram Garfield, the father, died from the effects of over-exertion, fighting a fire in the forest, leaving the elder brother but fourteen years old, and James but eighteen months. There was still a debt on the farm, but the mother had trust in heaven. She and her fourteen years' old boy managed the farm; adversity only brought out the heroic in the members of that family, who thereby were knit the closer together. At the age of eight Garfield became a "farm labourer;" at twelve he earned a full day's wage, and when he came home to place the one hundred cents in his mother's hands, mother and son felt a great lump suddenly grow in their throats. Few better schools are to be found for moral heroism than a family striving together, conquering adversity under the inspiration of a mother calmly, hopefully bearing her double burden, because Christ is with her. Adversity is not the direst cross that human pilgrims meet along life's troubled way (read James i. 2-4).

James must have had a splendid constitution. By day he toiled physically. The midnight oil was often spent as he determined not only to be a worker but a scholar. He succeeded, for where there is a will there is a way. Moreover, the time too often spent in frivolity and ease he husbanded for nobler purposes, and he who would use life aright has no time to lose on useless pleasures, or sickly expedients to "pass away the time." Life to him was real; had an object, and he prepared himself for whatever that object might be.

But the crowning gift of Garfield's life was his eminently Christian character, which carried him through even political strifes without a tarnish on his name. His assuredly was not a religion of fashion, for the President's church was poor, and of comparatively little esteem; but on rising in the world he did not forsake it for "society," "social prestige," or "mere culture," but to the last he gave to the church in which he had found Christ his countenance and support. In early life, James A. Garfield, converted under the teaching of a minister at the "Disciples' meeting," gave himself unreservedly to Christ, and thus exemplified how thoroughly they find God who find Him in their youth. Thus, nurtured in a humble but heroic Christian home, schooled by adversity in habits of self-reliance, devoted to Christ as the great Captain of his salvation, he carried out into the citizenship of his country those qualities which a nation most needs to make its people prosperous, and its institutions permanent. No permanent prosperity or peace can be where truth is not, virtue has no place, and God is practically forgotten.

It is hard to understand the Providence which has deprived a nation thus early of such a ruler, but the voice of him who though dead yet speaks, may by that death reach wider, sink deeper, than ever the living voice could hope to do. So mote it be, and let the assassin's name be forgotten.

The latest horror is the destruction by fire of a Vienna theatre and the loss of we know not how many lives, it is placed as high as a thousand. A terrible catastrophe indeed, the worst

of its kind since the destruction of the Brooklyn Theatre a few years ago. There are practical lessons of safety which will no doubt be urged by our secular journals, foremost being the necessity of easy means of exit from public buildings, a caution which, scarcely applying to any of our churches, is yet very applicable to many of our halls and other places of meeting. Let the awful warning not go unheeded. Of course we have no sympathy with the teaching that would point to this as a mark of God's displeasure against theatre-going—we don't believe it. We dislike theatres and their associations, and have said so pretty plainly in these columns, that is one thing, but such a statement as we have just named we put from us. Yet, a thought will come in, how should we wish to meet our God in death from a theatre? Is there one who would say he would just as soon pass away in a theatre as elsewhere? we fancy not, at any rate among our readers. We remember on the occasion of the Brooklyn fire a gentleman, whom we had known in England as a pious Methodist, went out with his son that night, just to see the play, and the sorrow of his widow was not alone that no trace of her husband or child was recognizable among the charred mass, but that the end was there. The teaching is obvious, if it be not a place in which we should care to die, it is not a place in which to spend our hours. Let us live as we would die, then death will be the seal of life.

THE successive defeats of the Scott Act in different counties, though matter for regret, is scarcely surprising. No great social revolution, such as this undoubtedly is, was ever accomplished at the first onset. The people have to be educated, prejudices have to be overcome, and vested interests are always powerful, especially where they touch the lower appetites of the masses. In Lambton the voting was close, and had it not been for the adverse vote of the town of Sarnia the Act would have been carried in that county. It is pertinently asked if "local option" cannot be made to cover a wider area, and to permit in such cases places that so desire to be freed from what they feel to be an undesirable traffic. It would be rather hard if Sarnia should say to every village in Lambton, you shall have a powder magazine in your midst, with all the chances of explosion, yet practically the same thing is done in the voting. However, so the law is we would not say to the friends, do not be discouraged, they are not made of such stuff. They will "try and try again," until the victory is achieved. God hasten it.

News of the Churches.

EATON, QUE.—Our Church affairs seem to be progressing favourably under the pastorate W. F. Currie. Meetings well sustained and minister well liked. Some two or three additions are expected at our next communion. May our Heavenly Father smile upon the efforts here made for the good of our people by blessing us with the outpourings of His Spirit, by filling the hearts of His people with love and praise for His goodness, and may that goodness lead many to true and unfeigned repentance for their sins and cause them to unite with the people of God. W. F.

Correspondence.

To the Editor of the Canadian Independent.

SIR,—In common with a number of your subscribers and stockholders, I regret the causes which led the directors of the Publishing Company to announce their determination to discontinue the weekly issue and to go back to the monthly after January 1st. Now, if this resolution is carried out, I fear that our denominational interests will suffer. A monthly, however well conducted, as an organ for the transmission of "the doings of the churches," is, to say the least, behind the times. Of course, so long as the receipts were less than the expenditure, the directors could not reasonably be expected to arrive at any conclusion other than the one above mentioned.

But is there no way by which the regular income can be increased so as to equal the present comparatively small outlay? It seems to me there is. Suppose we adopt the method proposed by the committee of the English Jubilee Fund relative to its increase, to let loose a competent lecturer upon the land, who shall visit every city, town, village and country place as far as practicable, leaving no Congregational Church in Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritime Province unvisited. And let this gentleman be authorised to collect amounts already due by subscribers, and solicit personally among the churches new subscriptions for paper and stock. In doing this he need "not worry or torment" the people, but speak in a good round tone to them as to what "those competent to judge" regard as the claimant need of Canadian Congregationalism. Now, would not such an endeavour result in making both ends meet, and thereby save us the humiliation of this threatened retrograde movement, and secure for us still our weekly which, with all its shortcomings, has contributed towards bringing us together and making us feel that we are Brethren in Christ, and the real interest of one is the interest of all.

Yours,

J. R. BLACK.

Garafraxa, 7th Dec.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL NOTES.

—At the Sunday-school Congress of the M. E. Church, held in Boston, Dr. J. H. Vincent strongly urged that the catechism be taught in its entirety and with repetitions, and not merely in fragments. The neglect of the catechism he thought had been a serious trouble in the church.

—"I go without books myself," said an earnest teacher, "and buy them for the boys in my class. What they read now may change their characters for life, and the self-denial on my part may be the means of saving a soul." How many other teachers are exercising the same faithful oversight over the mental food of their pupils?

—The Sunday-school of the Church of Christian Endeavour, Rev. W. F. Crafts, pastor, is one of the four largest in Brooklyn, having a membership of 1,270. The library has 1,400 carefully selected volumes, and the average attendance of children at church, during the year, has risen from a dozen to a hundred, by count.

—At the same meeting statistics were given showing that the attendance of children at the church services is underestimated. In Dr. John Hall's Sabbath-school, New York, the scholars who attend morning service are occasionally asked to stand, and about four-fifths of the school rise. In twenty schools in New Jersey the average attendance on any given Sabbath is found to be sixty-three per cent. In one of the Lynn schools no pupil receives a mark of perfect scholarship unless he has attended public worship at least once on the Sabbath.