

# The Canadian Independent.

"ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST, AND ALL YE ARE BRETHEREN."

Vol. 29.]

TORONTO, THURSDAY, NOV. 18, 1880.

[New Series. No. 21.]

## Topics of the Week.

—The Rev. J. L. Green, of the London Missionary Society, writes from Tahiti that the restrictions which have contracted the labors of the missionaries ever since the French Protectorate was established there have been nearly all removed, and that he now has virtually the ecclesiastical direction of nearly three thousand natives.

—Arthur Mursell, of Birmingham, has been preaching on "The Church Congress and the Dramatic Stage." He does not like the deliverance of the Congress on the subject of the drama. He claims that dramatic representations are to be approved or condemned according to the moral character and tendency of each case.

—Another wholesale slaughter by whiskey is reported of at least 500 inhabitants of St. Lawrence Island, in the Polar regions, being almost the entire population. Early in the summer a trading ship supplied them with a great quantity of liquor, taking from them in exchange their stock of furs. Instead of preparing for the coming winter the islanders kept up a debauch, and when winter came they perished of famine only two hundred surviving. Perhaps the liquor was not "good."

—The famous "Scotch Sermons" are causing something of a breeze in the Established Church of Scotland. At last accounts the Glasgow Presbytery had the case of Mr. McFarlan, one of the contributors to the volume, before it. After a great deal of discussion a resolution was passed referring the "Sermons" to a committee, with instructions to confer with Mr. McFarlan, and report at an early date. The sentiment in the Presbytery was somewhat against the tenor of the sermons.

—At the present moment, including three ladies, the London Missionary Society has thirty agents in Madagascar, of whom five are absent on furlough. The statistics for the bygone year inform us that the number of church members among the native population is now 70,125; with 253,182 adherents. Exclusive of the Pastors' College and Normal and Central Schools for males and females, there are in all 882 elementary schools, attended by 48,150 pupils. For school purposes £543 had been contributed by the different district churches, and for general church purposes £2,726.

—The Christian queen of Madagascar has taken a strong position on the temperance question. Under a former treaty with France, importations were allowed. This nation brings in rum. She has forbidden her people to drink it, and faithfully warned them of the evil consequences; and, in their presence, she caused the barrels assigned to her as revenue to be broken, and the contents poured out upon the sand. "I can not," she says, "take a revenue from anything that will debase and degrade my people."

—It has a curious smack of ancient history to read that the State of Illinois has been erected, by a Papal decree, into a province of imperial Rome. It sounds much more martial and ruler-like than

the facts warrant, and does not mean the immediate loss of the great Sucker State to the company of sister States. Fortunately the Pope's temporal power is gone altogether, and whether Illinois shall accept the high title of an imperial province of Rome depends upon the unsubjugated people there, and not upon a Papal decree. Bishop Feehan, of Tennessee, has been appointed to the new Archepiscopate. He is said to be a man of fine abilities, and well qualified to lead in the work of his Church. The one point in which Protestants should imitate the Catholics is in zeal and persistent effort.

—A very effective gospel temperance work is in progress in London, under the direction of Mr. William Noble, who visited this country three years ago. Hoxton Hall, a former noted drinking place, has been she centre of his labor, and a great revolution has been wrought in its character and surroundings. At the recent second anniversary of the movement, conducted by Mr. Noble, it was stated that a total of 1,780 meetings had been held—822 at night, 115 for women, 116 on Sunday mornings, 585 for children, 111 for the Sunday Schools, and 31 in the Standard Theatre. They have enrolled 560 children in the Band of Hope work, with a pledge against both strong drink and tobacco, and have a Sunday School with 198 children. All this has been achieved in one of the most forbidding localities in London. Much credit is due to Mr. Noble and his faithful co-workers.

The completion of the Cathedral of Cologne is an event of unusual significance, from the fact that, though it is a Roman Catholic edifice, it was completed by the German Government, which is hostile to the Papacy. And the high Catholic dignitaries refused to take part in its consecration. In fact, though founded by the Catholics, it has been finished by Protestants, who would gladly extirpate Catholicism from the Empire. The history of this edifice is remarkable; it reflects the vicissitudes of the German people and of Europe. Its foundations were laid in 1249 when Frederic II. was Emperor, and it was doubtless designed to represent the glory of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, during which Germany reached its crowning point in the Middle Ages. It is not known who planned it, and the work went on for centuries, slackening during the periods of war, and stopping altogether in 1509 until 1830, a wooden roof covering the vast interior. The edifice is 511 feet long, and 231 feet wide, and the towers were planned to be 511 feet in height. It has a double range of flying buttresses and intervening piers, and a whole forest of pinnacles. The choir was consecrated in 1322, but the north and south aisles were only carried to the capitals of the column in 1500. Work on the building was resumed in 1832, and has been carried forward under the present Emperor with added zeal. Plans which had been dropped as impracticable or too costly have been taken up, and over four and a half millions of dollars have been spent in finishing it. It is the largest and most imposing cathedral in Europe.

## HOME MISSIONARY COLLECTIONS.

Will the pastors, deacons, and members of the Western Missionary District look at this?

For as much as for the last few years, it has been found impossible to make arrangements for Missionary meetings to suit the churches, and some pastors have requested to have their churches left out of the plan. Our meetings if on the right time for the moon, have been on the wrong time for the roads. If the roads and moon have been right, there has been a conflict with local church collections, or somebody's tea meeting, or lecture, or special service of some kind so that the published programme has been set aside, or the meetings have failed. It has been resolved by the committee.

That the pastors, and deacons of the churches in this district be requested to make their own arrangements for collecting funds for Home Missions. Each church to suit itself as to time and method, but we earnestly request that the monies be collected and sent in as far as possible, before the 31st of December, 1880.

The committee also earnestly request, that the churches will make their arrangements in getting help, or exchanges, as far as possible so as to keep down travelling expenses. It is now expected that every church will do its utmost to bring up the funds of the society to the point from which they have fallen, and augment them if possible.

W. H. Allworth, District Sec.

Pro. tem.

## HINTS HERE AND THERE FOR TEACHERS.

BY REV. A. J. TITSWORTH.

The inspiration of the Bible is the last thing in the world that one would suppose could become a hindrance to the study of the Bible, and yet it sometimes is so. It is not seldom thought of as giving a fragile sort of sacredness to the book, so that not a word of it can be touched, except in the tenderest manner, without injury to it, or disrespect. "Hands off," says this conception of the revelation God has given us in His Word. "If you shatter my confidence in one thing," the Bible says, "you spoil the whole book for me." Such a watch dog to keep off the critics, attacks fiercely many a reverent and profound student of the Scriptures, and though less so to-day than once, is still a formidable obstacle in the way of thorough examination and explanation of God's Word.

It needs to be distinctly understood that the Bible is not what the English call a "preserve," which a privileged class alone can enter and hunt in it for texts to spread their own doctrinal or practical table with; it is a common, open to everybody, without a fence, or a warning placard, or a prohibition of any sort hindering the freest use of it by anybody who chooses. Its sacredness is not of a sort that fears the commonest use, or the closest scrutiny. Inspiration is not something outside the Bible forbidding disbelief in it; it is something in the Bible, in its character, making final and intelligent disbelief impossible. The inspiration of the book is the shadow of the truth of the book, and much of the argument we hear upon the right of the Bible to our belief and respect needs to be reshaped with this fact in mind. It is not simply true because it is God's book, but it is God's book because it is true. It is of far more consequence to-day that we prove to men's satisfaction first that it is true, and then that it is inspired, than that it is inspired, and is therefore true. We may be never so sure of the inspiration of the Bible, and still our nerves will be sensitive and our tears wakeful lest unhallowed hands should use it roughly; but if our one thought,

deeper than all others about it be, the Bible is true, true in the same natural, simple sense in which other truth is true, we shall gradually learn to welcome the keenest analysis of it, the brightest light possible to be thrown upon it by scholarship, the fullest investigation of contemporary history, the most searching tests of science, and we shall not fear to throw the Word of God out into the seething sea of human thought and controversy, knowing that it will, because it is true, outride every storm of criticism and survive every danger of refutation, and emerge at last acknowledged more and more by all who love truth and are of noble enough nature to feel its power.

This means not simply that the Bible tells the truth; more than that, it means that the Bible is truth. Often the Bible does not tell the truth, *i. e.*, the words are the words of untrue, wicked men, or of good men in unhappy, unworthy moods. In Job xii. 7, God expressly disclaims what the three friends of Job have said, and yet what they said is incorporated in the narrative, and it is not uncommon to hear the words of these misguided men quoted as "Bible," and therefore sacred truth. Job himself, in his despondency, more than once uttered what he "understood not," as he afterwards confesses, xlii. 3. I think a notable example of this may be found in the fourteenth of Job, where he seems to be quite wrong in his thought about the immortality of man. No end of harm is done by committing the Bible as the Word of God to statements which the Bible makes, if it makes them at all, perhaps to contradict, or in the course of the narrative as the language of some one whom God never meant to endorse. We must learn the difference between the Bible's telling the truth in every word and verse, and the Bible's being a true and honest and reliable book. It is true precisely because it truly reports whatever it reports. It honestly incorporates within itself the language, the actions, the history of men exactly as they were; and this is the ground of its trustworthiness.

I was asked the other day if I did not wish that some things were left out of the Bible. I knew the questioner well enough to see at once the drift of the question. A great many people are dissatisfied with David, and think such a man unworthy the place he occupies in the Bible; they think Samson a queer sort of a saint; they wish, if they love the Bible, that some things had not been told about Abraham. I answered "No" at once, and with as much emphasis as possible. These very things convince me that the Bible is a true book. If it told me that David was a Christian saint, I should suspect it of falsehood. If Samson had been made out to be a St. John, in his sweetness and purity, I should be staggered in my faith by the unnaturalness of the character. If Abraham, living in the times which produced him, betrays unmistakable kinship to the human nature of what he was a specimen, I am glad; not that he equivocated to Pharaoh and Abimelech [Gen. xii: 18-19; xx: 2]; not that this man of faith laughed in God's face at the first mention of a son being born to him in his old age [Gen. xvii: 17], but that these things being facts, the Bible neither hides nor justifies them. It is a true and honest and fearless witness of the times it tells of, and we need not fear any cross-examination of it by any counsel for the other side, whoever he be.

The inspiration of the Bible, therefore, is not a seal put upon every verse it contains, making each verse, no matter what its connection, no matter whose utterance the words may be, God's own truth, to be believed before examination or without examination. It is rather a guarantee of the trustworthiness of the book as a whole, the value and relation of the parts being dependent upon a thousand considerations which it is the student's business to find out, so far as possible, and become an intelligent and true student of the book in proportion as he does find them out. We cannot study the Bible too much, or be too hospitable to whatever helps us to a better understanding of it.