

**MUNIFICENT BEQUESTS**—We are informed that the late Anson J. Phelps, after providing amply for his widow, 100,000 dollars for each of his children, 10,000 dollars to each of his grandchildren, and an additional 5000 to each of them, to be paid by the executors, with the injunction from him to use the increase of this fund sacredly for benevolent purposes, and transmit to their heirs with the same injunction, has left the following sums to various benevolent objects, providing for their payment in instalments during a term of years.

To the American Bible Society, . . .	\$100,000
To the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, . . .	100,000
American Home Missionary Society, . . .	100,000
To literary and theological education in Liberia, Africa, subject to the control of the Executors, . . .	50,000
United Theological Seminary, N. Y., . . .	5,000
Institution for the Blind, . . .	5,000
New York State Colonization Society, . . .	5,000
Auburn Theological Seminary, . . .	3,000
Half Orphan Society, 6th avenue, . . .	1,000
Coloured Orphan Society, . . .	1,000
Congregational Church, Simsbury, Conn., for the use of the poor, . . .	1,000

\$371,000

In addition to the above, Mr. Phelps, just previous to his death, placed in the hands of his son \$100,000, the interest to be used at his discretion for the spread of the Gospel, and the principal eventually to be invested equally for the benefit of the American Bible Societies, the A. B. of C. for Foreign Missions.

This disposition of Mr. Phelps's property, including the amount given to each of his twenty-two grandchildren, makes the munificent bequest of \$581,000 for religious and benevolent purposes.—*N. Y. Com. Adv.*

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND AS IT WAS AND IS:

A Sermon, preached before the last meeting of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, by Rev. ROBERT GILLAN, minister of St. John's, Glasgow. Glasgow: Thomas Murray & Son.

At the desire of many Clergy and Laymen, who heard the above sermon preached, the reverend author was induced to publish it. The object of the sermon is to show that the Church of Scotland is still, what she ever was, a free untrammelled Church of Christ, and not liable to the charges of Erastianism brought against her. The fundamental principles on which the Church rests, and for which it is distinguished, Mr. G. notices, are these: the orthodoxy of her creed; the spirituality of her worship; the independency of her government; the extent of her provision; and the solemnity of her associations. Each of these points is ably illustrated by the reverend gentleman, and the language employed is of that glowing and highly figurative character for which Mr. G. is distinguished. Whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the principles enunciated, will be admitted by all who read this eloquent sermon that it is written in an elegant and forcible style.

**SABBATH EVENING READINGS ON ST. MATTHEW.** By the Rev. J. CUMMING, D.D. London: A. Hall, Virtue, & Co.

Dr. Chalmers had Scripture Readings on the Old Testament, short practical comments, written unaffectedly on the impulse and feeling of the moment. Dr. C. has begun with the New Testament, and this thick little volume of 477 pages is devoted to St. Matthew. If he proceed through the whole of the Testament at the same rate of progress, his "Readings" will form a small library. The reverend doctor's comments are chiefly of a

practical character, but he appends occasional critical notes on points of difficult interpretation or prophecy. Topics of the present times are also glanced at, and we subjoin the doctor's remarks on the Crystal Palace at Sydenham as a specimen of his style and manner in this new work:—

"The Sabbath was not made at first, and man created in order to fit it; but man was made first, and the Sabbath was instituted in order to fit man. In other words, we are not for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath is for us: and any one, who can comprehend that great truth in its length and its breadth, will not be likely to have a scrupulous conscience in reference to the Sabbath, which is bad one way; nor will he have a latitudinarian conscience, or tendency to profane it, which is as bad in the opposite direction. This text is often quoted by men who have no reverence for the Sabbath, and I have heard it quoted in order to justify the proposition, that the Crystal Palace—now erecting as a private speculation—should be opened on Sabbath. Now I took an active part, in company with most excellent and Christian men, in endeavouring by petition and argument to preserve that beautiful structure, as I could have wished, for the use, enjoyment, and instruction of the people, especially the working classes; but it was clearly understood, and, when I was asked publicly to advocate it, Lord Shaftesbury told me that, if Government consented to our petition, it was not to be opened on the Sabbath-day. It was one of the glories of 1851 that on that day it was shut. Now it does seem very plausible to say that the people must have pleasure and health on the Sabbath and that it is for their good to open the New Palace. But it seems to me that, if it were proposed that there should be fields and parks open round London, where the poor man, confined 16 hours every day in close shops, could find air and enjoyment for 2 or 3 hours on Sabbath between the services, that would be so far less liable to objection. But recollect it would not be the acquisition of health to go into a heated atmosphere and crowded rooms, and to see things most instructive and proper in their place; that is not health, it is only a transference from a Christian sanctuary into a philosophical sanctuary, if I may call it so, equally close and crowded, and meanwhile the sanctuary's teaching would be lost together. The British Museum would soon be open, shows and entertainments would follow also. To those who are advocating this I would propose—what would be far better and meet all sides—that masters should not be so anxious to screw the last atom of life and strength out of their servants, as too many do; but that they should give half of each Saturday to visit the Crystal Palace. The fact is that masters and employers, being desirous to work their servants longer still, if possible, on other days, think they will give them a treat by enabling them to go to the Crystal Palace on Sabbath, and so continue long hours on Saturday. The proper way is, for houses of business to shut up earlier every night and earlier on Saturday; and then the Sabbath will be kept for the Lord of the Sabbath, the employed will have part of Saturday for natural, and scientific, and interesting studies, and they will have the Sabbath for the Sabbath's work."

**TO YOUNG MEN**—A New Year approaches! Let each one ask himself, "Am I doing my duty to God and man?" If not, "Wherein do I fall short?" Stop and think! Your thoughts and actions you cannot hide from God. Are you willing that they should be revealed to your parents! your teachers! your employers! and your friends?—There are eyes upon you that never close. Perhaps they mourn already some evil habit, leading you slowly in a downward course. If so, arouse! look to your character—more precious than gold. You know the right path; resolve to follow it: and, while you are mindful of this world, forget not that before another year you may be called to an account with your Heavenly Father.

POETRY.

[For the Presbyterian.]

THE GUIDINGS OF PROVIDENCE.

"And He led them on safely, so that they feared not." PSALM LXXVIII., 53.  
 "He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light in the night."—Psalm cv., 39th.

Stay, Christian, go not forth  
 But at thy Lord's command,  
 Though golden shores and fairer fields  
 Lure to a far-off land;  
 But watch and wait thy Father's will,  
 And bid thy wayward heart be still!

'Tis blessed work to wait,  
 Secure that *all is right!*  
 Cool shadows o'er thy head by day,  
 A shining light by night,  
 Oh, rest then in thy Father's will,  
 And bid thy murmuring heart be still!

But, shouldst thou clearly see  
 Thy Father point the way,  
 The guiding light illumine thy path.  
 The moving cloud by day;  
 Then go! though fears thy bosom fill,  
 And bid thy trembling heart be still!

So shall He safely lead  
 His chosen to the shore,  
 Where they shall pray, and weep,  
 And watch, and wait no more,  
 With Him at rest, whose glory's still,  
 That He had done His Father's will.

OSNABRUCK.

S. O.

CHRISTMAS.

It is the dead of night,

And o'er the silent plains the crescent moon  
 Sheds silver light, that not obscures the glow  
 Of thousand stars, nor more than half reveals  
 The shadowy forms of giant hills, that rise  
 Calm and majestic towards the dark blue sky.  
 See, where upon a soft and gentle slope  
 The moonlight rests, a simple band is seen  
 Of shepherds watching o'er their silent flocks;  
 Not silent as their charge: on holy themes  
 The band of friends discourse with voices low  
 Amid the deep solemnity of night.  
 They speak of David's promised SEED, the SON,  
 The ROYAL SON, of Bethlehem's shepherd-king:—  
 "The years of prophecy have run their course;  
 The stranger's yoke is bound on Judah's land;  
 And Judah's parting sceptre waits the SHILON!  
 Sure His eternal reign is near, His reign  
 Of righteousness and peace!" But, see, yon star  
 Brighter and brighter gleams with sudden glory!  
 Lo, it descends; and, lo, the hills reflect  
 The wondrous radiance! Mute and trembling stand  
 The astonished shepherds. Now in the 'midst  
 appears

In outline clear a living form; and now  
 He stands revealed—an angel from the skies!  
 He speaks! "Fear not; I come to bring from  
 Heaven

Glad tidings of great joy, joy that shall be  
 To you, and to all people; for this day  
 Is born in David's city, HE for whom  
 Ye wait—a Saviour, who is CHRIST THE LORD!  
 And this shall be a sign; ye shall behold Him  
 Enwrapped in swaddling clothes, and lowly laid  
 Within a manger!" When the herald ceased,  
 A multitude of the heavenly host brake forth  
 In seraph song—

"Glory to God!  
 All glory in the highest!  
 Peace on earth!  
 Good-will to men!"

Then straight they spread their plumes  
 Of rainbow tint, and sought their native sky.  
 Uprose the shepherds, nor their footsteps strayed  
 Till at the feet of their new-born Redeemer  
 They breathed their fervent prayer. Then all  
 around

Judea's hills the tidings they proclaim  
 Of Christ announced by messengers from Heaven.