

# The Canadian Independent.

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

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## Topics of the Week.

THERE are now in the Fiji Islands 1,131 places where Christian services are held. The church members number 23,274.

PROTESTANTISM in Roumelia and Bulgaria seems to be making some headway. The Scriptures are in demand among the people, and two new chapels, one in Philippopolis and the other in Yamboul, are nearly, if not quite, completed.

THE New Testament company of the American Bible Revision Committee have finished their second revision of the Book of Revelation. It is expected that the revised New Testament will be published in England by the University presses during this year.

THE Congregationalists of South Africa have been holding their annual meeting at Graham's Town. An increase was reported in the income of the union for aggressive purposes. A mission has been established at the diamond fields, students have been prepared for the ministry and evangelists for rural work. The retiring chairman delivered an address on "Some Aspects of Colonization and Christianity."

A LETTER from Madagascar states that complications are being fomented by Jesuits with a view to induce the eventual intervention of France and its assumption of a protectorate of the island. "We hope," says "Le Journal du Protestantisme Francais," "that the Government of the Republic will not be tempted to renew in Madagascar the deplorable errors which formerly brought trouble upon Tahiti."

BISHOP CROWTHER, the coloured bishop of Western Africa, shews his catholicity of spirit in a very marked manner. Although, of course, an Episcopalian, he preached one Sunday morning not long since from the pulpit of the Faji Wesley Church, Lagos. Only a week or two previously the Bishop addressed a missionary meeting in the (American Mission) Baptist Church, at which the Governor presided.

THE Associated Congregational Colleges, of England, have published their subjects of examination for 1880, 1881, and 1882. This union, we hope, will result in something more. Our English brethren, it seems to us, have altogether too many theological institutions. Half the present number would be more than enough, and if they had fewer, there is little doubt that there would be more thoroughness and efficiency in their work.

WHERE is the superiority of Presbyterianism over Congregationalism in matters of ecclesiastical discipline? The Talmage case is not done yet. The Synod has upheld the decision of the Presbytery. But Dr. Van Dyke will not accept such a decision. He is prepared to go out of his Church unless that Church does what he holds it is its duty to do. So there isn't much difference after all, between our Church politics when we regard practical results.

THE "Journal du Protestantisme Francais" says that M. Paschkoff has become the instrument of an important Protestant evangelization movement in St. Petersburg. At first he attempted to gather together the droshky drivers and hackney coachmen of the capital, many of whom were converts. Thence his work has gradually extended until now he has at his house, every morning and evening, public re-unions at which people of all ranks of society are to be met,

and the Prefect of Police has authorized him to distribute the Scriptures and tracts in the streets of the capital.

THE Birmingham School Board has restored the reading of the Bible in the schools under its care. We understand that this was according to an agreement made before the election recently held. The Conservatives had proposed to make this a question at the polls. The majority of the Liberals, however, conceded what they demanded, and so there was no contest. Mr. R. W. Dale spoke against the measure, and six Liberals out of eight did not vote when the resolution was passed. It looks as if they might have defected if they had been disposed to do so.

OUR Congregational friends in London, England, have been discussing the subject of church psalmody once more. They held a meeting for this purpose at the Memorial Hall on the 9th of December last, with the Rev. J. G. Rogers in the chair. Papers were read by Mr. J. Spencer Curwen and Rev. Dr. Allon, and several prominent gentlemen followed with addresses. The feeling was expressed that there is room for improvement in this department of worship. If that be the case in England, what must it be in Canada? Suppose that we have a conference on the matter in this country ere long. It would be the means of directing attention to the subject.

THE Protestants in Roumelia seem to meet with favour rather than disfavour at the hands of the new government. Permission to build two chapels, one in Philippopolis and one in Yamboul, was readily given. These two chapels are now nearly or quite completed, and when done will mark a new era in the progress of the work in the two cities where they are located. Messrs. Bond and Marsh are members of the Bulgarian Lyceum at Philippopolis. At a late assembly of this lyceum the Archimandrite, a high Bulgarian church official, declared that "when the American missionaries came the people for the first time heard the Gospel." Protestant booksellers report a great change among the people generally, shewing that the gospel is making itself felt with increasing power.

MR. BEECHER, as he often does, has caused a little commotion. At the recent annual meeting of Plymouth Church, a motion was made that the list of monthly collections in that church be revised. In speaking on that motion, Mr. Beecher mentioned some societies which, he thought, could do very well without the aid of Plymouth Church. The American Tract Society and the Bible Society were specially referred to. Other churches, it was remarked, would support these societies readily, while they would contribute nothing for some organizations in whose welfare Plymouth Church felt a deep interest. In speaking of the Bible Society, Mr. Beecher said that it was publishing a text of the Bible which was full of errors. And that statement has been pounced on everywhere. The facts behind that statement are these: Some years ago, the American Bible Society appointed a committee to revise the English version of the Bible. The design was simply to correct errors; it was not to make a new version in any sense. The Committee did its work pretty thoroughly, and the Society published for a time the corrected, revised text. But some very conservative supporters raised a tumult, and the Society went back to its old text. So there is some ground for Mr. Beecher's assertion.

THE London Missionary Society has received the long-expected mail from Ujiji. Mr. Hore writes of the sickness, death and burial of the Rev. Arthur

Dodgshun, announced two months ago, and of the Arabs and their malign influence at the Lake. The Arabs have the Wajiji so much in fear of them that the missionaries can scarcely approach them, except with the permission of the Arabs, who believe that the mission has been established for the sole purpose of breaking up the slave trade. The Wajiji want to be friendly with the white men. Food is cheap and plentiful. Mr. Hore says, in conclusion: "I trust no one will call this mission disastrous or condemn Ujiji hastily as unhealthy. It is certainly much healthier than Zambar, and both Mr. Holey and myself were never more persistent in our determination to go on. Certainly we want more help; but the work is going on. We are living down native prejudices and suspicions and the lies of slanderers. We will slacken no effort to carry on this work; and I am speaking not at home, but in the midst of the work and its difficulties. May God induce His stewards to do their part, and see in the vacant spaces of the ranks only cause for new and earnest effort. I commenced this letter with but mournful news. I desire to close it with an expression of thankfulness to God for what health and strength and success he has given us, and with an earnest appeal to all missionary hearts to apply their means and strength with renewed vigour to this work, and to be assured that, however cavaliers may talk of disaster, there is no despondency here."

A GOOD deal of discussion is in some quarters being raised out of a case in which a person who subscribed \$300 to the building of a church, and was afterwards either unable or unwilling to pay according to agreement, was sued by the office-bearers of the congregation, and had a decision given against him. Some say that the defaulting subscriber was treated properly; others the reverse. Strictly and legally we cannot see that there is anything to complain of. If a man promise to pay a certain sum, whether for secular or religious purposes, he ought to keep to his engagement; and no honest or honourable man would think of doing otherwise. If any one lend himself to being merely a decoy duck in church matters, and by his liberal subscription seek to make others pay while he himself is excused, we can think of nothing more creditable, and if such an one finds himself "bit" he certainly deserves very little sympathy. At the same time, contributions to religious objects are so much matters of moral obligation and so much removed out of the plane of mere legal commercial indebtedness, that we should greatly doubt the wisdom and propriety of suing defaulters, either in Division or other secular Courts. The man who has so gone back upon personal honour, to say nothing of religious integrity, as to be ready to falsify his promise and reputation, his verbal or written engagement, is not one with whom the Church ought to have any dealings, except he come as a penitent, or except it see fit to deal with him for spiritual delinquency. Forcing money by legal process for religious purposes, from deliberate promise-breakers, does not work well and can scarcely have the Divine blessing. The man, however, who would want to escape from his obligations on this account is spiritually dead—dead as a hammer,—let his talk and profession be what it may. Of course, if his ability to pay has been in the meantime taken away, that makes all the difference in the world, but we have known cases in which after subscriptions were given with a great flourish of trumpets, the promises were repudiated and the congregations left in the lurch, simply because some personal whim had not been gratified, or the absolute infallibility and omniscience of the individuals subscribing had not been so generally recognized as it was thought they ought to be.