

The Record.

TORONTO, W. CH., 1859.

ANNUAL COLLECTION FOR MINISTERS' WIDOWS AND ORPHAN'S FUND.

By appointment of Synod this collection, the last for the Ecclesiastical year, should be made on the third Sabbath of the current month. It is desirable that the time fixed by the Synod should be observed, and due notice given to the several congregations on the preceding Sabbath. In some cases it may be impracticable to take up the collection on the day specified, but in such cases any other suitable day may be chosen.

It is unnecessary to urge the duty of liberality with reference to this collection. The object is one that will commend itself to the judgment and feelings of every considerate and reflecting member of the Church. We have reason to thank God for the success which has attended the efforts of the Church to institute a fund for the widows and orphan children of her ministers. The accumulated fund has now reached £6000, but when we take into account the rapidly increasing number of ministers, the claims on the fund now existing, and the greatly augmented claims which may be looked for in coming years, this amount cannot be regarded as constituting a sufficient and safe basis. The burden, it should also be remembered, is not borne alone by the congregations. There is a yearly payment due by each Minister.

We trust then that the collection appointed by the Synod for the third Sabbath of this month will be attended to in all the congregations of the Church, and that, as in former years, it may be a liberal one.

INVITATION TO PRAYER—SEASONABLE SUGGESTION.

The importance of the following remarks justifies us in giving them this prominent place. We regard the subject as peculiarly deserving of attention, and doubt not the remarks of the writer will commend themselves to the approval of our readers.

MR. EDITOR,—Permit me, through your pages, very respectfully to call attention, especially on the part of Ministers of the Gospel, to what seems a duty of the time. We are now approaching the season peculiarly interesting, not to the agricultural laborer alone, but to the country generally. "Even the king himself lives by the field." And always dependent as we are on the Almighty Giver, it must have been remarked, that in all quarters a greater importance than usual is attached to the prospective ingathering of the present year. From the speech of His Excellency the Governor, at the opening of Parliament, downward, every hope of returning prosperity to the community, expressed in word or writing, turns largely on the issue of the next harvest. While politicians may vary as to the causes of the distress so generally felt, all will agree that the issues of prosperity and adversity are ultimately in the hands of the Supreme Disposer. And

I would respectfully suggest the query, whether the temporal interests of the Province, and in particular our industrial and agricultural interest, should not occupy now, or forth with, a larger share in the prayers of the sanctuary? The chief place being always given, as it ought to be, to what immediately concerns the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, we, however, do not honor God the less, but only the more, when we ask of Him also, as he has bidden us do, the former and the latter rains; and they who do not acknowledge Him in reference to their temporal concerns, forget a part of the beautiful prayer which our Saviour has taught us to use: "Give us this day our daily bread."

I am aware that the subject is not altogether neglected. Some churches have held special meetings months ago, both for humiliation and thanksgiving, and on such occasions the judgments of the Almighty have been deprecated, sins acknowledged, and mercies—both spiritual and temporal—invoked. But I submit that, in the present crisis, more is called for. And I feel assured, that they who have already been regarding most devoutly the hand of God, will not be behind others in responding affirmatively to the invitation: "Come, let us pray before the Lord!" Permit us, then, to suggest, that particular and fervent supplication should yet be made, in the country's behalf, to Him who teacheth the husbandman discretion, and who reserveth for us the appointed weeks of the harvest. I shrink from presuming to name one Sabbath, on which all might be asked to join simultaneously with heart and lip in special pleadings, having the object I refer to in view. Some have spoken of the last Sabbath of the approaching month of March as most seasonable, though I need not say that, none would dream of suggesting that intercessions of this kind should be restricted to any particular day. But, no doubt, united and, as far as possible, simultaneous prayer, touching a common interest, has a tendency to evoke (when one is conscious of such sympathy) deeper feeling than prayer detached and occasional. My object, however, will be substantially gained, if, whether on the same day, or on diverse days, the matter have due attention given to it.

I regretted that the proposal of a day of special humiliation and prayer, under sanction of a recommendation of the Government, was not gone into. Nor is the present suggestion made as any substitute for what, I think, should have been so recommended and observed. What is now proposed would still have appeared a duty additional at this season, and is only the more incumbent in the absence of such an appointment.

Finally, I need not say how full the Holy Scriptures are of encouragement to such exercises. One can hardly open the Book of God, especially those parts which exhibit the dealings of Divine Providence and Grace with communities of men, without seeing that it is acceptable to the Almighty to acknowledge His supreme government over all our affairs and interests, and that He has promised His gracious interpositions and copious blessing to those who prayerfully "praise Him, and put Him in remembrance," and stir one another up to seek His face.

I am, respectfully yours,

M. WILLIS.

Toronto, 19th Feb., 1859.

TWO CRYING EVILS—THE OPIUM TRAFFIC AND THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

At the present moment the attention of the Christian Church, on both sides of the Atlantic, is intensely fixed on the present circumstances

and future prospects of India and China. In the one country the dreadful storm which swept so suddenly across it, bearing sad ravages in its train, has had the effect, now that the atmosphere is again becoming clearer, and the tempest has spent itself, of directing Christian attention and drawing forth far deeper sympathy, and far more powerful missionary efforts, than were witnessed in time past. Already several of the Churches and Missionary Societies have made preparations for re-enforcing their missionary staff, and thus out of present evil great spiritual good will, in the providence of God, be educes. In the other country to which we refer, facilities for missionary effort, and openings for commercial intercourse are now found where formerly all was exclusiveness and jealousy. We thank God for these changes. We own His hand in the accomplishment of them. He maketh the wrath and the covetousness of men to praise Him, and maketh all things to work together for good.

There is, however, one thing which is occasioning uneasiness and anxiety to many Christians who are deeply interested in the elevation and the spiritual progress of these nations. We refer to the opium trade. Disastrous will be the consequences, if Britain takes advantage of the opportunities which, in the providence of God, she now enjoys for pushing her commerce in China, for the purpose of introducing opium, which, according to the testimony of well informed missionaries and residents, has wrought and is still working such fatal effects among the people. According to the statement of a writer apparently well informed, which lately appeared in the columns of the *Edinburgh Witness*, or rather according to the statement of the special correspondent of the *Times*, which is quoted by the writer referred to, Indian opium to the amount of \$24,000,000 had been smuggled into China during the year, while not more than \$4,000,000 worth of British manufactures had been sold. The same writer states that the victims of opium-smoking are now counted by millions in the southern states of China, while the trade has not yet reached these districts in which ports are to be, for the first time, opened to our commerce. If, when these new ports are opened, British merchants shall introduce the deadly drug, the consequences will be most calamitous. No wonder that there is jealousy on the part of the Chinese Emperor. No wonder that there is anxiety on the part of Christians who take a right view of this matter, and who are earnestly seeking the destruction of this crying evil. We trust the matter will be taken up more strongly than ever, and that the Government will be induced sincerely and effectually to interfere. There is reason to believe that the opium trade is a curse, not only to the Chinese who are the consumers, but to the Hindus who raise it. Long ago it was declared to be highly prejudicial to the foreign trade of Bengal. For the sake of India then, and for the sake of China,