

Current Topics.

—In Scotland during the last five years, more new Baptist chapels have been built and more debts cleared off than in the previous forty years.

—Dean Church's memorial, asking for toleration for Ritualism in the Church of England, has received the signatures of no fewer than 3,538 clergymen.

—The Chinese on the Pacific Coast have organized a society called the "Congregational Association of Christian Chinese." The whole membership is 222, and the total of their gifts and offerings last year amounted to about £400.

—Mr. Robert Arthington, of Leeds, has lately offered the Church Missionary Society the sum of £5,000 for investment toward providing a fund for the maintenance of a steamer and a staff of agents on the upper Binue and Lake Chad. Grave fears are entertained for the safety of the society's agents on the Victoria Nyanza.

—Lady Harriet Bentinck, as sister of the late Duke of Portland, receives by his will about 200,000 per annum. Of her first year's income she has pledged \$60,000 to various Protestant missions and institutions in Italy. Of this \$20,000 goes to the British Hospital and \$20,000 to the Protestant school for Italian young ladies of the better class.

—The earliest printed Bible known was recently sold in London. It brought \$3,800. It is supposed to be also the first book ever printed from movable types. It contains only the Old Testament, is in Latin, is a folio and is known to have been printed at Metz about 1452 by John Gutenberg. It was found by accident in the sacristy of an old Bavarian church.

—The *Church Review* calls attention in very sharp language to the fact that another colonial bishop has resigned and accepted a rich English living, making some twenty such "now in England, eating the bread of the priests, and often not doing the priests' work, while they have one and all deserted their dioceses. It adds, "How long is this scandal to continue?"

—When a man is not willing to do anything for the heathen it is sometimes for a heathenish reason that he is not. To look out for one's self, or one's near friends, and to be careless of what comes to others, is part of the old heathenism, and of all heathenism. When one is in this state of mind, and says that there are chances enough to do good near home, he may make a close application of his own words to himself.

—At the recent sale of the late Lord Hampton's library in London, Tynedale's English Pentateuch, of which the only extant perfect copy is in the British Museum, brought \$200; Cranmer's "Great Bible" (1539), \$162.50; the two Common Prayer books of Edward VI (1549 and 1552), \$355 and \$330 respectively; the first edition of Knox's Liturgy (Geneva, 1556), \$205; Geoffrey Tory's *Hora B. V. M.* (*Beata Virginis Maria*), rare and with wood cut borders, \$505; and Kerver's *Hora B. V. M.* (1552), \$545.

Let us see to it that we make the most and the best of the Sabbath, in our own homes, and in our own hearts. We need to have a care to keep out worldly thoughts as well as to leave off worldly business. If we make gain ourselves on this day in devoutness and in all goodness, we shall be able to commend the keeping of the day to others, and shall thus help in causing it to be remembered and kept holy.

—Do not be troubled if you see much to be done, and if you are called on to do many things to advance the cause of religion and to promote the welfare of your fellow-men. It is a happy thing for you that you see these things and can help to do them. If it were the other way you would have need to be troubled. Truth and goodness live and make progress by such sight and action. And it is in this way that you live. And while you are so living you may thank God and take courage. —*Boston Congregationalist.*

—There is, it seems, from a communication just received by the Missionary Society, from the Rev. Y. M. Sjødahl, of Trondhjen, a bitter feeling of jealousy springing up amongst the clergy of Norway against the Baptist denomination in that country. Indeed, the prejudice appears already to have developed into actual persecution, as the clerical party have succeeded in getting imprisoned one of the local preachers who, being under the age of nineteen, administered the ordinance of baptism. The missionaries are, we understand, taking a bold stand against this new form of intimidation.

—Bishop Ellicott has lately expressed himself with great severity against a class of the younger English clergy, who, instead of studying the Word of God, are devoting themselves to a study of forms, and postures, and orders of service, and old and new liturgies.

"Instead of striving to become meek, Christian scholars, their ambition, if they read at all, is to be what they call 'liturgiologists'—liturgiologists however, who could not write down from memory, in properly accented Greek, that blessed prayer which is the model of all liturgical access to Almighty God."

—The *Christian Register* having claimed that the recent exit from our denomination of such men as Rev. Messrs. Adams, of Dunkirk, N. Y., Pierson, of Somerville, Mass., Slicer and Miln, of Brooklyn, shows that Congregationalism is being honeycombed with Unitarianism and Universalism, the *Watchman* (Baptist) aptly replies: "It seems to us that these examples prove, not that the evangelical denominations are, as we have been so often assured, permeated with Unitarianism and Universalism, but on the contrary, that as soon as one of their ministers defines his position as outside of Orthodoxy, he finds it necessary to take a position outside of his denomination."

—The friends of the Rev. Joseph Cook, of Boston, who for some time past has been lecturing North of the Tweed, are showing praiseworthy diligence in their efforts to keep his name and qualifications before the public. In a letter addressed to a weekly reli-

gious newspaper, I see him described, in less than thirty lines, as "this distinguished champion of Christian truth," "the illustrious lecturer," and "this renowned lecturer." Mr. Cook's lectures certainly appear to give great satisfaction to his audiences, but the expressions quoted remind one rather disagreeably of the language applied to champion athletes by their admirers and puffers.

—There are signs in all the Catholic countries of Europe of a growing religious reaction. The commune of Bertolla, which contains two thousand inhabitants, lies at a short distance from Turin. It has been troubled for some time by the immoralities of its parish priest. The Archbishop at length consented to depose the priest, and gave orders that the church should be closed. At a meeting of all the inhabitants it was resolved, without opposition, that the commune should withdraw its allegiance to the Vatican, and a petition was forwarded to the Protestant clergy in Turin—it is needless to say with what result—requesting them to "send preachers of the Word of God to Bertolla," with a view to the reception of the entire commune into the Protestant Church.

—Tyrol has, for the present, driven out the last Bible-colporteur. For days a spy followed Mr. — until he was able to prove that the man had actually committed the enormous crime of selling a Bible. The law is not interpreted alike in all the provinces. Now the strictest interpretation has reached Tyrol, by which the colporteur is only allowed to carry specimen copies, take subscriptions, and have the book forwarded from the store. Our colporteur was arrested, fined, books and license confiscated, and himself dismissed, with the assurance that Tyrol would never give him another license. Effort is making in another province to secure for the faithful worker another "permission." In Carinthia we have a new colporteur who is doing good work and meeting with some success in the sale of books.

—It is encouraging to find that amidst so much intolerance and bigotry among the churchmen of England, there are those who are not afraid to manifest a more liberal spirit. A few weeks ago the Rev. T. N. Oliphant, of Hope Chapel, Nelson, having lost a child by death, requested permission to inter the body in the St. John's churchyard, in the parish of Little Marsaen. The vicar, Rev. W. Messenger, not only consented to the interment, which he might legally have refused, but placed his church at the disposal of the Rev. T. J. Shawcross, a Congregational minister, and offered to assist in the service if agreeable to Mr. Oliphant. This is invested with peculiar interest from the fact that it is the first instance of a Nonconformist being allowed to officiate in an Episcopal church since the passage of the Burial act.

—It is a suggestive fact that more than one fourth part of the income of the Basle Mission, which now sustains 115 missionaries in India, Africa, and China, and which has already gathered 13,245 church members, is derived from a system of penny collectors. There are now about 120,000 persons who contribute a penny a week to this

society, these gifts amounting, in 1879, to over \$53,000. These collections were begun in 1855, and within the twenty-five years that have since elapsed not less than \$1,156,145 have been derived from this source. If giving at this moderate rate will secure such aims, how much could the church of Christ accomplish towards the evangelization of the world if all her members should give, not their spare pennies merely, but such larger sums as they might, in a spirit of earnest and devoted self-sacrifice.

—Good crops in the garden or field do not follow a yearly subsoil plowing, valuable as that may be. The successful cultivators bid us stir the surface often. An annual gift, though it may be large, does not bring the donor all, or even the best part, of the fruits he might derive from his giving. It is frequent giving that keeps the heart open and free, ready for the growth of all the graces. He was a wise missionary who declined to receive from a Karen a rupee for a whole year instead of the pice a week which the other native Christians were giving. To be sure, fifty two pice would not make a rupee, and the treasury would be fuller if the rupee were accepted. But the donor would not be as much blessed. "Don't you know," said the missionary, "that a door hinge, if opened only once a year, soon comes to creaking. Open often, no creaking; give often, no creaking."

—The *Jewish Messenger* says that a *fac simile* copy has been received by the Palestine Exploration Fund of a Phœnician inscription from the Pool of Siloam. It was first discovered by their correspondent in Jerusalem, a few months ago, and consists of six lines (about 150 words in all), enclosed within a tablet, the letters of which it is composed being almost identical with those on the Moabite Stone. It has been anxiously awaited by the experts in Europe, and we may soon expect a translation. If not of equal historical value with the monument of Mesha, it cannot fail to prove of great archaeological interest. To get at the inscription the water had to be lowered by making a ditch through the Pool, so as to reduce it to its former level, it having become choked up with rubbish in the course of years, and its bed accordingly raised. The Pool of Siloam is of very ancient workmanship, and is supposed to be connected with the waterworks made by King Hezekiah, and to be supplied from a spring of living water in the heart of the Temple rock. The name still exists in its Arabic form in the Kefr Silwan, or village of Siloam—a cluster of dwellings, half hovels, half natural caves, on the opposite side of the valley, whose inhabitants, when not engaged in theft, earn a scanty livelihood by carrying water of the Pool into the town for sale. No legend remains of the healing power of the Pool, and it would be interesting if the inscription should contain any allusion to sick persons who waited for the angel to trouble the waters. This is not so improbable as may at first sight seem, for the date is certainly not later than the first century of our era and may be much earlier, while it would appear to be the work of more than one hand and is just such a record as a pilgrim would leave.