

## News of the Churches.

OTTAWA.—Six persons were received into membership at the December communion service, five on profession of faith for the first time, and one from one of the Presbyterian Churches of the city. Several others are expected shortly to unite. More than usual interest has been manifested in the spiritual work of the church of late.

The Rev. Dr. Stevenson, of Montreal, lectured recently in the Church, at Ottawa, on the "Pilgrim Fathers," of which the *Free Press* says: "It was heard by a fairly large and most appreciative audience. Senator Ferrier presided. The pastor led in prayer, and presented letters of apology from a number of ministers who were unable to attend. The Chairman then in a few appropriate remarks introduced the lecturer, who began by graphically sketching the religious condition of England during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and the Stuarts. The Congregational wing of the Puritan party, who could no longer remain in the only partially Reformed Church of England, and who were not permitted to meet for worship as their own conscience, and the Word of God directed, first fled to Leyden, in Holland, for the liberty their own country denied them; and then in the year 1620, about 100 of them came to America in the Mayflower, and planted themselves, and free institutions, civil and ecclesiastical, at Plymouth, Massachusetts. Bancroft declares that civil and religious liberty was born in the voyage of the Mayflower, and from that feeble, but grand and heroic beginning we inherit all the blessings for which our country is distinguished. It is impossible, in the space at our disposal, to give even a sketch of the lecture, but it was eloquent and masterly throughout, and was greatly enjoyed by all present, who loudly applauded the Doctor at its close.

On motion of Principal Thorburn, seconded by Mr. Watson, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded the lecturer for his able and interesting lecture.

Senator Ferrier also expressed his own great delight with the manner in which the subject had been presented, after which the meeting was closed by the Doxology and the benediction."

TORONTO.—Mr. J. D. Nasmith who has for some time past actively exerted himself for the spiritual improvement of the Deaf Mutes of the City, meeting them every Sunday afternoon and at other times, and manifesting in many ways a deep interest in their welfare, was made the recipient on Christmas morning of a volume of Milton with Dore's illustrations, accompanied by the following address:—

TO MR. J. D. NASMITH.

We, the Deaf Mutes of Toronto, have been very desirous for some time past to express the sense we entertain of the unwearied kindness and patient attention we have received from you, dear Mr. Nasmith, and the many evidences of your sympathy in all that concerns us, which each in turn has experienced. There is not one that cannot recall some instance that has testified that your kindness towards us is not in word only but in deed and truth. It is no common interest in us and ours, for which we have to thank you.

We may on this occasion, perhaps, be excused for referring to our peculiar position and the difficulties of our own intercourse with others, and if we do so it is in no spirit of complaint. We are conscious of the kindly attentions which have actuated others in their attempts at times to do something for us, but to none are we so indebted as to you. You alone have had the courage and perseverance to overcome the obstacles which stood in the way of free intercourse with us. You alone have had the patience to endure disappointment which every earnest man must feel at the inadequate expression which could be conveyed to us of the things desired to be set forth by your patient perseverance, and the suggestiveness born of an earnest will. You have shown that there are no obstacles which cannot be overcome, and you have done us the further benefit of not only giving us your own lively

interest and sympathy, but of stirring up the interest and sympathy of others on our behalf, so that through you we have had access to some of the kind expressions of Christian thought and feeling which are so freely open to others, but so seldom find their way to us.

We are conscious that kindness such as yours and directed mainly to such ends as you never fail prominently to keep in view, is not of this world, neither does it seek its reward here. It testifies to us that the event which we at this season commemorate is no fading vision of the past, but showing through the mists of time there is a power and a blessing still fresh and strong as the changeless heavens, and that the life of all love and mercy still dwells on earth in the hearts of the servants of the Most High.

But we feel that there is due from us some expression of our sense of all that you have done for us, and we trust that the volume of which we beg your acceptance, however inadequate in intrinsic value, may not be unacceptable to you, as some attempt to represent the regard and gratitude we feel.

Chas. J. Howe, Robt Green, James Jones, John K. Ellis, G. B. Bromfield, Chas. Smith, R. C. Hater, John Moore, J. H. Smith, N. V. Lewis, Henry Moore, Joseph Farnworth, J. J. Peake.

TORONTO, CHRISTMAS, 1880.

BURFORD.—In November I sent you a notice, that I think has not yet appeared in the *INDEPENDENT*, of a Donation to the Rev. W. Hay, on Thanksgiving Eve, upon which occasion his friends presented him with \$121.

Christmas Day was the 40th anniversary of the Sabbath School, an Xmas Tree was exhibited and a supper provided. The meeting was held in the town hall, and \$71 was added to the funds of the school.

H. C.

## Literary Notes.

THE NATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER has introduced some new improvements for 1881. Model blackboard lessons not only are given, but underneath them an artist tells what kind of colors to use in putting them on the board. "Class Test Questions" have been added, by which a teacher can review the lesson taught, and in that way see how well the scholars remember it. This magazine excels in its *Analyses* of the lessons, in its *Class outlines*, its *Bible readings* on the main topic of each lesson, as well as in its expository notes. The January number is replete with good things. No matter what other helps we have we cannot afford to be without *The Teacher*. Chicago: Adams, Blackmer, & Lyon Publishing Co., 147 and 149 Fifth Avenue.

DICKENS' CHRISTMAS BOOKS IN FULL.—Finely illustrated with 16 new full page engravings. Containing (1) A Christmas Carol, (2) The Chimes, (3) The Cricket on the Hearth, (4) The Battle of Life, (5) The Haunted Man. This is a capital holiday book. Printed from new plates, made especially for this edition. Just issued in Standard Series) Octavo size Nos. 48 and 49. Price postage paid, bound in manilla paper, each 25 cents.

GODET'S COMMENTARY ON LUKE.—With Preface and Notes Specially prepared for this Edition by John Hall, D.D. Godet's Celebrated Commentary on Luke (perhaps the best commentary on this Gospel ever written) has been selling in this country heretofore at \$5. L. J. Funk & Co., have now in press an edition which they will supply at popular prices. They are actually giving it as a donation to every subscriber for their *Preacher and Homiletic Monthly*. Their reprint is *verbatim*, includes all the notes, all the Hebrew and Greek words—everything contained in the English *six dollar* edition. The type is large brevier leaded, and the paper is good. The book is octavo in size. A Preface and Notes for this American Edition have been specially prepared by John Hall, D.D., thus greatly increasing the value of the original to all American readers. This commentary is most highly commended by such men as

Spurgeon, Drs. Crosby, Tyler, Wm. M. Taylor. All will agree with Dr. Crosby that Godet is a "man of soundest learning and purest orthodoxy." [The Commentary ranks very high in this country and in Europe. There could be no better hand-book of the kind for teachers in our Sabbath schools, who during the next six months will find their lessons in the Gospel of Luke. Preachers can now add to their libraries, at a trifling cost, a most valuable book of reference.

## Boys and Girls.

### HOW STRONG IS GOD?

How strong is God, papa? asked Willie Dale.—"strong as a giant?"

"Who made giants?" said his father.

"Why, God, of course," answered Willie.

"Then will not God be stronger than the men he makes?" asked papa.

"Yes, sir. But then, *how* strong is God?"

"Stronger than all men put together," said Mr. Dale; "stronger than all angels and devils, strong enough to dash all the worlds and every living thing to pieces in a moment."

"I'm afraid of Him," said Willie, nestling to his father's side.

"You need not be, dear. He is strong enough to keep you safe."

"But I am a naughty boy," said Willie.

"Well, God loves you, and He is strong enough to make you a good boy. Ask Him to take you for His own. Let Him help you to be good; and then God will be on your side."

### A CHILD'S WORD IN SEASON.

An English Clergyman says: "Very recently a little boy in my parish, only six years of age, was sent to fetch his father from a public house. He found his parent drinking with some other men, one of whom invited the little fellow to have some beer. Firmly and at once the little fellow replied,

"No, I can't take that: I belong to the Band of Hope."

The men looked at one another, but no one was found to repeat the temptation. The man then said:

"Well, if you won't take the beer here is a penny for you to buy some bull's-eyes."

The boy took the penny and said:

"I thank you, but I had rather not buy bull's-eyes; I shall put it in the savings bank."

The men looked at each other, and for a few moments were entirely silent. At length one of them rose and gave utterance to his feelings in these words:

"Well, I think the sooner we sign the pledge and put our savings in the penny-bank the better."

The men immediately left the house. Such was the effect of the speech of a boy only six years old.

### ABOUT CHRISTIAN NAMES.

At the time of the Norman conquest only English names, with a few old Celtic names, were known in England. This may seem to some readers too obvious to need setting forth, until they know that this limitation excludes such names as John, Thomas, James, Stephen, William, Robert, and so forth. It is not quite true to say that John was absolutely unknown; but it was very rare, and was of late introduction. Now John and William are the commonest Christian names borne by men of English race. Before the Conquest the names were truly English—Alfred, Arthur, Ethelbert, Edgar, Harold, and so forth. After the Conquest these rapidly disappeared. The conqueror's language yielded to the strength and the foothold of the English speech, but their names were diffused all over England, and within less than a century and a half had almost wholly driven the English names out of the

country. This is remarkable because, although the Normans brought in Bible names and saints' names, as well as their own proper Scandinavian names, their list was comparatively small, and the consequence was a great repetition. In every community of one hundred Englishmen there would be, during the four hundred years preceding the Reformation, an average of twenty Johns and fifteen Williams, and then, in fewer numbers and varying proportions, would come Richard, Robert, Walter, Henry, Guy, Roger, Thomas, Nicholas, Philip, Simon, Peter, and so forth. Of women's names during these four centuries the favourites were Matilda, Isabella, Emma, Cecilia, Catharine, Margaret, and Lillian—all Norman, it will be seen. A fact very remarkable, as to the common repetition of names, is that, in many cases, one name was repeated in one family and in the same generation. A father would name two, or, in some cases, even three of his sons John, or William, or James. This strange custom did not pass away until nearly the beginning of the seventeenth century.

In consequence of this very small allowance of Christian names, the confusing effect of which was aggravated by the absence of surnames, our forefathers were sorely put to it to distinguish themselves one from the other in their everyday talk. Hence the use of words expressing a man's occupation, his place of residence, his personal appearance, or his parentage as a to-name, and we have John [the] Wheelwright, John [the] Constable, John Attwood, John [of the] Green, John [the] Bigg, John [the] Gray, John Robert's-son, and John William's-son. Singular remnants of this custom are the names By-the-sea and Strong-of-the-arm, which still exist in England.

But the needs of individual distinction were far from being fully met in this way, and recourse was had to nicknames and pet names. Nicknames are those which are nicked, or cut. Pet names were generally made by the addition of a syllable, which was either diminutive, or fondly or jocosely descriptive. Nicknames hardly need illustration, for we have them still in use. Our use of them, however, is very limited compared with that of our forefathers between three and six hundred years ago. Tom, Bob, Sam, Will, and the rest may soon be reckoned, but of old the variety was endless. Walter was Wat; Simon was Sim; Bartholomew, Bat; Gilbert, Gib; Isaac, Hyke; Nicholas, Col; Gregory, Grig; Robert, Hob; Lawrence, Larkin; Hugh, Hud; Theobald, Tib; Cecilia, Cis; David, Dave, and so forth. Moreover, one name had many varieties of nicking. Thus, Bartholomew was made into Bat, Bate, Batty, Bartle, Toily, and Tholy; and besides it was both nicked and petted into Bartelet and Barcock by a process to be explained hereafter. Now, all these nicked and petted names sticking to those to whom they were given, became first separate Christian name, and afterward surnames. They may all be found in the London Directory. So William became not only Will, but Willot, Wilmot, Wilkin, and Wilcock, and these nicknames all became surnames, as any one may see. John was Jack, but it was also Jenn, and Jenning, and Jenkin, and Jackcock, and Brownjohn, and Micklejohn, and Littlejohn; and all these nicknames and pet names, adhering to their bearers, became surnames. It was no mere freedom of intercourse or slipshodness of speech which made these nicknames and pet names so common. It was absolutely necessary. For, 500 years ago, one-third of all the Englishmen alive were named either John or William, and they had no surnames!—*Richard Grant White*.

True friends visit us in prosperity only when invited, but in adversity they come without invitation.—*Theophrastus*.