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The Canadian Independent.

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

Vol. 25.

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BUSINESS DEPARTMENT.

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Subscription \$2 per annum, payable in advance. Remit by Money Order, Draft, or Registered Letter. We want an active Agent in each Church. Advertising rates sent on application.

We learn by telegram just as we go to press that the Congregational church at Granby was destroyed by fire on Tuesday afternoon, the 8th inst. It was insured in the S. S. Mutual for \$2,000.

SOME of the French Conservatives in Parliament are as sore as they can be over the Letellier matter. They seem disposed to leave no stone unturned that they may get rid of the obnoxious Lieutenant-Governor.

It looks as if the Afghanistan war were about ended. Negotiations are going on with Yakoob Khan, and it is expected that they will be successful. We shall see what has been gained by British expenditure of treasure and life.

A PLEASANT evening was spent in the school-room of the Congregational church, Georgetown, on the 31st ult. Music, recitations, readings, social greetings and refreshments formed the programme. It was enjoyed by young and old.

POOR ARCHBISHOP PURCELL is in difficulty again. Now Committees bother him. He appointed one to receive contributions for his relief, and the priests of his diocese appointed another. It is a wonder that there has been no investigation in his case.

DEACON BIRCH, of the Stratford church, passed away to his rest and reward on the morning of the 10th ult. He had been laid aside since the first Sabbath of the year. The many friends who mourn his loss are comforted to know that he has gone to be with Christ, which is far better. He was seventy-eight years of age.

WILL the people of Canada never learn to send fit men to represent them in Parliament? It may be too much to ask that our legislators should be acquainted with the rudiments of political economy. Common sense would demand such a thing, but the exigencies of party will not permit it. But is it possible that decency of behaviour is a disqualification for the House of Commons? The Gilmor-Domville squabble last week would have been disgraceful in a bear-garden.

THE world moves! J. Hyatt Smith, a Baptist minister of Brooklyn, well known as an advocate of open communion views and practices, was called to administer the right of baptism on a Protestant in the Roman Catholic Hospital of Brooklyn, N.Y., and he baptized the man by sprinkling! He used the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer! And a sister of charity brought and held the bowl of water for him! And two Episcopalians and one Presbyterian were present as witnesses! Things must have been marvellously mixed there, but would it not be a blessed thing if they

were oftener mixed? We think the Millennium is not far off. A few more scenes like that would make us believe it had come already.

It is with feelings of personal loss that we chronicle the death of Mr. S. Jones Lyman, of Zion Church, Montreal. He was well known by the Congregational Churches of Canada. He was a devoted follower of Christ, an active worker in the Church and Sunday School. The "Canadian Spectator" expresses the feelings of many, when it says that, "In Mr. Lyman we have lost a valued personal friend. He was a man to love and remember. Always genial, and never out of heart, his presence was a perpetual encouragement. Friends miss him as they miss an old landmark when it is removed, or a venerable institution. The world and the Church could have spared many better men." Funeral services were held on Sunday, 6th inst., in Zion Church. The sermons were preached in the morning by Dr. Wilkes and in the evening by Rev. A. J. Bray.

THE Talmage trial is not likely to prove a means of grace to anybody. Its progress thus far has certainly been no honour to the Presbytery which conducts it. The methods of the counsel on both sides, and especially those of the defendant's, rival if they do not surpass those adopted by the Tombs "shyster" lawyers of New York. And what good will come out of all this? If Dr. Talmage is condemned, it will do him no harm, if he is acquitted, it will do him no good. His real trial has taken place long ago, and judgment has been pronounced. What is going on now is only a battle between his friends and his foes. This nineteenth century goes far ahead of the fastest ecclesiastical machinery. By the way, what does the "Canada Presbyterian" mean when it speaks of the *promptitude* of the Brooklyn Presbytery in dealing with the rumours and charges against Talmage? Does it know that the only charges touched on yet are pretty old ones? For a long time past, there have been loud mutterings about Talmage's misconduct, but the Presbytery dared not look into the matter.

IN the "Fountain" of March 6th, Dr. Parker has a paper headed, "The Rev. Baldwin Brown on Congregationalism New and Old." The doctor sympathizes with Mr. Brown in his strictures on recent developments in the English Congregational Union. He is very hard on the organizers and statisticians. The concluding sentences give a good idea of the entire article, and we quote them:—"We agree heartily with Mr. Brown in thinking that the official leaders of the Congregationalism of to-day are honest in their purpose, and thoroughly devoted to what they believe to be the interests of the free Churches. Not one atom of personal distrust or personal dislike do we feel, nor does Mr. Brown. Our contention is that Independency can do better without elaborate organization than with it; that elaborate organization is opposed to the very spirit of Independency; that the strength of Independency is in the holiness, the intelligence, and the faithfulness of the individual churches; that, when those churches meet, their supreme object should be to take counsel as to the deeper reading of the Scriptures, a nobler charity towards heretics, and a more faithful service in society. Committees, sub-committees, officers, resolutions, amendments, movements, secondings, risings to order, minutes and confirmation of minutes,—upon all these we look with apprehension, and, in our judgment, the fewer we have of them the better. Our hope is that the time will again come when the sacred watchword will be. Independency a *Theocracy*, not a *sect*."

TO WORKING YOUNG MEN.

BY THE REV. A. J. BRAY.

At the request of the Orange Young Britons, Mr. Bray lately preached a sermon in Zion church, Montreal, to that Order. The sermon is reported in full in the "Spectator," and abounds with wise counsel to young men, and to old ones elder for that matter. After advising young men to have homes of their own as soon as they can manage it, he in strong earnest words warns them of the seductions of the dram-shop:—

"The home cannot contain you, you must go out to find change of scene, and change of companionship; you must go outside to unwind yourselves. But there is one place I most earnestly implore you to shun—shun it as you would a place reeking with deadly disease. I mean the place I mentioned just now—the bar. Whiskey may well be called "The curse of Canada." It is. That fire-water they hand you over the bar of the drinking-saloon takes the colour from your face, the light from your eyes; it brings paralysis upon your limbs, and fills your brain with mad, ungovernable devils. Those places are licensed, and so legalized. The black streams of desolating woe that pour from them help to turn the wheel of government; but they are sources of ruin and death none the less. I wish they could be abolished—I wish they could. And they can, for the most part. It may be done by you young men keeping away, and persuading others to keep away. Refuse to let that molten iron run through your veins—refuse to give your brain to madness and your heart to death, and you will dry up the stream, and choke this misery at the very springs. I would say, have rooms well aired and well lighted where you can meet; pass a law prohibiting intoxicating drinks and gambling of every sort, and then admit all the games you can find and have room for; provide newspapers and periodicals, and literature of every kind but what is simply vicious. You should encourage and cultivate music—visit the banks of the river, and the sides and top of our mountain in summer time. That way you may find a real recreation, a real unwinding strengthening for the sinews, and hope and courage for the heart, and content in all the life."

He then goes on to speak of the need of personal religion in political life. Especially does political life need the religion of charity. Men are not to be forever insisting on their *rights*. They are to study the feelings of others. The strong are to bear with the weak.

"So I most earnestly implore you to be strong enough, and wise enough, and loving enough to yield in non-essentials, where yielding is needful to peace and goodwill. There are times when you must give up what are clearly your rights. You have a right to walk the streets in a straight line; but when there are people going slower than you, or in an opposite direction, you must turn out of your course now and then. You have a right to be protected in the streets; but if you go teasing bad tempered dogs you must take the consequence. If you are going through a farm and there are bulls about, don't tie a red handkerchief about your hat, although it was given to you by your grandfather, and you have a perfect right to wear it as you please. There is a law of expediency which we must consult—there is a law of Christian charity which should rule our lives. You cannot insist upon carrying out what you have been taught to the strict letter of it, for others have been taught in opposite ways. You can insist upon nothing but toleration—liberty to agree with you, or to differ from you—and above all, a true Christian charity that is always kind."

"I love the Bible—it shines with the truth of God; it has made plain to me my duty and my destiny; it has taught me the power of prayer, the secret of faith, the beauty of holiness; it has taught me how to order my living, and how to leave my dying to the care of Him who lives forevermore; it has taught me my place in society, in the universe—how that I am free in dependence, and dependent in freedom. But the truth the Bible teaches is greater than the Bible, and I care for *that* most. I cannot learn it without the Bible? then I must have my Bible, and my right to interpret it. No priest, no Church, and no organization must take it from me. The style of printing or of binding I care little about; but the Bible I must have. I love the altar—it is the place of my sacrifice, of my prayer; it is the symbol to me of God's patience and mercy; it is the point of contact between earth and heaven; I must have freedom of access to that, and no man, no church, and no organization must bar my way to it.

"Working young men, and all others here!—Shall I tell you how you can best promote the principles of the Bible, and how you can best defend the altar? Let your *lives* be in accordance with both. Take the idea of God you find in the Bible—that He is the All-wise and the All-good, ever loving and blessing you; take the Christ of the Bible, going about doing good—not pleasing Himself, but speaking, living, dying to save sinners; take the brotherhood of the Bible with its teachings of honesty and truth and love; take the freedom the Bible enjoins—individual liberty, manhood's assured rights and privileges. But read and mark at the same time the grand servitude of the Gospel—see how it teaches you to put yourselves under restraint, and the law of self-denial for the sake of others. You cannot be the freemen of truth and Christ if you are under bondage to an organization, to a custom—if you are to be moved and commanded by other men. Would you protect the altar?—then live out the idea, the idea of mercy and sacrifice. You will vindicate our Protestantism best by being tolerant of everything but intolerance. It is better—as you and I firmly believe it to be—if it is better than other forms of faith, show it and commend it by your own industry, your own honesty, your own benevolence to friends and foes, your own charity, your willingness to forego a right to secure general peace. That is the best Church which makes the best manhood and womanhood.

"My brothers, seek after that *manhood*—put it before all custom, all tradition, all creeds, all organizations. Christian manhood is before and bigger than all of them. Whatever would restrict the growth of that; whatever would hinder its free development, put away; whatever will help you to be true and good, be it in creed, or Church, or organization—or outside of them all—take it; for your first concern is the salvation of your own soul."

JESUS LIFTED UP.

Looking in another direction, we find the Church confronted by critical skepticism and scientific doubt, which aim to break down the bulwarks of her faith, and raze her walls of salvation to the ground. But while we survey this frowning evil, let us not be unduly alarmed, or make too hasty concessions but be vigilant and wise in meeting it on broad and sound grounds. Holding to the Bible as our sole rule of faith and practice, we must maintain the supremacy of the Bible by placing it in its right position; and that is, that it is a perfectly completed book. The Bible of to-day is the Bible of all the centuries of the Christian era, and will be of all the centuries to come. As it came from Him, it can neither be added to nor taken from without incurring the anathema of its Author. But the science which opposes this Bible is but the science of to-day. It was not the science of the last century; it will not be of the century to come. These sciences, of whatever name, are variable and uncertain. Not one is on a fixed and immovable basis. Not one that may not be altered, or set aside by some new discovery, or by some new generalization. It will be time enough to say whether these sciences

and the Bible do agree when the perfected circle of science shall be placed on the perfected circle of the Holy Scriptures. Then only can we rightly measure each, and when that time comes it will be found that the circumference of science and the circumference of revelation have one and the same periphery, because they have one and the same divine centre, the same one living and true God.

In the apostles' day there were "oppositions of science, falsely so-called." In every age since then the same assaults have been renewed, but the Bible has calmly held on its way. It waits patiently for confirmation as the ages roll on, and each advance of true science does bring it more into accord with revelation. What the clergy have to do is not to attempt to put on Saul's armour and go forth to fight what they would call a Philistine science with something that they have not proved and cannot wield, but to take the smooth stones out of Scripture, and in the name of the uplifted One so hurl them that even giant defiers of the Israel of God shall fall before the simple truth, slung by the humblest shepherd of the flock. This preaching is now, as in Paul's day, to the Jew a stumbling block, and to the Greek foolishness, but it is still what it was then, and what it will ever be—Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. When the apostles preached this uplifted Christ, they did it not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, lest the Cross of Christ should be of none effect, but with that plainness of men fully imbued with the truth which they heralded, and telling it out in the fulness and directness which all will feel who realize that they are bought with a price, even the precious blood of the uplifted Jesus.

CHRISTIAN GIVING.

It is of the nature of, and forms a part of worship. Worship may be defined as including, reverence for God, trust in Him, love toward Him, and consecration of ourselves and all that we have to Him. This worship may either be private and informal between the individual and God alone, or it may be public and formal before the world, and in this aspect, in all ages of the Church's history it ever included the act of giving, it was so under the old dispensation from its first institution. For over and above all the gifts and offerings that were prescribed and fixed by the letter of the Levitical law. It was commanded that, "Three times in the year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose, in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles, and they shall not appear before the Lord empty." "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee," Deut. xvi. 16, 17. Thus the giving was essential to right and acceptable worship. Its withholding vitiated and destroyed the whole act, while its faithful discharge was intimately connected with flourishing piety in the individual soul, and the constant and general keeping of the commandment was ever accompanied with the Divine blessing, and was a sure guarantee of national prosperity. As it was instituted, so it existed and continued to be recognized and practised during the chequered history of the Hebrew monarchy. It survived the captivity, and in the days of our Saviour, the casting into the treasury formed part of the temple worship. The dissolution of the old dispensation and the introduction and establishment of the new did not alter the nature and spirit of true worship in the least. Under the old, the tithes and offerings were distinctly prescribed and enumerated, while the free-will offerings were at the option of the individual as his love or gratitude might prompt him. Under the new, there is no bond but that of love or gratitude laid on any one. It is only "give as the Lord hath prospered you," and lay by you on the first day of the week; and, on that day "forget not the assembling of yourselves together." Hence we see that all true worship is inseparably connected with giving; and conversely, that all right giving is of the nature and essence of true worship.

It should be systematic; not fitful and uncertain

Just as in everything else, if we wish to go on smoothly and prosperously, we must go according to some settled and definite plan. It ought to be looked upon as a part of our life work, and as such be constantly before our minds. We should settle with our own consciences as in the sight of God both the schemes to which we give and the amount of our giving, and then adhere to it as in any other matter of business, and if we set about it in this conscientious and business-like manner, there will be no fear of our withholding altogether, because we have so little to give. For in so giving God will not only bless the gift but bless us in the giving and make it to us a blessed thing to give.

This methodical arrangement of the duty will help to make us cheerful in our giving—and God loves a cheerful giver. If we have no well defined plan of giving, we will seldom find ourselves prepared to give, when we are asked, and when asked in these circumstances the conflict between the sense of duty and inability rightly to discharge it, makes the calls of the collector sources of irritation and dislike to us, so that the spirit in which we give if we give at all, is such as to rob us of all the pleasure connected with our giving, deprives us of all the good that accrues to us from right giving, and leaves us no right to expect God's blessing.

Again, we should be *discriminating* in our giving, and to this end it will have to be *intelligent*. All objects are not alike deserving, and there may be honest differences of opinion as to which is the most needful or the most deserving scheme; but in order to a decision or a judgment there must be information on many points, acquaintance with the condition of the world at large, with the state of our own land and the schemes of our own Church in particular. This can only be acquired by reading and reflection, and having thus informed ourselves and decided as to which of the many we are to give our most earnest support, while at the same time we ought not to withhold entirely from any, we will give with *discrimination*, and thus be enabled to give *prayerfully*, fulfilling the Scripture, "In all things by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God," *praying* that God would bless you in your giving, and more and more enlarge your heart and open your hand, *praying* that His blessing may rest on what you give, *praying* that He would bless the particular object for which you give, and if we thus prayed in our giving, "*Alexander the coppermilk*" would be entirely cast out of all our special givings.

Let us next enquire what would be the results of such giving as we have indicated; these would be twofold, direct and reflex.

It would do away at once with all that vast complicated and cumbrous machinery which has been called into existence for the purpose of raising the funds necessary for carrying on the work of the Church. Let it once be recognized and acted on, that giving is essential to and forms a part of acceptable worship, and there would be a return at once to the scriptural method of laying by in store as the Lord has prospered us, and on the first day of the week we would bear our own offerings and cast them into the treasury of the Lord. Our worship would then be complete, and not shorn of its essence in being divorced from our giving.

Another direct result would be a large increase in the aggregate of our contributions from the very fact that our giving would be systematic and constant and not desultory and fitful, and as a necessary consequence of this increase there would be a rapid extension of the Church itself, not only in building up the waste places in our own land, but by sending the messengers of the cross into the dark places of the earth, and sustaining them while there by our substance and our prayers.

There would be a large increase of large-heartedness on the part of those giving. It would widen the range of our sympathies, strengthen the bonds of fellow-feeling between ourselves and the world at large. It would deepen our convictions of the brotherhood of the whole human race, and thoroughly arouse us to the fact that as sinners, we all stand in the sight of

God on one common ground, and that if we differ from others it is because we are debtors to His grace and not the recipients of our deserts. It would result in a deeper and more fervent piety, a higher standard of spiritual life, a great increase of joy in the service of God, a more rapid and fully developed spiritual growth, a more triumphant entrance into eternal rest.

CARD-PLAYING.

The following is substantially the answer given by a pastor to a young member of his church who had asked him, "Why is it wrong to play cards?"

Opposition to card-playing is, with me, first of all a matter of spiritual instinct. Ever since I knew the Saviour as mine, I have felt that that amusement which more than almost any thing else is the joy and the passion of the worldly and the vicious, the dishonest and the depraved, must of necessity be inconsistent with high spirituality and unfavourable to growth in grace. I have felt that that which Satan uses so largely to ensnare and destroy men must necessarily be bewitching and destructive; and that that which is the bosom-friend and inseparable companion of the grog-shop, the dance-house, the theatre, and the brothel must, of course, have had like parentage and bring forth like progeny.

Card-playing, promiscuous dancing, and theatre-going constitute the trinity which the thoroughly worldly and the wicked worship. Can that professing Christian whose heart worships at the same shrine be filled largely with the Spirit of Christ? Can any man serve two masters? Can the love of the world and the love of the Father dwell in the same heart? If the things named are not "of the world," what is?

I would not assert that none who indulge in card-playing can be Christians. It may not be inconsistent with the existence of grace in the heart; but I feel very sure that it is inconsistent with a high state of spirituality, and that it is in many ways unfavourable to the growth of piety. Some of these will readily occur to you. It is usually engaged in as an evening entertainment, and as such is sure to absorb the time which ought to be given to the duties of the closet. It is both exciting and fascinating, and so tends to unfit the mind for the profitable reading of God's word and for secret prayer. It is likely to beget feelings that are anything but devotional, and so to disqualify the heart for communion with God.

In addition to these personal considerations, it seems to me to be of pernicious tendency as an example to others, especially to the young, many of whom undeniably are being constantly ensnared and destroyed by it. And, to say the least of it, it is a needless, a trifling, and therefore a profane appeal to God's providential decision. For these, and for other reasons, every Christian ought to say of it, as Paul said of eating meat, when his example might lead others into sin, "I will not do it, while the world stands."

I know that what I have written would not have much weight with those who love this amusement. There are none so blind as those who do not wish to see. The heart has much more to do with the formation of our opinions on such subjects than either our reason or our conscience. Many say, "I see nothing wrong in it." Very likely. It is written of another transaction that "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat." Yes, she did; and she thereby "brought death into our world, and all our woe." She saw no harm in it; but the harm was there notwithstanding.

The true antidote to the love of cards, and all other dangerous or doubtful recreations is the love of Christ. Fill the heart with this and it will expel the other, just as certainly as light drives out darkness, or heat banishes cold. All the sophistries and illusions of a world-loving, pleasure-seeking reasoning are easily dissolved and dissipated by the divine, transcendent logic of John and Paul: "We love him because he first loved us;" "The love of Christ constraineth us."

ATTENTION.

No book suffers so much from inattentive, listless readers and hearers as the Bible. The familiar words fall upon the ear, often failing to arrest even a passing attention. How many people in an average congregation hear the Scriptures read in the service on the Lord's day, and could not possibly tell, if asked immediately afterward, what had been read, whether Psalm, Gospel, or Epistle!

The listless attitude of mind, in which many of us indulge in church, is largely responsible for this. An honest Scotchman, when pressed for the reason of his enjoyment of the service, said, "It's so comfortable like, I just puts up my legs and thinks of nothing." May not too many of us have to confess that we too "think of nothing?" Ministers might perhaps do something to win attention to the reading of God's word in the Sabbath services by reading continuously certain portions and commenting wisely upon them, the people following with Bible in hand.

The habit of taking heed how one hears, may, I am sure, be cultivated in children. Visiting some years since in a singularly attractive Christian home, we were invited into the library to join in the Sabbath afternoon Bible-reading, which was customary in the family. There we found the father, mother, and three children, the youngest ten years old. The passage read was the account of Paul's shipwreck. I listened to the familiar story, but was somewhat alarmed when the father proceeded to ask questions as to the details of the narrative, questions which I could not possibly answer because of my careless listening. The young people were eager, interested, and showed that they had learned to give diligent heed to the reading. After a half hour of questions and answers and instructive talk together, hymns and the creed were repeated, and earnest prayer offered. I at least learned one lesson I shall not soon forget. On our return home, the Sabbath afternoon Bible-reading was introduced in our family. Our little people enjoy it, and we find it especially helpful, as it secures attentive listening to the Scripture read.

Let us become first *attentive hearers and readers of God's Word* that we may be also *earnest doers*.

SOLOMON THE PREACHER.

Solomon was a great experimenter on human life. He tried all ways of it. He tried what wealth, what wisdom, what mirth and music, building of houses, planting of vineyards, making of orchards and gardens, could do to make a man happy and keep him so. And he conducted each experiment of this kind upon the largest scale, and carried it to its furthest issue. His position gave him full command of all the means and instruments of human enjoyment, and he exercised that command without limitation or restraint. Whatsoever his eyes desired he kept it not from them; he withheld not his heart from any kind of joy. We are not to imagine that he did all this at the prompting of any higher motive, or for any religious end. He did it as multitudes in lesser spheres and to a more limited extent are doing it—to gratify the devices and desires of his own heart. But he was all the while, though unconsciously, fulfilling a high and benevolent purpose of the Supreme, and when afterwards he was brought to the love and service of God, he was directed to put on record, for the guidance and warning of all after generations, a history of earlier experience. It is in this light, regarding them as written for this purpose, that the opening chapters of the Book of Ecclesiastes are to be read by us.—*Dr. Hanna.*

THE SIN OF WORRY.

There are men in the world who wear a girdle of fret, as trying as any friar's to annoy themselves. They fancy that in such experience is to be found the highest fulfilment of religious duty and the truest expression of this world's probation. Some one has said that they procure their tickets, and then carry their luggage with them wherever they go, while there is provided a proper and capacious receptacle for all encumbrances. Or, what domestic infelicity this spirit

of worry occasions! Mary and Martha are always in confusion—never able to comprehend one another. What business impatience and misunderstandings are inspired by this same contradiction, as it exists in common forms!

The assurance needs to be taken home by every one of us that worry is the deadly foe of the gospel and of common sense. In both the general and the special providences of God, which are revealed to us on every page of the Bible, there are distinct utterances against this tendency, by which we are all plagued. But in addition to these promises, there are positive precepts, which make it most evident that anxiety has in it the very nature of sin, and is the mother of misery. However nervous, depressed, and despairing may be the tone of any one, the Lord leaves him no excuse, for there is God's promise to overbalance all these natural difficulties. In the measure in which the Christian enjoys his privileges, rises above the things that are seen, hides himself in the refuge provided for him, will he be able to voice the confession of Paul and say, "None of these things"—however combined and confederate they may be—"none of these things move me."

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Eternal life is said to consist in the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent. To impart this knowledge is the work of the Spirit. He enables us to see the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ. It is this discovery which produces holiness. By beholding His glory we are transformed into His image, from glory to glory. When Christ was thus revealed to Paul he was instantly converted from a persecutor into a worshipper of the Lord Jesus. And this is the history of every conversion from that day to this. It matters not to the blind that the heavens are flooded with glory, or that the earth is clad with beauty; and it matters not to the spiritually blind that God has clothed Himself in flesh and dwelt among us. But when the Spirit opens our eyes, then the beatific vision breaks in upon the soul with all its transforming power; then we become new creatures in Christ Jesus.—*Dr. Charles Hodge.*

It is said that never since the gloomiest days of Pitt's Administration has England suffered as much as she does now from financial and commercial depression.

Peter McKenzie's advice is good. "If you have a greedy disposition, and the devil comes to you when you are in the act of giving, and tells you, 'You can't afford it,' say to him, 'If you don't keep quiet I'll double it,' and he'll soon give it up."

THE negro emigration from the Southern States has assumed formidable dimensions. Kansas seems to be regarded by the blacks as their Promised Land. The question of setting apart a territory for their use is now discussed, and it may result in something practical. The only sufferers will be the Southern States, which will lose their labouring population.

PHILLIPS BROOKS is right, although he is much belaboured in some quarters. In the Princeton "Review" he wrote "It is the glory of the earliest church that it had for its people no demanded creed of abstract doctrine whatsoever. In the venerable wisdom of the apostolic symbol it believed in Father, Son and Spirit, the One Eternal God. To talk of a creedless Christianity or a creedless church is folly. It is not creeds simply, but bad creeds, or *over-minute creeds*, or *too many creeds*, that are objectionable. The Apostles' creed lays only the great vital truths, those without which Christianity would be a mere vague name, those in their simplest statement before the new disciple, and says 'Dost thou believe in them?'" Every Christian must have a creed, every Christian organization must have a creed. But let them be the simplest possible. Let them deal with *facts* and not with *theories* and *philosophies*. This is that we contend for.

THE
CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, APRIL 10th, 1879.

RELIGIOUS CONVENTIONALISM.

MUCH of the religion of the day is conventional. That is, it is merely a religion of custom and fashion. It is a religion that accepts everything that is generally accepted and does everything that is usually done. It dare not go out of the beaten track. It dare not look at anything except through other people's spectacles.

Now, we will not affirm that this conventional religion is altogether an evil. We have no sympathy with those who despise what is customary, merely because it is customary. In any department of life there is no merit necessarily in trampling on what is fashionable. It is better, if that be possible, to go with the crowd than to run in opposition to it—certainly, it is more easy and more amiable. But the tendency to do this may be carried to excess; and it seems to us that it is carried to excess in these days. Men are too apt to follow blindly in the wake of others. They are not ready enough to find their way for themselves, to think and act for themselves.

This is true in the matter of religious belief. Christian truth is many-sided. It is infinite in its dimensions. It shows a thousand aspects: it reaches out in a thousand directions. And when men look at it—look at it thoughtfully and earnestly—every one almost will discover some peculiarity that does not appear to another. And, so, when it is studied properly, there must result an endless variety of view. But how little of this variety of view is found in the rank and file in our churches! How few are they who use their own eyes! How few are they who realize that they have minds of their own! The fact is, in theology as in politics—as in everything else, indeed—there is too much of slavery to party. A man affiliates himself with a certain school, and practically he binds himself ever after to accept every dictum of that school. There is to him nothing good which that school does not possess. He locks himself up in a club-room, and his world is ever after within its walls. The opinions and sentiments that obtain there are the only ones worth cherishing.

So also is it in the matter of religious work. Our activities are turned into a few conventional channels. And, of course, there are fashions in this as there are in dress. And these fashions are sometimes as evanescent in the one case as in the other. Let some strong man, or better, let some influential clique, introduce some new feature, and let it be what it may be, the multitudes will blindly adopt it. Mr. Moody in his evangelistic services held meetings for Bible-reading, and in his readings he used Bagster's Bible. In three

months Bible-readings were the rage everywhere, and Bagster's Bible was in universal demand. And so is it in everything. Our prayer-meetings run in ruts: the regulation hymns are sung and the regulation remarks are made, one prayer-meeting is a specimen of ten thousand. Our Sunday Schools run in ruts: the same things are done in the same way by the same men forever and ever. Our preaching runs in ruts. There is nothing that bears to any appreciable extent the stamp of individuality and naturalness. It seems as if, in the estimation of most men, the one sin was to be themselves, the one virtue to be somebody else.

The same thing is witnessed in other directions. In the building of places of worship, churches follow in each other's wake to a ruinous extent. Few churches are intelligent enough to find their own work and do it. One church erects a beautiful and expensive building, and in a short time a hundred will attempt the same thing. The question is never asked whether it is proper and right to do it. It is done. And then comes the inevitable struggle to get rid of heavy burdens. Some churches, no doubt, need costly edifices; such edifices help them in their peculiar work. Others do not need them: they are better off without them. Is it not the dictate of common sense, to say nothing of Christian principle, that every church consider its own circumstances and surroundings, and act according to the best and wisest judgment which it can command. No two churches are similarly situated: no two churches, therefore, should seek precisely the same things.

We would say to every individual Christian; we would say to every Society of Christians: Don't be guided in everything you do by any unwritten ecclesiastical book of patterns. Learn this: that God has given you individuality, individuality of character and of obligation. Find your own place, and occupy it as best you can.

LIBERTY OF THOUGHT AND EX-
PRESSION IN THE REALM OF
THEOLOGICAL ENQUIRY.

BY REV. J. R. BLACK, B.A., ST. CATHARINES.

THERE is liberty, ample liberty, in this direction, but not within the Christian Church. Scientists, not content with their broad field in the domain of physics, have gone over into that long considered as belonging exclusively to theologians. And once there they began to discuss about the more sacred things, in the same bold, free spirit which characterized them when engaged with the laws of heat and light and disease. But the liberty which these iconoclasts have taken, and taken largely without a protest from the guardians of theology, seems to be denied those within the pale of the orthodox Churches. It seems to be taken for granted that a young man who has been educated in a

so-called evangelical college, and entered his public ministry through the laying of evangelical hands, shall go on uttering the same views of divine truth and enforcing the same principles taught him in the college, and held by those under whose approbation he began his work.

Now all this arises from a misapprehension that the views of truth which obtained in the college and were held by the brethren in the ministry were *correct* and *so* correct that they are incapable of any modification whatever.

But history teaches us, that in every age new light has been breaking forth from the pages of inspiration. And we should not forget that that which has been may be still, as by this forgetfulness we may be led to conclude that we are the wise ones, and none can advance on our knowledge. And after all what, amid the controversy of the centuries, has been settled, settled beyond reasonable doubt? Very little. It may be expressed in one short sentence: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

Of this there can no longer reasonably be any debate on the part of those who accept the Bible as a revelation from God, and will listen to the voice of history for the past eighteen hundred years. Now, with this truth as a pivotal centre every man should be free to move. And what though in his movements round this grand centre, he be led to doubt such doctrines as formulated by doctors of theology, and doubting them, he go on to discuss them freely. Should he not have liberty to do so? What right has any man or body of men to cry "heretic?" or sitting in solemn conclave pronounce anathemas against him?

THE ONLY STANDARD.

There is a constant tendency to substitute traditionalism in the Church for the Word of God. The story is an old one. First the creed or the gloss is prepared as an interpretation of the Bible; then it is accepted as an equivalent to the Bible; then it comes to take the place of the Bible. The divine standard is crowded out; the human standard takes its place. Those who are carrying on this process are generally unconscious of it, but it is none the less real and dangerous; dangerous alike to the liberty and the life of the Church. Tradition, whether it be an unwritten "old faith of the New England Churches," or a carefully formulated "Westminster Confession," can never become a standard in lieu of the Bible without becoming an obstruction instead of an incentive to intellectual and spiritual growth.

Indeed the very characteristic of the Bible which causes it too often to be denied its place as the sole standard of truth should cause it to be lovingly and reverently preserved. It ought not to be supplanted; it need not be supplemented. The fact that it admits of a variety of interpretation is a reason not against but in favour of its sufficiency. It is said by those who do not regard it as adequate that not only all Evangelical Christians—Baptists and Pædo-Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Calvinists and Arminians—profess to accept the Bible as the Word of God, but that to these may be added many in the Unitarian, the Universalist and the Roman Catholic communions; and that to recognize no other standard of truth than the Bible is to open the door wide to a communion which disregards all distinctions. It might be enough to reply that the

Divine Author of the Bible knew both its character and the capabilities of human nature, that if He had desired He could easily have inspired some prophet or apostle to formulate a more exclusive standard, and that since He has given one which separates men rather by their spirit than by their intellectual opinions it is possible that this is the separation which He desires should be recognized by His Church. But one may easily go farther, and see why this very ambiguity of the Bible makes it a better standard than the creeds which are proposed either to supplant or to supplement it. The Bible may be briefly described as the History of the Life of God in the Soul—of the individual and of the race. It has often been pointed out that it contains no formulated creed; and the omission is significant. What it does contain is the record of spiritual life, of which the creed is only an intellectual analysis.

For example, the Bible contains little or no discussion respecting the origin of sin in the world; but it abounds with portrayals, in every possible form, of the experience of personal humility, contrition and repentance because of personal sin. It contains no discussion respecting the philosophy of the atonement; but every page is luminous with the experience of a joyful trust in a pardoning God, and a peace in Him which passes all understanding. It nowhere states the doctrine of the Trinity—three Persons in one God; but it exhausts language in its utterance of homage, reverence and affection to the Divine Son. It nowhere emulates the pages of the modern theological review in an attempted accurate definition of the nature or limits of future punishment; but it portrays in unequalled eloquence of feeling the awe with which the devout soul looks to a possible meeting with a just and holy God of a soul with sins unforgiven and a heart unchanged. It contains no wise philosophical disquisitions concerning the nature of moral obligation; but there is no book and no literature which compares with it in power to inspire a devout, unselfish, heroic life. In short, it contains very few definitions; very little purely intellectual philosophy; but it portrays, as no other book has ever done, that spiritual experience whose three essential elements are repentance, faith and love; sorrow for and abandonment of sin; trust in a pardoning and healing Saviour, and consecration and allegiance to a holy and loving God.

Account for it as we may, of the fact there can be no question, that the spiritual life which the Bible portrays is to be found equally eminent in men of very different logical qualities and theological opinions. No devout Protestant can question the spiritual life of Fenelon; no devout Catholic will deny the evidences of spiritual life in Robinson. A man may have humility, faith and love in either the Romish or the Protestant communion. Whoever actually possesses this divine life, of which the Bible is the one divine interpreter, is a child of God. Whoever consecrates himself to the direct work of promoting this divine life in other men is a Christian teacher. The essentials of Christianity are in the life, not in the philosophy about the life. They are not the doctrines of original sin, the proper deity of our Lord, the simplicity of moral action; they are personal humility, repentance, faith, trust, love. The foundations of true religion are in experience. And the reason why the Bible is a standard of truth, such as no creed ever was or ever can be, is because it is a divinely inspired disclosure of this divinely inspired life. The intellectual analysis of it is always partial and imperfect. The life itself is alone divine.

Any attempt to supplement the Bible by an authoritative creed, to require either of the church member or of the minister adherence to a human philosophy of this divine life, whether it be afforded by a written or an unwritten tradition, impairs the liberty of the mind by practically saying to it: "Thus far and no farther shalt thou go;" and impairs the spirituality of the Church by diverting its attention from the life to the philosophy, from the essentials of humility, faith and charity, to the non-essentials of intellectual opinion. He who has no sense of sin and therefore no experience of repentance, no consciousness of the presence

of a Divine Saviour and therefore no living trust in Him, no sympathetic realization of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, and therefore no catholic love for the one and no supreme consecration to the other, is not worthy to be inducted into the Christian ministry. He may serve his fellow-men in other spheres; but he does not conform to the Bible standard of truth, which is always a standard of life as well. But he who possesses these elements of an inward and a divine life, and is "apt to teach," will receive at the last a "Well done, good and faithful servant," and the Church of God may safely anticipate on earth the approbation which God will give in heaven.

The foundations of Christian truth are in a living experience; the interpretation of that living experience is the Word of God. We recognize no other standard of truth. We stand where Jesus Christ, and Paul, and Luther, and Robinson stood. We would stand here though we stood alone.

The true safeguard against heresy in pulpit or pew is not in venerable traditions, but in spiritual life. "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."—*The Christian Union*.

Correspondence.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

DEAR SIR,—I am glad that in a recent issue the attention of your readers was directed to the subject of Church Music. It is a patent fact that in many of our churches congregational singing requires much more attention than at present it receives. Whether the congregation does its own singing, or leaves it wholly to the choir—which too often is the case—there is need of more study and training.

Could there not be a column opened in the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT for contributions to this branch of musical art? When there are so many different opinions respecting the style of music best adapted as a vehicle of praise to God, and also, as to the best methods of training our congregations to sing, might not our denominational organ draw attention, from time to time, to much needed improvements in our public service of song? A. F. MCGREGOR.

Listowel, March 25th, 1879.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

SIR,—In looking over the INDEPENDENT of 6th March, I notice the "Christian Guardian" has given inspiration to your pen on the question of ministerial "tramps," and am glad to see your defence of the permanent pastorate from the charge of "scheming."

It is difficult to see what motive a permanent pastor who is in harmony with his people could have for scheming. There are few localities in which there is not plenty of work to do for the Master, to fill up the time profitably of a faithful pastor. His ministrations are well received by his people; the fruit of his labour is manifest in the steady growth of his church; he is at one with his people and they with him; his support, which is forthcoming at the stipulated time, is ample to meet all his wants, and perhaps something besides. The way is thus clear for him to employ his time, and energies in winning souls for Christ: which is the great work of the ministry. Now, if this be true, in regard to the permanent pastorate, whence comes the necessity for scheming?

The truth is, these lessons in scheming "nestle under," and are the fruits of the itineracy system, and are never shown more clearly, perhaps, than when they are put in practice by the student thereof, when he drifts into the fold of denominations holding opposite views.

You shall not be wanting in evidence to open the eyes of the "Guardian" to the fact that these pernicious lessons, which, when put in practice, are so de-

structive to the work of the Church, are the fruits, in some cases at least, of the itineracy, and are not always applied with due regard to truthfulness, as illustrated in a case which recently occurred in this city, to the destruction of a young, but well-organized, and prosperous church. Perhaps, in this case, the pastor thought "his sublime talents entitled him to a higher position," hence, his scheming for new fields of labour, as he is no sooner settled in his work, than he begins to look about him for another charge, without any special preference for any one denomination.

That there are occasional instances, under the permanent pastorate system, where a change is desirable and is sought in an open, frank, and Christian spirit, without doing violence to the Church and the cause of Christ, is not to be denied, but to argue that the system is calculated to foster, or encourage an unsettled condition of mind and heart, to the extent that scheming for a change is resorted to and made a constant study, to the neglect of the all-important work of looking after the spiritual wants of the flock over which he is chosen as pastor and shepherd, is at variance with all observation and experience.

Happily, for the good of the Church, this scheming for position, is seldom so unmistakably developed as in the case above referred to, and this minister received his training under the itineracy system, and had had no experience in "our ways which be in Christ,"—hence, in slumber be careful that we do not underestimate the amount of local disruption produced by the sudden and frequent change of pastors."

W. E. WELDING.

Brantford, 11th March, 1879.

Religious News.

THE Union church, Providence, R. I., Dr. A. J. F. Behrens, pastor, has a membership of 663.

THERE are now 350 churches in Burma, and most of the work—nearly all, indeed—is done by native teachers.

IN Boston it is estimated there are eight miles frontage of grog-shops; in New York city thirty miles.

DR. CUYLER'S church, Lafayette Avenue, Presbyterian, Brooklyn, N.Y., has 1,681 members.

PARK STREET CHURCH, Boston, under the pastorate of Dr. J. L. Withrow, raised for all purposes last year \$32,000.

THE English language will be the medium of instruction at the Syrian Protestant College at Beirut after next September.

THE Russian Synod of the Greek church is preparing for missionary work in Japan, and the work is to be carried on on a large scale.

TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD CHURCH, London, is again pastorless. Rev. T. Nicholson has just resigned after a short ministry.

THE Year Book for 1868 says that American Baptists average an annual contribution of not quite twenty-five cents each to all religious work.

BOSTON is about to lose one of its most prominent preachers, Dr. George C. Lorimer, of Tremont Temple Baptist church. He is going to Chicago.

A tablet to the memory of the late Rev. George Gilfillan has been placed in the School Wynd church, Dundee, of which he was pastor.

MR. RASSAM has discovered a cylinder of Sennacherib dated B. C. 700. It will probably help to decide the exact year of Sennacherib's expedition against Hezekiah.

THE International Sunday School lessons for 1880 comprise lessons in Matthew for the first six months, and in Genesis for the remainder of the year.

THE London "Christian" states the deplorable fact that 1,885 of the 5,241 shares of a recently registered brewing company at Carlisle, are held by clergymen.

DR. HOWARD CROSBY of New York has been appointed Lyman Beecher lecturer in Yale Theological Seminary for next year, and it is understood that he accepts the appointment.

UP to February 1, the total sales in the United States of Moody and Sankey's Gospel Hymns, Nos. 1, 2, and 3, were 6,392,460 copies, of which 4,713,873 were of No. 1. Nearly 7,000,000 of No. 1 have been sold in England.

THE American Presbyterian Board of Home Missions was in debt to the amount of \$90,000 on the 1st of February, and it needs \$45,000 more before the end of its fiscal year. The secretaries make a special appeal for contributions.

"A SMOKER" suggests in the "Central Presbyterian" that 20,000 of the 30,000 members of the Southern Presbyterian Church who use at least twenty dollars worth of tobacco annually, resolve to spend only half as much, and dedicate the other half, which would amount to \$200,000, to the benevolent work of their Church. Will they?

The Sunday School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XVI.

April 20 } QUEEN ESTHER. { Esth. iv
1879. } 10-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass."—Isa. xxxvii. 5.

HOME STUDIES.

- M. Esth. i. 1-22 Vasthi divorced.
T. Esth. ii. 1-23..... Esther made queen.
W. Esth. iii. 1-15..... Haman's plot.
Th. Esth. iv. 1-17. Esther's resolve.
F. Esth. 5, 6..... The king's favor.
S. Esth. 7, 8..... The plot defeated.
S. Esth. 9, 10..... The days of Purim.

HELPS TO STUDY.

A beautiful and romantic story is that of Queen Esther. To understand our lesson we must take a brief glance at the events which preceded it. The story begins in the third year (483 B.C.) of Ahasuerus or Xerxes. At a great feast, which he gave just before he set forth on his disastrous expedition into Greece, and which was kept up with great splendour and prodigality for 180 days, when "his heart was merry with wine," he sent for the queen, Vasthi, that he might show her beauty to the princes and nobles. This was so thoroughly contrary to all ideas of propriety in a land where women are kept exclusively guarded in the harem, that the queen refused to come, and was consequently deposed and disgraced.

Four years afterwards, upon the return of the king from Greece, Esther ("Star of Venus," a Persian name) was chosen from a number of fair maidens to be queen. She was a Jewess, whose Hebrew name was Hadasa, "myrtle," and who, being an orphan, had been brought up by her cousin Mordecai. Soon afterwards Mordecai discovered a conspiracy against the king and was the means of saving his life.

Another character now appears on the scene. Haman, a courtier and flatterer, became the royal favourite and rose to the highest power. All did him reverence except Mordecai, who, being a Jew, would not do homage to this Amalekite (see Ex. xvii. 14; 1 Sam. xv.) This embittered Haman's life, notwithstanding all his honours. He determined to have revenge, not on Mordecai alone, but on his hated race. He represented to the king the dangerous and disloyal character of this people and framed a royal edict for their destruction. Haman was, however, as superstitious as he was wicked, and cast lots to find a lucky day for this act of extermination, which was at last appointed for the 13th day of the 12th month. A whole year was thus, as many estimate, to intervene. Posts conveyed everywhere tidings of this terrible decree, and all, Persians as well as Jews, were filled with consternation. Mordecai, overwhelmed with grief and clothed in sackcloth and ashes, took his position by the king's gate. He was known by the officials to be a relative of the Queen. They told her of him and his mourning. She, in apparent ignorance of the cause of his trouble, sent him other garments, which he refused to accept. She then sent Hatach, the chief eunuch, to enquire what he meant. Mordecai sent her word of all that had happened and of the evil decree, and besought her no longer to conceal her Jewish birth, but to go in to the King and make intercession for her people. Our lesson begins with the Queen's answer.

I. THE EXCUSE—Vers. 10-12.

The Queen reminds Mordecai of the Persian law. The King was surrounded with mystery, as one lifted up above humanity. None could enter into his presence who was not called, on pain of death, unless the King held out to him the golden sceptre, in token of his favour. Executioners stood at the entrance of the court to put to death all intruders, unless the King interposed to save them. The Queen herself appears to have felt that she was out of favour. She had not been called to come in to him for thirty days, and he may have become indifferent to her.

How different is our king? We know His grace—2 Cor. vii. 9. We are continually called into His presence, and have always "access with confidence," and "boldness to enter in."—Eph. ii. 18; iii. 12; Heb. x. 19.

II. THE REMONSTRANCE—Vers. 13-14.

Mordecai, in reply to the Queen's excuse, makes a second and more urgent appeal. He appeals, first, to her own love of life. She herself was in danger. Could she hope to escape. There were many rivals who would be glad to betray her. No place is secure from God's wrath. Whosoever will save his life shall lose it. He urges, secondly, God's faithfulness. The Jews were His covenant people. From some other quarter He would provide for their enlargement, that is, release from danger and deliverance. The people of God's special care, in whom there centred so many promises, could not be destroyed.

Faith must still trust, where all seems hopeless. The failure of one great agent will not thwart God's plan. Even if we are unfaithful, God's work will go on but we lose the reward. Mordecai appeals, thirdly, to the law of opportuni-

ty—Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? *Every life well-lived is working out a divine plan*, although we cannot know what that plan is, until it in God's providence unfolds itself—Gen. xiv. 7; Ps. lxxv. 6, 7; Isai. xiv. 4, 5; Acts vii. 25. Upon the smallest events the greatest results may depend. Every neglect of opportunity is as really sinful as the commission of evil.

III. THE RESOLVE—Vers. 15-17.

The appeal had its effect. Esther made up her mind to go in to the King. Observe the *spirit* of her resolve. Her dependence is altogether upon God. She realizes the value of sympathy and of united prayer to which our Lord has attached a special blessing—Matt. xviii. 19, 20. The Jews always had prayer with this fasting, so that the mention of the latter implies the first. Our Lord has enjoined prayer and fasting—Matt. xvii. 21. Fasting was in harmony with the chastened and humbled spirit in which they sought God's assistance. The more important our work the more need is there of divine help. There is earnestness in her purpose—so will I go; and recognition of God's will, not desperation, when she adds, and if I perish, I perish—2 Sam. x. 12; Gen. xliii. 14.

With wonderful courage, love of her brethren, and self-sacrifice, Esther resolved to risk her own life to save others. Rom. xvi. 3, 4; and then, with great tact and foresight, she proceeded to carry out her resolve; She will not state her case in open court, lest hostile influences might be aroused. She first wins the King's favour. She then arranges for a banquet, at which she secures Haman's presence. When suddenly challenged he is speechless. He has no time to frame excuses. She identifies herself with her people, and puts her own life, as that which was precious to the King, in the forefront—vers. 16. The King's anger is aroused. Haman suffers on the gallows he erected for Mordecai and the Jews are delivered. God's name does not occur in the book of Esther, but His presence shines throughout it, while it illustrates His providence. Notice four small links in this wonderful chain:—

1. Esther preferred above all the virgins.
2. Mordecai discovering the conspiracy.
3. When Haman casts lots for a lucky day for his scheme, it falls nearly twelve months off, thus giving time for it to be foiled.
4. Most striking of all; whatever Esther's motive for the second postponement of her request (chaps. 5, 8), it was really God directing her; for that very night came the king's discovery of Mordecai's service, and the building of the gallows, and next morning the strange scene of Haman leading Mordecai in state through the city.

EUROPEAN naturalists are investigating the possibility of restocking the Alps with the ibex or wild goat that disappeared about 200 years ago. A few still remain in the Tyrol, and Victor Emmanuel had a flock of about 500 in the Piedmont Mountains, but they will not bear removal.

THE TIDE OF YEARS.

How slowly pass the years! the maiden said;
The tedious years, with lagging tread,
The distant days are full of hopes so sweet;
Why come they with such tardy feet?

How swiftly come the years! the mother said;
With rapid steps they softly tread;
And filled so full with toilings and with cares,
The fleeting years pass unawares.

The years are flying! cries the ancient dame;
We scarcely call them by a name
Before is filled life's chalice to the brim,
And for earth's scenes our eyes grow dim.

Yet calmly looking o'er the changing tide,
Whose ebb and flow has been so wide;
Upon each brilliant crested wave I find
A different hue to cheer the mind

For mirths and pleasures, trials, griefs and fears,
Lie mingled in the tide of years;
And in the shining gold of purest joy
Is found the strength of pain's alloy.

While thus I'm gazing, hoping, fearing, still,
I'll sing, though suffering bitter ill;
And on the ceaseless, restless tide of years
Approach the land where are no tears.

—The Occident.

CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER.

How it ripples across the fields and echoes along the hill side, as musical as distant church bells pealing over the grassy meadows, where brown village darlings are gathering buttercups. There are no sounds so sweet to a mother's ear, except, perhaps, the first lisping of an infant's prayer. Children's laughter! How dull the home is wherein its music has once joyously echoed, but now is heard no more. How still is the house when the little ones are asleep and their pattering feet are silent. How easily the fun of a child bubbles forth. Take even those poor, prematurely aged little ones bred in the gutter, cramped in unhealthy homes, and ill-used, it may be by drunken parents, and you will find the child-nature is not all crushed out of them. They are children still, albeit they look so haggard and wan. Try to

excite their mirthfulness, and ere long a laugh rings out, as wild and free as if there were no such thing as sorrow in the world. Let the little ones laugh, then; too soon, alas! they will find cause to weep. Do not try to silence them, but let their gleefulness ring out a glad some peal, reminding us of the days when we too, could laugh without a sigh.

Children's Corner.

THE SKILFUL SPINNER.

"YOU spin so fine that it is like thread, mamma. How do you do it?"

"I learned when I was a little girl, Lena, and have practised a great deal."

"Are there others that can spin so nicely?"

"Certainly. I know one, who spins such fine threads that many hundreds together are not so large as one fibre of this flax, and you know how many fibres I twist together to make this thread that seems so fine to you."

"She is surely a skilful spinner. Where did she learn to spin?"

"She never learned. As soon as she saw the light of the world, she began to spin, while other little children can do nothing but sleep, drink and cry."

"That is strange. This wonderful spinner must be very rich. How much money she must earn by her beautiful spinning!"

"She earns nothing, and possesses nothing."

"Then she is poor; and yet you have told me that industrious people who learn to do one thing well, are never really poor. Why does she not take what she spins to the store?"

"Because no one will buy it."

"Then she might take it from house to house."

"That she often does, but something bad always happens. The servant always tears the web, and it is so fine it is not very strong."

"That is very bad in the girl."

"Not so bad. We should scold Mary if she allowed her to remain here."

"That is very strange, to tear such a beautiful web when I am not permitted to tear a piece of paper unnecessarily. But why does she not carry her thread to the weaver? He could make it into nice cloth and she could easily sell that."

"The weaver cannot use it, and he drives her out the same as other people."

"Then what does the poor spinner do with her thread?"

"She weaves it herself and we call it the cobweb." Now you know who this skilful spinner is."

A CUNNING DOG.

DOGS sometimes exhibit traits that are human; and we sometimes wonder whether Pythagoras was very far wrong in his theory that the souls of men at their death, and also before their creation, inhabit the bodies of animals.

Certainly, if so, the soul of a certain little black spaniel named "Nig" must originally have belonged to some greedy boy whose indulgent parents fed him upon knick-knacks until he died; for never was there an animal more particular in his tastes with regard to

† The writer is unknown, but he must have been an eye-witness and familiar with Persian customs. The events he narrates took place in the fifty-eight years' interval between the 6th and 7th chapters of Ezra, about forty years after the dedication of the second temple.

food. Many times Nig would go supperless to bed because his little master insisted upon his eating plain bread and butter instead of cake; and he was known to fast an entire day on one occasion, because his breakfast consisted of fried potatoes and beef bones rather than hot rolls, of which he was extravagantly fond.

But little boys learn to get their own way, and little dogs are quite as apt.

After a time Nig concluded that the only sure method of obtaining what he wanted was to eat, or hide away, what was first given him, and then beg for more; and therefore he would carry off the crusts which he found upon his plate, bury them at the foot of the garden and then return, and with wagging tail ask for a doughnut or a cookie, which he seldom failed to receive.

By this and other tricks the spaniel generally managed to secure such food as he best liked; and for a long time, the shrewdness which he exhibited and the hearty laughs which he excited made his master forget how bad were the habits which he was forming. But one day Nig made too great a fuss about the supper which was set before him, and as a punishment, a severe order was issued:

The dog was to eat just what was left from the table, and nothing more. What was good enough for the family must do for him.

That night Nig slept in happy unconsciousness of the new rule; but when morning came and breakfast was over its full import became known to him. For his master had eaten codfish and potato, and codfish and potato was all that was left for Master Nig.

A plate with the fishy food was prepared and placed in Nig's corner, and he was invited to partake. At first he approached with evident hunger and delight, sniffing eagerly at the offered plate; but when his nose told him what it contained his countenance and his tail both fell. He looked at his master in a reproachful manner, and turned sadly away. He was called back and ordered to eat. Slowly he returned, but instead of eating, he carefully pushed every particle of the food from the plate to the floor, crowded it close under the rim of the dish, and again retired to a chair, where he seated himself, looking soberly at the plate and then at his master, as though entering a remonstrance against such a breakfast.

But his master was obdurate and spoke sternly:

"Nig you must eat that fish and potato before you have anything else."

No sooner were the words spoken than the dog leaped from the chair, ran to the door and disappeared.

For two entire days nothing was seen of him, and his master began to fear that the little fellow was lost, when, early upon the morning of the third day, Nig presented himself at the door and began to beg for his breakfast as usual.

Hoping that the dog's hunger had overcome his scruples, the fish and potato was again presented to him. He regarded it for a moment with a sorrowful air, ears and tail drooping low, then turned and quietly walked out of the door without tasting it.

This time he was gone nearly a week, and when at last he returned, his master succumbed. The obnoxious fish and potato were thrown away, and Nig fared sumptuously upon fresh beef and hot rolls.

Since that time the spaniel has eaten only such food as he prefers. Like many children he had fought the battle out and conquered.

AN ARABIAN STORY.

IN the tribe of Neggdeh there was a horse whose fame was spread far and near, and a Bedouin of another tribe, by name Daher, desired extremely to possess it. Having offered in vain for it his camels and his whole wealth, he hit at length upon the following device, by which he hoped to gain the object of his desire. He resolved to stain his face with the juice of an herb, to clothe himself in rags, to tie his legs and neck together so as to appear like a lame beggar.

Thus equipped, he went to Naber, the owner of the horse, who he knew was to pass that way. When he saw Naber approaching on his beautiful steed, he cried in a weak voice:

"I am a poor stranger; for three days I have been unable to move from this spot to seek for food. I am dying; help me, and Heaven will reward you."

The Bedouin kindly offered to take him up on his horse and carry him home; but the rogue replied:

"I cannot rise I have no strength left."

Naber touched with pity, dismounted, led his horse to the spot, and with great difficulty set the seeming beggar on its back.

But no sooner did Daher feel himself in the saddle than he set spurs to the horse and galloped off, calling out as he did so,

"It is I, Daher. I have got the horse, and am off with it." Naber called after him to stop and listen. Certain of not being pursued, he turned and halted at a short distance from Naber who was armed with a spear.

"You have taken my horse," said the latter. "Since Heaven has willed it, I wish you joy of it; but I do conjure you never to tell any one how you obtained it."

"And why not?" said Daher.

"Because," said the noble Arab, "another man might be really ill, and men would fear to help him. You would be the cause of many refusing to perform an act of charity, for fear of being duped as I have been."

Struck with shame at these words, Daher was silent for a moment, then springing from the horse, returned it to the owner embracing him. Naber made him accompany him to his tent, where they spent a few days together, and became fast friends for life.

THE ROSE-BUSHES.

IN front of my father's house, on the bank of a gently flowing river, grow two rose-bushes. They blossomed all the season through. The flowers were very beautiful, but they were all of the same form and the same colour. The pure, pale pink, ever repeating itself from week to week, and from year to year, became wearisome. We longed for a change; not that we disliked the flowers—for nothing could be more lovely, either in the bud or bloom—but we wanted something new.

I learned the art of budding. Having obtained from a neighbour some slips of the finest kind, I succeeded in inoculating them upon our own bushes. The success was great. Five or six varieties might be seen flowering all at one time on a single plant. The process was not much known at that time in the district. Our roses became celebrated, and neighbours came to see and admire them. They were counted a treasure in the family.

When their fame had reached its height a frost occurred, more severe than usual, and both the bushes died. They were natives of a warmer clime, and too tender for our severer seasons. Had the buds been inserted into a hardier stock, our beautiful roses would have survived the winter, and would have been lovely and blooming still. It was a great mistake to risk all our fine flowers on a root that the first severe frost would destroy.

This happened long ago, when I was a boy. I did not then understand the meaning of the parable. I think I know it better now.

LENDING A PAIR OF LEGS.

SOME boys were playing at ball in a pretty, shaded street. Among their number was a lame little fellow, seemingly about twelve years old—a pale sickly-looking child, supported on two crutches, and who evidently found much difficulty in walking, even with such assistance.

The lame boy wished to join the game; for he did not seem to see how much his infirmity would be in his own way, and how much it would hinder the progress of such an active sport as base ball. His companions, good-naturedly enough, tried to persuade him to stand on one side and let another take his place; none of them hinted that he would be in the way; but they all objected for fear he would hurt himself.

"Why, Jimmy," said one at last, "you can't run, you know."

"O, hush!" said another—the tallest boy in the party—"Never mind, I'll run for him, and you count it for him," and he took his place by Jimmy's side prepared to act. If you were like him," he said, aside to the other boys, "you wouldn't like to be told of it all the time."

How many times loving hearts will find a way to lend their powers and members to the aged, the poor, the sick, and the weak.

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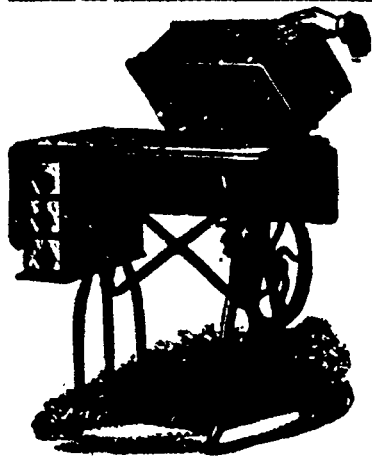
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INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION. (No. 235)
 PHILADELPHIA, 1876.

The United States Centennial Commission has examined the report of the Judges, and accepted the following reasons, and decreed an award in conformity therewith.

PHILADELPHIA, December 5th, 1876.

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