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## CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

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## WORK.

Kindly greetings from many happy hearts have ushered in the year 1864. What its days, weeks, and months may have in store is all unknown. We must wait for the uplifting of the curtain by a Divine hand. There are nevertheless calls to action on our part. Among these we find—Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest. *There is work to be done.* We speak not now of the busy activities of secular occupation, these have only a bearing on the comforts of the present scene, in their own place they are just and proper. Beyond the sphere of meat, drink, and clothing, there is a circle of duties occupying the powers of men, and touching the shores of eternity. Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat that endureth to everlasting life. There is a twofold aspect in which what is to be done may be viewed—that which affects personal improvement and preparation for eternity—and that of serving our generation according to the will of God. We are not about to recommend any attempt to obtain salvation by working out a righteousness of our own. That plan has been tried a thousand times, but always without success. Men and Brethren, what must we do?—What must I do to be saved?—Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Are inquires answered by pointing to the work of Christ. The personal reception of Christ is necessary to salvation. This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. Having received the Lord Jesus we are to walk in him. Hence the many scripture exhortations to diligence, earnestness, faithfulness, and perseverance in the care of our souls. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Is there not a great deal of this work left undone? The call to awake to righteousness comes with peculiar urgency at the opening of another year. Preparation for eternity is the most important work, yet many are careful and troubled about many things, while the one thing needful is neglected. The work to be done for Christ and his cause in the world also demands the consecration of heart, life and means. The poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, the ignorant and the careless are to be sought out and blessed. Sabbath Schools, Bible and Tract work, together with missionary efforts in our own and other lands, call for the hearty and prayerful toil of the friends of the Redeemer.

*The work to be done is placed in favourable circumstances for its accomplishment.* The hand findeth something to do. Before the hand moves, the heart feels awakened desires to do good. Desire for a good work is not mentioned as a disqualification. It came into the heart of Moses to visit his

brethren the children of Israel. The Spirit of God leads the sons of God. Without this drawing towards what is to be done, we fail to see the aptitude of the worker. Where sympathy is wanting, there an essential element of success is left out. Heart must join with hand to achieve any great work. Ability or the possession of means, is the land. Talents are to be employed. What God has given will be required. It is a temptation to view ourselves as unfit when the Lord hath need of us. Opportunity is providence. Finding an open door we are to enter. That may come unexpectedly, as the Good Samaritan right in his path found the half-murdered traveller. Further, cases are to be sought out. Forms of aggressive benevolence should be brought to the birth. A high practical power is the product of true religion.

*All work that is worth doing should be done with spirit.* With thy might, says the wise man. Put the heart into it. This implies an earnestness which will not rest without gaining its object. See how men of the world act. There is startling power in the words of the prize fighter though in a disgraceful cause—I am willing to lose all my money, and to have ten years taken from my life, if so be that I may win the fight. How much of this spirit of determination is seen in the pursuit of eternal life? The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force. Agonize to enter in at the strait gate. A wrong application of power may work serious evils, causing delay and defeat. Take knowledge and wisdom for direction, and call on God for strength.

*The time for working is passing away.* Work while it is called to day, the night cometh when no man can work. The time for action is now. To-morrow is an unknown birth. Work is better done when taken in hand early, than left to the last moment. Let youth consider that man goeth forth to labour in the morning. The working day may be very short. All are hastening to the grave, and there, there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom. In regard to God's work, and the great ends wrought for by the soul of man, nothing can be done there. It is too late to repent, it is too late to do anything for souls. Offers are made to sinners now. Seek the Lord while he may be found. Death puts an end to all probation. As the tree falleth so it lies. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, they rest from their labours and their works do follow them. Going to the grave is not alarming to those who have been about their Father's business, who have finished their work, to them it becomes a bed of peaceful rest. Since every individual's work is to be done in season, let the opening year find all abounding in the work of the Lord.

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## WINTER.

The seasons of the year are highly suggestive. Various references to them are found in the sacred volume. From age to age they have doubtless supplied to multitudes of people, many pleasing and quickening impressions, interesting analogies of thought, and trains of meditation at once gratifying to the mind, and of practical value.

To their influence, poets and other authors, ancient and modern, have yielded their finer faculties, and thereby enriched their associations of thought, feeling and imagination. Thomson's Hymn on the Seasons—so beautiful throughout and in some parts so truly sublime—commences in the following strain :—

"These as they change, Almighty Father, these  
Are but the varied God. *The rolling year*  
*Is full of Thee.*"

So felt the devout and "Sweet Singer of Israel" when he said, "*Thou* renewest the face of the earth:" "*Thou* crownest the year with thy goodness:" "*Thou* hast made summer and winter."

In the *Spring season*, when genial warmth, and vegetable life, and the blossom and the bud, and the songs among the branches, come in upon the human heart with their welcome influences, how important to consider, whether "the day spring from on high" has had a welcome to our spirits, whether the coldness of our moral nature has been removed by the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, whether the joy of God's salvation has begun to gladden our hearts.

In *Summer*, when "the valleys are covered over with corn," when there is "the ear and then the full corn in the ear," how important to consider what growth is advancing in our souls.

"The mind untaught's a waste—when fends and tempests howl:" and the soul, not taught of God, yields not the peaceable fruits of righteousness."

In *Autumn*, when the leaves wither and fall and the fruits of the earth are gathered in, how important to consider that "we all do fade as a leaf," and that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

And, in *Winter*, when the balmy breezes, the beauties and the fragrance of the natural world are far away, and man left all the more to himself, to the world within, how important to indulge sober thought, and to seek, in reliance on the grace of the Lord of all, to cherish those principles which are according to godliness, to cultivate those spiritual tastes of which heaven will be a never-ending gratification, and to indulge those bright prospects which no change in the seasons can materially affect, and which a change of worlds cannot impair.

There are three particular directions of thought to which the idea of winter peculiarly tends to turn the mind, viz:—old age, seasons of adversity, and the state of the unrenewed.

*Old age.* How common to think and speak of old age as the winter of human life.

And now "dread winter spreads his latest glooms  
And reigns tremendous o'er the conquered year:  
How dumb the vegetable kingdom lies!  
How dumb the tuneful!

Behold, fond man!

See here, thy pictured life: pass some few years,  
Thy flow'ry spring, thy summer's ardent strength,  
Thy sober Autumn fading into age,  
And pale concluding winter comes at last,  
And shuts the scene. Ah! whither now are fled  
Those dreams of greatness—those unsolid hopes  
Of happiness—those longings after fame—  
Those restless cares—those busy bustling days—  
Those gay spent festive nights—those veering thoughts  
Lost between good and ill that shared thy life:  
All now are vanished! virtue sole survives,  
Immortal, never failing friend of man,  
His guide to happiness on high."

"Virtue sole survives," says the poet. But is it always so? Alas, not seldom, how sadly different. The old age of some is desolate indeed: friend after friend having drooped and disappeared, till not one friend of youth or

middle age is left. In some cases no loved or loving one, no warm affections are near to cling like ivy to the falling fabric, to cheer the withered heart. And, saddest of all, no spiritual life, no joys from the upper world, no gladdening associations with a bright hereafter. The heart of an aged person in such a state—like a nest left in winter among the leafless branches of an old tree—is cold, dreary, joyless.

But there is an *old age* of a widely different character. *They that trust in Him* who is “the same yesterday, to-day and for ever,” “shall not be desolate.” “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit *in old age*: they shall be fat and flourishing.”

*Seasons of adversity.* That the idea of winter tends to turn the mind in this direction of thought, is evident from the commonness of the expression—“the winter of adversity.” In regard to the winter of adversity there are two considerations in particular, very naturally suggested by this season of the year. The first is this:—that great benefits are derivable from the winter of adversity. We all know that the natural winter, with its storms and frosts and snows, is of great value. As chemical and other sciences have advanced, the importance of winter in relation to the soil, its productions, and the physical constitution of man, has become more fully understood, and more highly appreciated. The better the seasons are understood, the more deeply may it be felt that one of the many appropriate expressions of grateful praise, is that of the Psalmist—“Thou hast made summer and winter.”

And so it is as regards the winter of adversity. Jehovah, seeing the real state of our souls, observing all the tendencies of our nature, knowing perfectly what changes we need to undergo in order to our attainment of the highest good, is pleased in his wisdom and mercy, to employ less or more, as need may be, dispensations which for the present are not joyous but grievous: and any that are in the winter of adversity, should thoughtfully and prayerfully seek to realize the full benefit of the comforting and quickening influence such truths are calculated to exert. In the winter of adversity, consider. Commit thy way unto the Lord, who “stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.” Commit thy way and thyself to the Lord, who is a strong hold in the day of trouble: and speedily the dark clouds will either utterly pass away, or become gilded by the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, in due season to disappear for ever, leaving you for ever to feel, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted.”

The second consideration is this:—that, like the evergreen in the natural winter, true and faithful friendship is peculiarly beautiful in the winter of adversity. And this is part of the moral beauty of the “friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” In Proverbs we read that “a brother is born for adversity:” and how preeminently precious is this truth, as we trace it in the character, the life, the death and the whole mediatorial work of Him who came to befriend humanity in its great adversity, and who, made in the likeness of man, is not ashamed to call his disciples brethren.

Blessed result of the winter of adversity to Christians, when it leads them to more confiding reliance on the fathomless sympathy and unflinching faithfulness of Him who was once “a man of sorrows,” and is ever ready to be the consolation of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble. Blessed its result to wanderers from God, when it leads them to hear his voice who is the sinner’s friend: “a hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest,

as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

*The state of the unrenewed.* The thought of winter in relation to the other seasons, may serve to supply useful considerations to such as mourn their coldness to spiritual realities, their want of spiritual life and fruitfulness, the *wintery state of their souls*. What a striking contrast between winter and spring in the natural world. A person born blind and having his eyes opened in the depth of winter, would be amazed indeed by the great sight above and around him. But when all nature seemed changing in early spring, how peculiar, intense and admiring, would be the feelings of his uplifted heart: and what an idea it would give such an one, of some unseen power or powers producing the great and gladdening change. Now the power by which the face of the earth is annually renewed, is the same almighty power, which in mercy and through the mediatorial interposition of Christ, "the power of God," is quickening souls far and wide among the nations, and ever contributing towards the complete fulfillment of the great promise, "Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the world with fruit."

We feel certain that spring will follow the winter now begun: and this feeling of certainty we may associate in our minds with three particular facts, viz:—that God has thousands of times renewed the face of the earth—that he is able to do so in the future as he has done in the past—and that he has expressly promised to do so "while the earth remaineth." Those in a wintery state of soul, should be encouraged by the analogous truths which will readily occur to the mind. God has in thousands of instances, quickened souls to newness of life. He is able to do so in the future as he has done in the past. Indications of his merciful will in regard to such blessed changes, are clear in Scripture. "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." "Verily I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."

When the soul truly listens to the Saviour, it becomes speedily visited by "the day spring from on high:" and that such may become the blessed experience of such of our readers, as are not yet "renewed in the spirit of their mind," may the Father of mercies grant for the Saviour's sake.

J. E.

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### IS THE WORLD GETTING WORSE?

Millenarians tell us that we are not to expect the progress of right and truth under the present economy. Instead of this, things are to wax worse and worse till the second appearing of Christ, when, under his personal reign on earth, the wilderness and the solitary place shall be made glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. One of the agents of the Upper Canada Bible Society lately, in his address at one of the Branches of the Society, warned the audience not to expect too much from the Word. While he urged upon us to send forth the Bible, we were assured for our encouragement that "*we are going down*," and that this would continue till the second advent. Singularly out of place, thought we, from an agent of the Bible Society.

But Millenarians are not alone in their views respecting the downward tendency of the world. Many others express themselves in a similar strain, and a writer in the *Montreal Witness*, a short time ago, assures us that the

Eastern Townships are certainly in the descending scale. Let us see how a pamphleteer expresses himself in regard to Britain at the present time. "We are not a Christian people. A superficial religiousness holds formal sway, chiefly over the middle classes of this country. But the people *en masse* have come to smile both at religious teachers and the system they represent. These things will scarcely be credited by those who live almost in a religious atmosphere; or if they move among the people at all, go among those only who have been separated from the great bulk of the population, and who cannot therefore be an index to the general condition. \* \* The tendency is to settle down into a hard, dry, unimaginative secularism, pushing aside with impatient gesture every claim that may be urged in favor of religion," &c. These views are sufficiently gloomy. Are they correct? Now it is not denied that there still exists a vast amount of evil in its thousand forms and various degrees, in church and state, in society, and in the individual. Yet is it not fair to ask, when was it otherwise? Can the time be pointed out, or the place shown, since the fall, where evil was not in the ascendant? We can easily point to darker periods than the present, taking them in their fairest aspects. If men now see darkness about them, what would they have said had they lived three centuries ago, or in any former period of the world's history! Indeed, it has been a sort of chronic complaint with certain classes in every age, to berate and abuse their own time. Thus we find some of the old writers speaking of their having fallen on "the dregs of time." When then was the golden period, the happy time, the holy-prosperous state from which we are falling? When was religion more prevalent or purer? When was there more of a missionary spirit, more of civil and religious liberty? Instead of finding any thing to damp his ardor or discourage his effort, the Christian finds much in the present, compared with the past, to cause him to "thank God and take courage." In the progress of civilization—in the advancement of science—in the education of the masses—in the various improvements and inventions of our age—in the emancipation of the negro in America and the serf in Russia—in the openings which God is making for the preaching of the gospel, and in the success which has been vouchsafed to missions at home and abroad—we see the onward march of the Messiah's kingdom. How the dream of the poet and the vision of the seer appear to be more than realized in our day. Kings and prophets desired to see those things which we see, but did not see them; and to hear those things which we hear, but did not hear them. We are not to forget that much remains yet to be done, and Christians should individually hear the voice of the Master, "Son, go *work* in my vineyard." While truth is advancing and the cause of God is gathering strength and going forward, the powers of evil are putting forth all their strength to resist and turn back the assault made upon them. The conflict may be protracted and desperate, but the results are not doubtful. Though evil may be entrenched and appear impregnable, it contains in itself the seeds of dissolution; so that if, like American slavery, it cannot be assailed effectually from without, yet it eventually falls and crumbles by its own weight.

One of the reasons which leads men to believe that the world is getting worse, unless where, as in the case of Millenarians, the exigencies of a system require it, is like the sluggard, to fold the hands in indolence and say it is no use to attempt to do any thing, and to make as little of what others do as possible. Thus it is with many who complain of our degenerate times; the rust of idleness has so accumulated upon them that they can see nothing but their

own corroded surface, and hence imagine all the world to be like themselves. Others, from peculiarity of temperament, are disposed to take the dark side of the picture and are always in the gloom. For these, and for all, nothing is so bracing and cheering as to enter heartily into the work of the gospel in the various spheres they occupy; for, as Cowper says of complainers,

“ Were half the breath thus vainly spent  
To heaven in supplication sent,  
Your cheerful song would oftener be,  
‘ See what the Lord has done for me.’ ”

Let the Christian then learn that his proper position is to be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,—this will raise his hope, strengthen his faith, and encourage his heart; and while he will find that the Lord whom he serves will find a field for all his energies, talents and experience, he will find the prospects before him bright as the promises of God, and that he will have no occasion to say unwisely “ the former times were better than these.”

D. M.

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## Trans-Atlantic Retrospect.

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We are glad to find that the “ exploit ” of the British fleet in Japan—the burning of Kagosima, a town with three times the population of Toronto, suddenly, without warning, and without cause—is calling forth the indignant protest of all who love their religion as well as their country, and do not desire to see the one blasphemed by pretended devotion to the other. The facts have been so fully stated in the papers, that we need not repeat them here. Palliate and excuse it as we may, it will remain a barbarous and horrible transaction, and, unless disavowed by the British Government, and reparation made as fully as possible, will be an indelible stain on the national character. Mr. Cobden has written a letter to the *Times*, earnestly denouncing the act, and calling upon the people to disown it, and refuse to be identified with so great a crime. He says:

“ Now, let me ask you to consider for a moment what is really implied by the destruction, with incendiary shells, without previous warning, of a city of even 100,000 inhabitants. There are always in such towns hundreds of infants at their mothers’ breasts, thousands of children under five years of age, hospitals with their sick, and numbers of aged and infirm tottering on the brink of the grave; there, too, must be women over whom the pangs of maternity are impending, and there will be found homes filled with mourning for the dead which are awaiting the rites of sepulchre. Such is the normal condition of every large city whether in Asia or Europe. Now, picture this great commercial entrepôt, with all its contents, reduced in forty-eight hours to a heap of ashes; try to realise in imagination the fate of its population; and then ask yourself what great crime they had committed to bring on themselves this havoc and destruction? To our shame and confusion, the answer must be that this is the way in which Englishmen, under the command of Admiral Kuper and Col. Neale, administer justice for the murder of an individual 100 miles away, of which crime the inhabitants of Kagosima were as guiltless of all knowledge and complicity as your own neighbours in Rochdale. It is precisely as though an enemy should lay Bristol in ashes because an individual had been murdered on the highway between London and Brentford. And the chief actors in this outrage on humanity, instead of expressing one word of regret or even emotion, coolly lay claim to the approbation of their Government.

"There has been much criticism in this country on the manner in which the civil war has been conducted by the Americans. We have been prompt to condemn a people, over whom we have no control, for acts for which we are in no wise responsible. I remember the indignation with which the Prime Minister denounced General Butler's proclamation, in which he threatened to consign to the calaboose those women who should insult his soldiers in the streets of New Orleans. Will he and his colleagues now make themselves and the country accomplices after the facts in these atrocities of their own agents, who in contemptuous disregard of the instructions of their Government, have brought this heavy disgrace upon the country? I trust not. But, at all events, let us not forget that our moral power in the world is at stake; that if as a people, we condone such crimes as these, when perpetrated in our name by those for whom, under Heaven, we are alone responsible, we shall only invite the scorn of mankind by assuming to sit in judgment, as moral censors, upon the delinquencies of other nations."

Mr. Binney, at the close of his sermon, on the last Sunday morning in November, after having preached from the last two verses in Jonah, spoke at considerable length on the subject, throwing into it all that energy and power of which he is so capable when aroused. His remarks are far too lengthy for insertion here, and we give only the conclusion:

"Such is the history of the burning of Kagosima; a hundred and twenty, some say a hundred and eighty thousand people, without a word of warning, or an opportunity of escape, suddenly find shot and shell falling around them; terrific explosions stultify and terrify, maim and destroy; one half of the city is burnt one day, the other half the next. Multitudes perish. It is impossible for many to be removed at all; it is inevitable that, with all their efforts, others cannot escape. Even those, however, who perish in the ruins of the city, may be envied by the survivors, in their houseless and naked and famishing condition. Looking at the facts as officially set forth, we are warranted to ask if this was what Earl Russell intended to be done; and, being done, if this is to be thought worthy of the high appreciation of her Majesty's Government.

"I am not one who believes in the immorality of all war; it may be at times a terrible necessity. I am not one to advocate our submission to national insults, or that, in cases of violence and wrong, we should not make and enforce our demands for reparation. I should like, however, to know whether the Government thinks that the second day's exploit of Admiral Kuper—when half of the town, steamers and arsenals, junks, and wharfs, had been already destroyed—whether, what he then deliberately did was, in the circumstances stated, the simple carrying out of what was meant by the words, "he will judge whether it will be possible or advisable to shell the residence of the Prince?" I should like to know whether, if the admiral is considered to have exceeded his instructions, he is to be told so; or if the matter is not to be deemed as deserving reproof. If the Government approves and applauds, and expresses its satisfaction, I should like to know if the ground of that is, because nothing was done but what was just and humane and according to the laws of civilised warfare, and that what appears otherwise was all an "accident?" And, finally, I should like to know—admitting the accident—an accident "to six score thousand persons" precipitated upon them "in the twinkling of an eye" flaming fire, devastation, and death,—I should like to know if the English nation is to accord such liberties in the use of language to naval and military men that they shall talk of such accidents in official documents—open to all the world—not only without regret, but with evident exultation, with a satisfaction, and the secret persuasion that they deserve credit, titles, and decorations, the thanks of a grateful country for being the willing and ready agents in bringing about so great a misfortune?

I make no apology for adverting to this subject this morning. I do it as an Englishman concerned for the reputation of his country—as a Christian Englishman who hears of the mitigation of the horrors of war, and is allowed to believe that even in it there can be regard had to the claims of humanity—and

finally, as one interested in the success of missionary efforts, and who desires to promote the preaching of the Gospel in heathen lands. Such occurrences as the one in question may obstruct the progress of Christianity in Japan for a hundred years. Instead of being thought worthy to spread the truth, and welcomed in doing it, these things expose Englishmen to the cutting rebukes of their own Bible, and to the contempt and aversion of the idolatrous 'barbarian.' What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth? 'For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.'

Public meetings have been held, and memorials addressed to the Queen on the subject, and we sincerely hope that the outrage on humanity may be disowned and punished.

The most extraordinary news we have yet received from Madagascar is to the effect that King Radama is still alive!—that, left for dead by the conspirators, he was recovered by his friends, had removed from the Capital, and is now, according to one version, seeking refuge on board a British man-of-war, and according to another, at the head of a body of armed followers, marching on the capital. We should be disposed to regard the whole as fiction, were it not that the *Missionary Magazine* for December gives credence to the report. It says, after alluding to the alarm occasioned by the report of the intended armed intervention of France to enforce the claims of the adventurer, M. Lambert :

"A second and still greater cause of excitement at the Capital was the report that RADAMA II., the late King, was still alive. In connection with this Report it was affirmed that he was making his way to the coast to seek refuge on board a British man-of-war at Tamatave; but other and later statements were circulated to the effect that he was at the head of an armed force marching on the capital. This report is published in the 'South African Advertiser and Mail' of September 30th., in the following terms: 'We learn from private sources, to which we are disposed to give credence, that King Radama is still living in some secret place.' What measure of truth there may be in the different details, we must wait for the arrival of the next Mauritius mail to determine; but it may be assumed, though the whole is at present involved in mystery, that Radama II. was actually alive at the latter end of September. Should he have found a refuge under the flag of Great Britain, we may hope that his dethronement and sufferings (severe as the discipline has been) may work for his improvement, and the future welfare of his country. If the other, he should have advanced on the capital with armed followers, for the tidings of his defeat or success we must wait until the arrival of the next intelligence. In the midst of these fearful uncertainties, the hope of the Christian rests in the assurance that "the Lord reigneth;" and the friends of Missions, in the review of the history of Christianity in Madagascar for the last thirty years, may look forward to the issue without fear."

Apart from these things, there is much that is encouraging in the work. Mr. Ellis says, in his last letter :

"Turning from various disturbing causes in the political state of Madagascar, it is encouraging to observe the steady increase of the Christians. In every department of our labor the blessing of God appears to attend the promulgation of the Gospel of Christ. The congregations in the city, that on the outbreak of the late disturbances were sensibly diminished, have not only regained their former numbers, but have all greatly increased; and what affords greater cause for thankfulness is that this increase is not from persons who had at any former time been associated with the Christians, so much as from among those who have heretofore been indifferent, or devoted to the superstitions of their country. Many of them also are young men and women, and not a few connected with

classes exercising influence over their countrymen, or connected with the families of the nobles of the land. Our largest chapels are all crowded, while at some, numbers stand outside the doors, around the doors and windows, rather than remain away, while accessions are made every month to the number of communicants. At Amparibe, a larger and more substantial building than the former, which would contain 1400 people, is nearly completed; we want also, and hope to obtain, a new chapel in the neighbourhood of Ampamarinana where the martyrs were thrown from the rock."

We earnestly hope that whatever may be the end, politically, of the present suspense, nothing may interfere with the work which is now so successfully carried on.

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LAST HOURS OF ARCHBISHOP WHATELY.—The following is an extract from a letter in the *Christian Observer*:—"His (the Archbishop's) last illness showed his principles; he then spoke plainly. To one who, observing his sufferings, asked him if he suffered much pain, he said, 'Some time ago I should have thought it great pain, but now I am enabled to bear it.' His intellect was unclouded by illness; he could think and speak. Some one said to him, 'You are dying, as you have lived, great to the last.' The reply was, 'I am dying, as I have lived, in the faith of Jesus.' Another said, 'What a blessing that your glorious intellect is unimpaired.'; he answered, 'Do not call intellect glorious; there is nothing glorious out of Christ.' Another said, 'The great fortitude of your character now supports you.' 'No, it is not my fortitude that supports me, but my faith in Christ.' With such a witness on his lips and in his acts, Archbishop Whately passed away."

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AUTHORISED COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE.—The following important announcement appears in the *Guardian*:—"We are happy to see that the objections brought against certain portions of the Bible are about to be met by leading theologians of the Church of England in a very practical way. If a false and unfair system of interpretation has been applied to the text of Scripture, the best way of confuting it is to apply a true and legitimate one. The honour of originating the plan is due to the Speaker of the House of Commons, who consulted several of the bishops on the subject, and the Archbishop of York, at his instance, undertook to organise a plan for producing a commentary which should put the reader in full possession of whatever information may be requisite to enable him to understand the Word of God, and supply him with satisfactory answers to objections resting upon misrepresentation of its contents." The plan has received the sanction of the Primate. A committee, consisting of the Archbishop of York, the Bishops of London, Lichfield, Llandaff, Gloucester and Bristol, Lord Lytton, the Speaker, Mr. Walpole, Drs. Jacobson and Jeremie, takes the general supervision of the work. The Rev. F. C. Cook, preacher at Lincoln's-inn, will be the general editor, and will advise with the Archbishop of York and the Regius Professors of Divinity at Oxford and Cambridge, upon any questions which may arise. The work will be divided into eight sections: the first of which will consist of the Pentateuch, a difficult subject, and will be edited by Professor Harold Browne; the Revs. R. C. Pascoe, T. F. Thrupp, T. E. Espin, and W. Dewhurst, contributing. The historical books will be consigned to the Rev. G. Rawlinson, editor; the Revs. T. E. Espin and Lord Arthur Hervey, contributors. The Rev. F. C. Cook will edit, and the Revs. E. H. Plumtre, W. T. Bullock, and T. Kingsbury will annotate the poetical books. The four Great Prophets will be undertaken by Dr. McCaul as editor, and by the Revs. R. Payne Smith and H. Rose as contributors. The Bishop of St. David's and the Rev. R. Gandell will edit the twelve Minor Prophets, and the Revs. E. Huxtable, W. Drake, and F. Meyrick will contribute. The Gospels and Acts will form the sixth section; the first three Gospels will be edited by Professor Mansel, the Gospel of St. John by the Dean of Canterbury, and the Acts by Dr. Jacobson. The editorship of St. Paul's Epistles is appropriately assigned to Bishop Ellicott and Dr. Jeremie, with

Dr. Gifford, Professor T. Evans, Rev. J. Waite, and Professor J. Lightfoot as contributors. To the Archbishop-elect of Dublin and the Master of Balliol is assigned the rest of the sacred canon. This really promises to be a work second only in importance to the LXX. or the English version made by order of King James. Perhaps it will be quoted "the XXX." The names of the editors, while they ensure orthodoxy, give promise that the comment thus put forth almost with the sanction of the Church of England as a body will not be the utterance of any narrow school or section of it.

REASONS FOR PREFERRING CONGREGATIONALISM TO WESLEYANISM.—At the recognition services of the Rev. W. Whittley, as pastor of the Congregational church, Liskeard, the minister, in giving an account of his personal and religious experiments, said he had been a Wesleyan minister and missionary in the Figi Islands, but found his doctrinal views and notions of church polity becoming so greatly at variance with that denomination, that he joined the Congregationalists. He said:—"I am not only a Dissenter from the Establishment, but also from Wesleyan Methodism, and this because I believe that every year finds the polity of Methodism approximating towards that of the Establishment: the right of the so-called "Legal Hundred" to decide upon all matters of importance, irrespective of the wishes of the lay-members, and of the other ministers of the body, and against which decision there is no appeal; then her district meetings, at which none but those appointed by Conference laws are allowed to attend; and her quarterly meetings, to which only a privileged few are admitted, and over which the superintendent of the circuit presides, and without whose permission nothing can be done; for, should a whole circuit be unanimous in recommending a man for the ministry, no matter how eligible in every sense he may be, no matter how much he may feel it his duty to give himself to the work, that superintendent, as chairman of the quarterly meeting, by refusing to nominate, has it in his power to prevent that man taking any step towards entering the ministry. This, with the setting up of Wesley's works as an indispensable standard of theology, and possessing a code of laws which her President boasts is as stringent as the military, is opposed to the free spirit of English institutions—is subversive of all true nobility of mind, and opposed to the precepts and practice of the Apostles, who followed the example of Christ. I am aware of the benefits which this country, and your county especially, has derived from the labours of men of God connected with the Methodist body. I do not make these statements in a spirit of hostility, but to prevent any misunderstanding, and to vindicate the course I have taken. This has led me to dissent from her views, and to adopt the views held by the Congregationalists, which are most in accordance with my feelings, and, as I think, with Divine revelation. This polity I feel to be more like that of the primitive church in the appointment of pastors and deacons, of the voluntary support of its ministers and institutions, the spirituality of its membership, and that system of self-government which, while it will not allow of the interference of foreign communities or councils, yet by friendly intercourse with such councils seeks advice as to the best way of bringing glory to God. Such, then, are my reasons for dissenting from the Church and Methodism, and seeking among the Congregational Dissenters a place wherein to exercise the gifts God has given me. But be it understood that, while on these grounds separating myself from the polity of the Establishment and of the other Dissenters, and while by God's help I intend to stand most firmly by the principles I have expressed, and will not yield up my right of private judgment to any man, yet I will love all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and will most heartily cooperate with them in attacks on the common foe, so that the time may sooner come when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ."—*English Paper.*

THE REV. J. B. PATON, M.A.—The Rev. J. B. Paton has resigned the pastorate of the Wicker Congregational Church, after having held the office for nine years. The resignation was last night tendered to the church, and was formally accep-

ted. The following resolution was passed:—"The members of this church regret that circumstances have arisen which cause Mr. Paton to resign the pastorate. They have sympathised with him in his affliction, and they pray that the great Head of the Church may restore his health and give him much success in his future career." Mr. Paton has accepted the office of a new institution for the training of ministers at Nottingham.—*Sheffield Independent*.

## Official.

### MISSIONARY MEETINGS: MIDDLE DISTRICT, 1864.

Sunday,	Jan. 17.	Kincardine...	} Messrs. McLean, D. McGregor, and McKinnon. Mr. Sanderson to attend at Osprey, if possible.
Monday,	" 18.	" .....	
Friday,	" 22.	Osprey .....	
Friday,	" 29.	Manilla .....	} Messrs. Marling, Reikie, W. F. Clarke (alternate Wood), and Allworth.
Monday,	" 25.	Markham ...	
Tuesday,	" 26.	Stouffville ...	} Messrs. McLean and D. McGregor, at Stouffville.
"	" 26.	Unionville ...	
Friday,	" 27.	Whitby .....	} Bowmanville: Central Association (East).
Thursday,	" 28.	" .....	
Friday,	" 29.	" .....	} Messrs. Unsworth, Wheeler, & Barker. Mr. Duff to join the deputation at St. Andrew's.
Monday,	" 25.	Pinegrove ....	
Tuesday,	" 26.	St. Andrew's .....	
Wednes.	" 27.	Albion.....	} St. Andrew's.
Thursday,	" 28.	Macville .....	
Friday,	" 29.	South Caledon }	} Mr. Duff.
Sunday,	" 31.	South Caledon :	
"	" 31.	Ospringle and Burtshill :	} Mr. Barker.
"	" 31.	Newmarket :	
Monday,	Feb. 1.	Alton .....	} Messrs. Duff, Unsworth, Barker, and Denny.
Tuesday,	" 2.	Church-hill...	
"	" 2.	Trafalgar :	} Messrs. Clarke, Marling, and R. Hay.
Wednes.	" 3.	" .....	
Thursday,	" 4.	" .....	} Georgetown: Central Association (West).
Sunday,	" 7.	Pinegrove :	
"	" 7.	Trafalgar :	} Mr. R. Hay.
Monday,	" 8.	Newmarket ...	
Tuesday,	" 9.	Bell Ewart ...	} Messrs. Allworth, Duff, and Denny, with the respective Pastors.
Wednes.	" 10.	Oro (1st) .....	
Thursday,	" 11.	Oro (2nd) ...	} Mr. Allworth.
Sunday,	" 14.	Owen Sound :	
Monday,	" 15.	Owen Sound }	} Messrs. Allworth, Duff, and Hooper.
Tuesday,	" 16.	Meaford .....	
Thursday,	" 18.	Toronto :	} Messrs. Denny, Clarke and Marling.
"	"	" .....	

That these meetings may be efficient, two things are especially asked: 1. That due notice of them be given to the public. It is left to the friends in each locality to give that notice in the way that may be thought best. It is hoped that the churches without Pastors will not overlook this. 2. Let the meetings be anticipated and attended with prayer, then shall we have real *missionary* meetings.

It is very desirable that there should be a considerable increase in the collections this year, especially as there has been a decline during the past six years.

In the year 1857, the churches of the Middle District raised the magnificent sum of \$1,400; but in the year 1863, only \$655 31! A trifling additional effort on the part of *each* contributor, would swell the amount even beyond the maximum in 1857.

E. BARKER, *Secretary Middle District.*

P. S.—The Missionary Reports for last year will be forwarded to the several localities so soon as they come to hand.

### THE WESTERN ASSOCIATION.

The Annual Meeting of the above named Association of Congregational Ministers will be held on Tuesday the 9th and Wednesday the 10th of February, in Scotland, C. W.

The following appointments were made at last meeting, viz.,

Rev. Solomon Snider, primary preacher.

Rev. Thomas Lightbody, alternate.

Essay, by Rev. C. P. Watson, on "The obstacles to the progress of Congregationalism, and the best means of surmounting them."

Review, by Rev. A. McGill, "The life of Rev. Greville Ewing."

Plans of Sermons, by Rev. J. Durrant, and Rev. D. McCallum.

Sermon, by Rev. Thomas Pullar.

Exposition, by Rev. Robert Robinson.

Brethren will bear in mind that their services are depended upon for the series of missionary meetings in that region during the same week.

EDWARD EBBS, *Secretary.*

### SPECIAL NOTICE.—FRENCH CANADIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

With a view to accommodate all the friends of this Association, to prevent mistakes, and secure a hearty co-operation, the General Agent wishes those who have not been visited by him, but to whom he can render service, to communicate with him as early as possible. Every application will receive due attention. Address—

REV. JAMES T. BYRNE,

BRADFORD, C. W., Dec. 18, 1863.

WHITBY, C. W.

## Correspondence.

### LETTER FROM A CONSTANT READER.

Mr. Editor.—When you are doing so much gratuitous work for the churches of our denomination, the least your readers should do is to cheer you occasionally with the plaudit you so richly deserve—"well done." The last mail to this place brought me both the *Canadian Independent* and the *Scottish Congregational Magazine*. Not having seen the latter since the Rev. Mr. Spence became its editor, I was curious to see how our own magazine would stand comparison with its older and more favoured friend across the Atlantic. Permit me to say that in my humble opinion the *Independent* suffered nothing by the comparison. Certainly, it has a more respectable coat on, the same number of pages of equal size, and for exactly the same price; and for style, matter, variety, and adaptation, it is not a whit behind. Your last number's

contents are all excellent—"Missionary deputations," is a word fitly spoken. Brother Allworth's address to the students of our College is *all worth* and will be read with profit when he is where negative theology can never enter, where the Lamb that was slain is in the *midst* of the throne and redeeming love the one eternal song. The Trans-Atlantic Retrospect is all good. Mr. Mellor's paper on Christian liberality is invaluable, would that every Christian in the land would read it and pray over it. And with what relish will your young readers peruse the sketch of holy Peden's life. Mrs. Stowe's production is calculated to lead to serious reflection. In a word, it would be hard to find in any religious periodical more valuable matter for the same money. I hope and pray that the free, manly correspondence on the college removal will not prove to be the beginning of strife. We, as a body, are too weak to be divided. Now that the change is virtually made might it not be well to let it have a fair trial; who knows but the hand of God is in the matter. May we be preserved from cliques and party spirit, which are more to be feared than honest differences of opinion.

Wishing you, Mr. Editor, much of the wisdom that is from above, and the Lord's blessing upon your labours of love, with a large increase of subscribers,  
Believe me, sincerely yours,

A CONSTANT READER.

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## News of the Churches.

### BOND STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, TORONTO.

#### DEDICATORY SERVICES.

The services by which the above new sanctuary was dedicated to the worship of God, took place in the order announced in our last. The Farewell services in "the former house," on Richmond Street, were held on Sabbath, Decr. 6th, when the pastor, Revd. F. H. Marling, preached two discourses, looking backwards and forwards respectively, from the texts, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee," and "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." The Lord's Supper followed the morning service, and a crowded and earnest prayer meeting that of the evening. Small, obscure and homely as was the place, and strenuous as had been the endeavours to obtain a better, the church had not worshipped within those walls for nearly fifteen years without collecting a hallowed store of associations which made many sad to depart. "This man and that man" had been "born" again "there." The prayers of the sainted dead had been offered there, and no new temple could be so linked with them. On the following Thursday evening, the first prayer meeting was held in the new school-room, a spacious apartment at the rear of the church, on the same level, 52 feet long, 28 feet wide, and 14 feet high. There was a large attendance, and hearty prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks filled up the hallowed hour. "It was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew nigh."

On Sabbath morning, December 13th, a large congregation assembled for the first of the public Dedication services. These were commenced by the Pastor, who also, in prayer, devoted the new sanctuary to the service of God and the Church. The Rev. O. E. Daggett, D.D., of Canandaigua, New York State, preached from the words: "A place where prayer was wont to be

made," and "How dreadful is this place." It was a discourse most admirably adapted to the occasion, showing wherein a Christian place of worship differed from the Jewish tabernacle or temple, in possessing no exclusive sanctity, and yet that it has a sacredness of its own, derived from its hallowed uses and associations, and therefore should be distinctive, comely, but not gaudy in its architectural style and adornments; that it should be reserved for religious purposes only; and that a reverential deportment should ever be cultivated within it. A chain of touching illustrations won a way for these teachings into every mind and heart; while the finished style, the expressive elocution, and the graceful bearing of the preacher, made a "picture of silver" for the "apple of gold." In the afternoon, the first part of the service was conducted by Rev. Dr. Lillie, and the Rev. A. Topp, A.M., preached to another large congregation from the text: "There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God." After exhibiting the privileges and duties of the church of God's elect, he made a very earnest and brotherly appeal for aid in defraying the cost of the building. In the evening, the church was crowded to repletion, as many, it was said, going away as could get in. Dr. Daggett preached from the text: "Their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges." It was a deeply impressive sermon. Afterwards, some three hundred persons remained to the prayer-meeting, their devotions being led entirely by members of other churches. Altogether, "that Sabbath day was a high day."

On the following Tuesday and Wednesday, the ladies of the church held a Bazaar in the schoolroom, which was well attended and successful. The final result of this second sale will be over \$300, making upwards of \$1,000 contributed by woman's industry and skill to the building fund. "She hath done what she could."

On Sabbath, Decr. 20th, the opening services were continued. In the morning, Rev. Dr. Burns preached, being assisted by Rev. Dr. Wickson in the other parts of the service. In the afternoon, Rev. T. S. Ellerby, assisted by Rev. Dr. Jennings; and in the evening Rev. Dr. Caldicott (Baptist), assisted by Rev. J. Porter. Another large prayer meeting closed the second day.

On Tuesday, December 22nd, the opening Soiree was held. About 300 guests were present, including eleven ministers of various denominations. After tea in the school room, the company gathered in the church to hear addresses, and the pieces of music which were well performed by a select choir, accompanied by the sweet toned organ which has been placed in the church. The pastor took the chair, and, after prayer by the Rev. J. Unsworth, made an address. He referred to the facts that nine months ago he had described, at a similar meeting in the old church, the plans for this building; and, six months ago, laid its corner-stone; while now they were permitted to assemble within its walls, the whole work being efficiently performed. After a few explanations of the provisions made for all the uses of a Christian church, he referred to "the financial situation." The site, building and all its furniture equipments, would cost fully, \$13,000. Of this \$7,000 had been paid, and there were resources of various kinds, including the old church and the opening services, expected to produce \$3,000 more. Of the remaining \$3,000 it was thought that the church might carry the sum of \$2,200 already mortgaged on the property. But for the \$800 still due, Mr. Marling urged that a special effort should be made at once. Something had been promised for this purpose already. The result of the appeal we hope to be able to give

in a future number. The next speaker was Rev. E. Ebbs, whose volunteered presence was greatly appreciated. He assured the audience that there was not a member of the Congregational brotherhood, from east to west, but rejoiced in their joy that day, and he urged on the members of the church increased activity in the work of God. The Rev. J. B. Howard (Wesleyan) and Rev. W. Gregg (Presbyterian) also spoke in a very interesting strain, and Rev. W. McClure (N. C. Methodist) closed with prayer and the benediction. "The feast of the Dedication" was a hallowed and joyous one.

On the following evening the Sabbath school had *their* opening soiree, with a number of other young friends, some 200 in all. Tea, singing, addresses by Rev. W. F. Clarke and J. Baylis, Esq., and the magic lantern, made the evening pass very pleasantly. With the proceeds a new library is to be provided. The scholars have collected over \$60, for furnishing their schoolroom.

Thus closed these "protracted meetings." If, on entering upon their regular work again, the church and pastor receive the blessings which have been so earnestly invoked upon them by all the brethren who have been present, and, doubtless, by many at a distance, they will be blessed indeed.

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#### CONGREGATIONAL SOIREE.—LONDON, C. W.

The annual tea-meeting in the Congregational Church, King Street, took place Dec. 22, and was an unusually pleasant occasion. The Church was filled, and the first table seated at 6.30. The eatables were first-class, and served without confusion in the vestry of the building. After tea was over, the company repaired to the body of the Church. On the platform we observed the Pastor of the Church, Rev. C. P. Watson, in the chair; and seated around him, were the Rev. Mr. Potts, Rev. Mr. Ure, Rev. Mr. Durrant, of Stratford; Rev. Mr. Gilray, Rev. Mr. Spettigue, Rev. Mr. Wood, D. D. Campbell, Esq., Reeve of Listowell, and Wm. Bowman, Esq.

The meeting was opened by a beautiful hymn being sung by the entire congregation.

The Chairman presented kindly greetings to all present and remarked, What a pleasant thing it was to have fellowship with sister churches. While there were many things to make the heart sad in our city, as in every place, there was much in which a Christian or a philanthropist might rejoice. No city had more churches open every Sabbath to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ, in proportion to the number of its inhabitants, than London. No one here can plead want of church accommodation to justify non-attendance on religious instructions. In no part of the world does more kindness or brotherly charity prevail among the ministers of evangelical churches. During the past year there had been an increase in the membership of this church to the number of twenty-one.

We had thought of giving a synopsis of the speeches, but cannot do justice to them in the space left in our columns, as they were of a higher order than is usually heard at a tea meeting. Rev. Messrs. Gilray, Potts, Spettigue, Durrant, Ure, Wood, Wm. Bowman, Esq., and D. D. Campbell, Esq., all made appropriate and interesting addresses. The interval between the speeches was filled up with an occasional piece of music from the choir, under the direction of Mr. William Rowland, sen., accompanied on the melodeon by Miss Rowland. The proceedings were unusually interesting throughout, and the company separated at half-past ten—with the conviction that the evening had been pleasantly and profitably spent. The meeting was one of the best ever held in London.—*London Evening Advertiser*.

## CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, FOREST, C. W.

The friends of the Congregational cause in this place, having been encouraged by the success attending the labours of Mr. J. Douglas, student, deemed it advisable to proceed to the formation of a church. Invitations were therefore sent to Rev. T. Lightbody, of Sarnia, Rev. C. P. Watson, London, and Rev. D. McCallum, Warwick, to give their services for this purpose.

On Friday afternoon, Sept. 18th, a Tea Meeting was held, the proceeds to be applied to supplying the place of worship with pulpit and pews. Very rainy weather and muddy roads caused the company to be much smaller than had been expected. With this exception the meeting was everything that could have been desired. Addresses were delivered by Messrs. Douglas, McCallum, Watson, and Lightbody. In the evening a sermon was preached by Rev. T. Lightbody.

On Saturday morning a very happy meeting of the Sabbath School children took place. Several beautiful hymns were sung, and all present seemed deeply interested in the remarks of the several speakers. Cakes and fruit were afterwards distributed.

Too much praise cannot be given to the devoted superintendent of the school, Mr. McFadden, by whose untiring zeal and generous services so much has been accomplished.

In the afternoon of the same day, after an appropriate sermon by Rev. C. P. Watson, a Church of Christ of the Congregational order was formed, consisting of eight members, formerly belonging to sister and other churches. Seven have since been added by *profession*.

The services on the Lord's Day were as follows: at 10, a.m., addresses to the Sabbath School were given by Messrs. Lightbody and Watson; at 11 a.m., sermon by Bro. Lightbody, after which the Lord's Supper was administered; at 2, p.m., sermon by Bro. Watson. These services were remarkably well attended, the chapel being filled with deeply attentive hearers. Bro. Lightbody preached also in the afternoon and evening at two other stations, and Bro. Watson preached at 7 p.m. in Johnson's school-house. The services of the day were of a very encouraging character, many felt them to be times of refreshing.

On Monday afternoon a sermon to the young was preached by Rev. T. Lightbody, and at 7 p.m. Mr. Watson again preached. The interest in these meetings seemed to be sustained throughout.

During the past summer \$115 were raised towards the support of Mr. Douglas, and about \$12 for the College funds. Do we not see some of the fruits of our missionary efforts at Forest? Bro. J. R. Kean spent two summers at this station, labouring very acceptably. Bro. Douglas has also spent two college vacations here, and so kindly has he been received by the people, and so successful his labours, that, in the opinion of all the ministerial brethren who have visited Forest, the prospect is full of encouragement. Brother D. has had services regularly at six different stations, and at all of them are found several persons who are warmly attached to Congregationalism. The simplicity of the form of our Church government, the purity of communion, and liberality of sentiment, seem to meet with peculiar favour in this district. It is no exaggeration to say that, in this part of the Province at least, no denomination has obtained a precedency over us. But there is no time to be lost. If we do not go in and take possession

others will soon enter in and reap the fruit of our labours. A Church of England missionary has recently been sent to Forest, and a place of worship is about to be erected for his congregation. A Roman Catholic church is also talked of as likely soon to be built. It seems, therefore, very important that the Congregational cause at Forest should be strengthened by receiving, as soon as possible, the services of a pastor. The people have already expressed their strong desire to have Mr. Douglas settled over them at the expiration of the present College session. With a little aid for a short time from our Missionary Society there seems to be no reason why there should not soon be a self-sustained and flourishing Church in and around Forest, C.W. W.

### WEEK OF PRAYER, 1864.

The following circular has been issued by the *Evangelical Alliance*.

PROPOSED WEEK OF SPECIAL PRAYER THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.—  
JANUARY 3-10, 1864

*Christians of all lands are again affectionately invited to observe a Week of Special and United Prayer at the beginning of the New Year.*

For four preceding years the commencement of each has been thus hallowed. In almost every country, in every quarter of the globe, Christians have met to present one offering of thanksgiving to our covenant God, and to plead with Him for blessings both for the Church and for the world.

It is encouraging to know that their prayers have been graciously answered. The Lord has been in the midst of His people gathered together in His name. They who have watched the progress of God's providence, and who have faith to discern His good hand in passing events, cannot fail to acknowledge that, notwithstanding the audacity of infidelity, the past four years have been remarkable for the very blessings sought for in earnest and united prayer. Among these may be named—the power of the Holy Spirit manifest in religious awakening, and revival; the progress of the Gospel in heathen and nominally Christian lands; the emancipation of slaves in many countries; the shaking of Papal and Pagan Powers; the Christian activity that has carried the Gospel to the neglected masses of our great cities; and the triumphs of truth in many places over various forms of error.

Therefore let Christians again plead before God, agreeing on earth as touching the things they should ask, remembering the promise. "It shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

The following topics are suggested as suitable for a prominent place in the exhortations and intercessions of the successive days:—

*Sunday, Jan. 3.*—SERMONS: Subject.—The Work of the Holy Spirit, and our Lord's Words on Agreement in Prayer,

*Monday, Jan. 4.*—PENITENTIAL CONFESSION OF SIN, and the Acknowledgment of Personal, Social, and National Blessings, with Supplication for Divine Mercy through the Atonement of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

*Tuesday, Jan. 5.*—FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE UNGODLY. For the Success of Missions among Jews and Gentiles; and for a Divine Blessing to accompany the Efforts made to Evangelize the Unconverted of all Ranks and Classes round us.

*Wednesday, Jan. 6.*—FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND MINISTRY: For Sunday-schools, and all other Christian Agencies, and for the Increase of Spiritual Life, Activity, and Holiness in all Believers.

*Thursday, Jan. 7.*—FOR THE AFFLICTED AND OPPRESSED. That Slavery may be Abolished, that Persecution may Cease, and that Christian Love may Expand to the Comfort and Relief of the Destitute in all Lands.

*Friday, Jan. 8.*—FOR NATIONS: For Kings, and all who are in Authority—For the Cessation of War—For the Prevalence of Peace, and for the Holy Observance of the Sabbath.

*Saturday, Jan. 9.*—Generally for the Large Outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the Revival and Extension of pure Christianity throughout the World,

*Sunday, Jan. 10.*—SERMONS: Subject.—The Christian Church: its Unity, and the Duty and Desirableness of Manifesting it.

## CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH POLITY.

The Congregational Churches hold in common with the entire church of God all the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, which, derived from the New Testament, have been taught everywhere from the apostolic age, and so denominated catholic, or universal. In them they have fellowship with all the faithful—with “all who in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ their Lord.” On questions of *church polity*, however, they have been compelled, in the exercise of their own judgments upon the language of the New Testament and the records of primitive Christianity, to adopt principles distinctive from those maintained by other ecclesiastical communities; and these are briefly set forth in the following particulars.

I. Congregational church polity is distinguished from all sorts of Prelacy, Roman, Oriental, Anglican, and Wesleyan, by the principle that all Christ’s servants in the ministry of the gospel *are equal in rank*.

The pre-eminence of one servant of our Lord to another appears to be inconsistent with the genius of Christianity; for he has said, “The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you,” Matt. xx. 25, 26. “One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren,” Matt. xxiii. 8. The apostle Peter assumed not this superiority—“the *presbyters* who are among you I exhort, who am also a *presbyter*. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the *oversight* (ἐπιτροπονῶντες discharging the duty of *bishops*) not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind: neither as being *lords* over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock,” 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. The identity of the terms *presbyter* and *bishop* is obvious on the very face of the apostolic writings, the *bishops* being called *presbyters*, and the *presbyters*, *bishops*. In Acts xx. the same persons who, at the 17th verse, are termed elders, or *presbyters*, are in the 28th verse called overseers, or *bishops*. In his epistle to Titus, Paul, after having declared it to have been his design, in leaving the evangelist in Crete, that he should ordain *elders* in every city, at once proceeds to enumerate some of the principal qualifications by which they should be distinguished, and in the midst of the recital he says, “for a *bishop* must be blameless,” &c., Tit. i. 5-7.

As prelatical superiority is unscriptural, so it is found to be *useless*. In those communions where such gradations are acknowledged, peace is not secured by the concession, but rather discord. The evils arising from ambition, pride, and tyranny, the natural fruits of such ascendancy, are far more destructive to the interests of true religion than the differences of opinion which equality produces. Diversity of judgment may be silenced, but cannot be prevented by an appeal to authority.

II. Congregational church polity is distinguished from Episcopacy and Presbyterianism by the principle—that the only organized church it owns is

a particular church or congregation of believers stately meeting in one place. A provincial or national church including many particular churches, and governed by general officers, has no place in the Congregational system. "The plan pursued by the apostles seems to have been," says Archbishop Whately, "to establish a great number of small (in comparison with most modern churches) distinct and independent communities...occasionally conferring with the brethren in other churches, but owning no submission to the rulers of any other church, or to any central common authority, except to the apostles themselves,"\* whose office was extraordinary, and but for a limited time.

This may be confirmed by an appeal to the New Testament. Look to the superscription of the epistle to the church of Corinth. Corinth was in the province of Achaia. In that province there were other churches besides that in the city of Corinth. If, then, a provincial church had existed, the epistle would have been addressed to the church of Achaia. But, in truth, the independence of the church at Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, and but a few miles distant from that city, is distinctly recognised by the apostle, Rom. xvi. 1. He also speaks of "the churches of Galatia," Gal. i. 2: "the churches of God in Judea," 1 Thes. ii. 14; and John speaks of "the seven churches which are in Asia," Rev. i. 11.

Church history fully sustains these interpretations. Mosheim, in his commentaries on the affairs of the Christians, says, "Although all the churches were, in the first age of Christianity, united together in one common bond of faith and love, and were in every respect ready to promote the interests and welfare of each other by a reciprocal interchange of good offices, yet with regard to government and internal economy, every individual church considered itself as an independent community, none of them ever looking in these respects, beyond the circle of its own members for assistance, or recognising any sort of external influence or authority. Neither in the New Testament, nor in any ancient document whatever, do we find anything recorded from whence it might be inferred that any of the minor churches were at all dependent on, or looked up for direction to, those of greater magnitude or consequence: on the contrary, several things occur therein which put it out of all doubt that every one of them enjoyed the same rights, and was considered as being on a footing of the most perfect equality with the rest."† "The passages already alleged sufficiently prove," says Bishop Kay, "that in Tertullian's estimation all the apostolic churches were independent of each other, and equal in rank and authority."‡

Gibbon has truly said, "The (Christian) societies which were instituted in the cities of the Roman empire were united only by the ties of faith and charity. Independence and equality formed the basis of their internal constitution. \* \* \* Every society formed within itself a separate and independent republic; and although the most distant of these little states maintained a mutual as well as friendly intercourse of letters and deputations, the Christian world was not yet connected by any supreme authority or legislative assembly."||

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\* Essays on the Kingdom of Christ, ii. § 20, p. 129.

† Vol. i. cent. i. § 48.

‡ Ecclesiastical History of the Second and Third Centuries, p. 236.

|| Decline and Fall, chap. xv.

III. Congregational church polity is distinguished from the fore-mentioned systems by the principle *that all church power resides in the church itself, and not in the church officers*: and resides in each particular church, directly and originally, by virtue of the expressed or implied compact of its members, and not habitually or by virtue of any authority derived by succession from some higher body, ecclesiastical or clerical.

“Of the design of our Lord to establish what should be emphatically a *social religion*, ‘a fellowship,’ or ‘communion of saints,’ there can be,” says Archbishop Whately, “I think, no doubt in the mind of any reflecting reader of our sacred books. Besides our Lord’s general promise of ‘coming unto, and dwelling in *any man* who should love him and keep his saying,’ there is a distinct promise also of an especial presence in any *assembly*—even if ‘two or three—gathered together in his name.’ Besides the general promises made to prayer—to the prayer of the individual ‘in the closet,’ there is a distinct promise also to ‘those who shall agree together touching something they shall ask.’ And it is in conformity with his own institution that Christians have, ever since, celebrated what they designate as emphatically *the communion*, by meeting together to break bread in commemoration of his redemption of his people. His design, in short, manifestly was to adapt his religion to the *social* principles of man’s nature; and to bind his disciples throughout all ages, to each other by those ties of mutual attachment, sympathy, and co-operation, which, in every human community and association of whatever kind, are found so powerful.”\* The archbishop then proceeds to consider how much is implied in the constituting of a *community*, and what are the inherent properties and universal character naturally and necessarily belonging to any regularly constituted society as such, for whatever purpose formed. And he concludes that it belongs to the very essence of a community that it should have *officers, rulers, and power* of admitting and excluding persons as *members*. These principles of common sense were acted upon by the first churches, under immediate direction of our Lord and his apostles. They elected their officers, Acts vi. 2—6; received their members, Acts ix. 26; Rom. xiv. 1; dealt with offenders, Matt. xviii. 17; Gal. vi. 1; excluded the impenitent, 1 Cor. v. 4, 5; and restored those who repented, 2 Cor. ii. 6—8. Dr. George Campbell therefore truly says, “The different congregations, with their ministers, seemed in a great measure independent of one another. Everything regarding their own procedure in worship, as well as discipline, was settled amongst themselves.” “It appears plainly from the sacred narrative,” says Archbishop Whately, “that though many churches, which the apostles founded, were branches of one *spiritual* brotherhood, of which the Lord Jesus is the heavenly Head—though there was ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism,’ for all of them, yet they *were each a distinct independent community* on earth, united by the common principles on which they were founded, and by their mutual agreement, affection, and respect; but not *having any recognised head on earth, or acknowledging any sovereignty of one of these societies over others*.”

IV. Congregational church polity is distinguished from *strict independency* by the principle of the *communion of churches*.

It has been already shown that the first churches, though independent, were united by the ties of faith and charity. This was seen in their mutual salutations, Rom. xvi. 16; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; 1 Peter v. 13; in their consulta-

\* Essays on the Kingdom of Christ, ii., § 1, p. 54.

tions by delegates or messengers, Acts xv. *pas.* ; 2 Cor. viii. 23, 24 ; Phil. ii. 29 ; by pecuniary contributions, Acts xi. 29, 30 ; 2 Cor. viii. 9 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 1—4 ; and by their letters of commendation, Rom. xvi. 1, 22 ; 2 Cor. iii. 1 ; Col. iv. 10.

The Rev. D. Turner remarks that “every such *particular* church is to be esteemed a part of the *universal* church, or general body of Christians called by that name ; and whether there be a few or many of them at the same time in the world, (if really churches of Christ) they have all the same common Head, faith, laws, powers, privileges ; and therefore, though differing in lesser matters, and not authoritatively subject to one another, *may* and *ought* to hold the communion of saints with each other, as the means of preserving and cherishing the common unity of the universal church—‘keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,’ not only in respect to themselves, but all true Christians throughout the world. Their being formed into distinct communities being only intended for their better edification, and not for the supporting opposite interests and little ecclesiastical factions, as too many imagine.”\*

“Union of churches,” says Mr. Haldane, “is highly important, and must take place, in as far as religion prospers amongst them. If they are guided by the word of God, they will have the same end in view, and consequently must be united. But in order to union in religion being beneficial, it must be *voluntary*. As love is the perfect and only bond by which the members of a single church are connected, this is sufficient for uniting different churches. Love alone can produce useful co-operation amongst them. Considering the relation in which they stand to each other, it is highly important that by mutual good offices they should cultivate brotherly love. This may be done by their giving and receiving advice: by their praying for each other, especially when anything difficult or important occurs ; by their joining to promote the spread of the gospel ; by their sending messengers to one another as we find the apostolic churches did, 2 Cor. viii. 23 ; by their communicating to each other’s necessities, and many things similar. Such correspondence is calculated to have the happiest effects, while it allows the most perfect liberty and independence to each church.”† It is much to be lamented that some churches, actuated by a spirit of ultra-independency, have fallen into a morbid jealousy of their liberty, and by refusing to unite with sister churches have lost these advantages.

Dr. John Owen recommends that “those churches which do walk in express communion, would frequently meet in synods to inquire into the spiritual state of them all, and to give advice for the correction of what is amiss, the due preservation of the purity of worship, the exercise of discipline, but especially of the power, demonstration, and fruit of evangelical obedience.”‡

V. Congregational church polity is distinguished from that novel scheme which *would supersede the pastoral office and a stated ministry*.

It is doubtless true that every Christian man who understands the truth should teach it ; especially that truth which is essentially connected with salvation. Still the sacred writings always distinguish between ministers and the believers in general, *between the pastor and the flock, the teachers and the taught.*” “To all the saints which are at Philippi, with the bishops and

\* Compendium of Social Religion, chap. ii.

† A View of Social Worship, &c., p. 167.

‡ True Nature of a Gospel Church, chap. xi.

deacons," Phil. i. 1. "Let him that is taught communicate to him that teacheth in all good things," Gal. vi. 6. "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel," 1 Cor. ix. 14. "If all were teachers, where were the taught? If all were pastors, where were the flock? If the body were an eye, where were the hearing?" The gifted brethren in the church at Corinth possessed remarkable and miraculous powers, and the apostle Paul has given directions for the exercise of their special and supernatural endowments, 1 Cor. xiv. 31; but these are not possessed in the present day.

"It does not follow," says the learned Neander, "that all the members of the church were destined to the ordinary office of teaching: there is a great distinction between a regular capability of teaching, always under the control of him who possessed it, and an outpouring (like prophecy or the gift of tongues) proceeding from a sudden inspiration, and accompanied with a peculiar and elevated, but transient state of mind. On such transient excitements, care for the maintenance, propagation, and advancement of clear religious knowledge could not be made safely to depend, any more than the defence of the pure and genuine apostolic doctrine against the manifold false tendencies of Jewish or heathen feelings, which had already thus early begun to threaten the true church. Although all Christians must be taught only by one heavenly Guide, yet regard to the weakness of human nature, which is destined to keep the treasures of heaven in earthen vessels, made it requisite that persons should never be wanting in the church who were peculiarly qualified constantly to set strongly before their brethren their relation to the common Guide and Redeemer of all: to impress it on their hearts forcibly; to show them how everything ought to be viewed in connection with this relation; and to warn them against everything which threatened to withdraw them from this fundamental principle of Christian life. Such a capability of expounding pre-supposed a certain cultivation of the intellect, a certain clearness and acuteness of thought, and a certain power of communicating its impressions to others, which, when they were present, and penetrated and animated by the power of the Spirit of God, became the *χάρισμα διδασκαλίας*, the gift of teaching."\* For this reasonable and divine ordinance, the Congregational churches plead; regarding "the maintenance of the Christian ministry in an adequate degree of learning, as one of their special cares, that the cause of the gospel may be both honourably sustained and constantly promoted."

VI. The Congregational church polity is distinguished from the system of the Baptist churches by the principle that believing parents have the right to dedicate their infant children to God in baptism; by the principle that water is to be applied to the person, and not the person to the water; and by the principle of free communion with all who make a credible profession of being Christ's disciples, irrespective of the mode of baptism.

1. God ordained and established the families of the earth, and connected with that economy his truth and worship for two thousand years. The family of Abraham was favoured with a rite of purification, observed not only by the fathers, but performed on their infant sons. Jehovah was "the God of all the families of Israel," and in Christ "all the families of the earth are to be blessed." Wherever the gospel is received by the head of a family, "salvation has come to that house." Thus "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife (who believes), and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the

\* History of the Christian Religion and Church, vol. i. pp. 188, 189.

husband (who believes); else were your children unclean, but now are they holy," 1 Cor. vii. 14. As Jesus saves his people from their sins, so baptism with the element of cleansing is a proper symbol of that spiritual purification, as circumcision was under the patriarchal and Levitical economies. The apostle Peter, therefore, exhorted the inquiring multitude, "Be baptized, every one of you, &c. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off," &c., Acts ii. 38, 39. As if he had said, the reason why you, parents, should be baptized, is because the promise is to you; but the promise is to your children also, and therefore they should be baptized too." Thus Lydia was baptized, and *all her household*. The jailor at Philippi, and *all his*, Acts xvi. 15, 33. Paul baptized *the household* of Stephanas, 1 Cor. i. 16. Justin Martyr, who wrote about forty years after the apostolic age, says, "Several persons amongst us, both men and women, of *sixty or seventy years old*, who were proselyted or made disciples to Christ in or from their infancy, do continue uncorrupt," &c. Now they could not be proselyted or made disciples from their infancy, without being treated as such, that is, baptized. Matt. xxviii. 19. *Sixty or seventy years* from the time of Justin carries us back almost into the middle of the apostolic age, the period at which these aged Christians were so disciplined.

2. Baptism is the introductory ordinance of a religion that is destined to prevail in every part of the world. Hence it must be a rite *universally* practicable—in the Arabian desert, or near the polar circle, as well as in the temperate regions, or in a city abounding with water. It is to be administered to persons of both sexes, in all circumstances, and of all ranks. Hence it must be *readily* performed. "The yoke of Christ is *easy*, and his burden light." The sensitive female, the sickly or the aged convert, will not find it to outrage her delicacy, nor to endanger her health. Such, we conclude, was the primitive baptism. Water was applied to the person; for, under the Mosaic law, all the rites of purification and consecration were so performed. "He sprinkled *with blood*," &c. "Almost all things purged *with blood*," &c. "With *my holy oil* have I anointed him." "I shall be anointed *with fresh oil*." "I will sprinkle clean water upon you," &c. "I indeed baptize *with water*." "Ye shall be baptized *with the Holy Ghost*." How? He fell upon them—was poured forth—shed forth, &c. The multitudes who were baptized by John in the wilderness, and by Peter on the day of Pentecost, did not anticipate the reception of baptism, and were not prepared for it by immersion. The circumstances under which Paul was baptized, Acts ix. 9, 18, 19, when in the house just recovered from blindness, and faint with abstinence and grief, lead us to conclude that water was applied to his person, while those in which the jailor at Philippi was baptized, render it still more certain that the rite was so administered. It was at midnight, and in a prison, just as an earthquake had shaken the edifice, and while his own soul was torn by emotions still more violent. The quantity of the element employed cannot determine the right observance of an ordinance. The Lord's *supper* conveys the idea of a *meal*, yet we take the smallest quantity of bread and wine. Why may not the use of the smallest quantity of water, as the sign of cleansing, be accounted baptism?

3. That man, we maintain, makes a credible profession of discipleship to Christ, who observes all things that are made plain to his mind from the New Testament. This is the case with those who observe baptism in either mode, and therefore, neither should exclude the other from the Lord's table. "He who is accepted of Christ should be accepted of his brethren."—*The Christian's Penny Magazine*.

## REMINISCENCES OF MISSIONARY LABOUR.

In the most pleasant reminiscences of my Bible meeting James B. holds a central place. I think I see him yet as he was wont to sit, with the Bible in his hand, and his eye fixed upon the passage as if he would pierce it through. When very young he had left his native village, some eighty miles away, and came here to learn a trade. His mother came every summer to see her son, and get his wardrobe put in order. Before I became specially acquainted with him, he was married, and a father. His wife had been before their marriage a member of my Bible class. She had early sought and found the Saviour, and in the church of which she was a member was beloved by all. Her education was better than poor men's daughters often get, and she had imbibed a taste for reading. She could sing with skill and feeling. Left, when quite a girl, an orphan and almost friendless, she had conducted herself so as to gain the confidence of all who knew her. May was not pretty, but in her modest intelligence and quiet cheerfulness there was true beauty. A real lady was May, though a factory girl. The girls in the work beside her believed in her, and came to her with all their troubles. "You're weel aff, May," they would say, "you can do anything, and you are so good that everybody likes you." "You can easily be better than me," she would reply, if only you ask *Him* to make you better." She had a large Bible class of girls, who clung to her like sisters, many of whom she was honoured to lead to Jesus. James B. courted and won May for his bride. If their income was small, their wants were few; and with one another they deemed themselves rich. What a bright cheerful little home that of theirs was! There was the chest of drawers—to buy which May, before her marriage, had toiled hard, and I fear eaten many a scanty meal—polished bright as a looking-glass. And then there was the neat book-case, with both their gatherings in it, for James also was a reader. A modest carpet covered "the room" floor, and a few tasteful engravings, mostly scripture subjects, hung around the wall. And then a goodly array of dishes and "scouring things" looked warmly on the visitor from the kitchen wall. There was as much real happiness enjoyed in that home as falls to the lot of most. There was only one drawback to May's happiness. James was not yet a Christian. With *her* chief joy *he* could not sympathise. And he too would have been happier, he thought, had she been only a little less religious. It was a delicate matter for her to speak of to a high-spirited husband; but sometimes on a Sabbath night she would do it, when good naturedly he would reply, "My dear little saint, I know you are right, and I must see about it some day, but meanwhile you have religion enough for both of us." He was not a sceptic, but he had picked up as many sceptical objections as kept him swinging pretty easily, in see-saw fashion, between scepticism and Christ. Partly to please May, and partly to satisfy some suggestions of conscience, he went to church. But then, like many besides, he would say, "O yes, it's easy for ministers to talk; but a poor fellow like me can never expect to be half so good as they tell us to be." The great realities of salvation, death and eternity, he simply ignored.

But a greater preacher—DEATH—came to that pleasant home. A lovely boy, whose coming had shed an unusual brightness over these two young hearts, was smitten with a disease that was emptying many a cradle in the district. James came one night to ask me to call to see the child. "May," he said "wished it." The two, when I went in, looked the picture of intense sorrow. It was the first cloud on their home. The doctor had given the child up. In the agonies of convulsions it was lying on its mother's lap. We prayed together. Before I left, a neighbour, after putting her own children to bed, slept quietly in, to sit up all night with the sorrowful pair. The sequel was just what many young parents have experienced.

"Above the couch we bent and prayed,  
In the half-lighted room,  
As the bright hues of infant life  
Sank slowly into gloom.

“ At last the fluttering pulse stood still,  
The death frost through the clay  
Stole slowly ; and as morn came up,  
Our sweet flower passed away.”

On the funeral day, as the little coffin was carried away, from May's eyes there was a burst of anguish. I observed that James was struggling to beat back his emotions. In the cemetery he seemed unwilling to let the white cord go ; and his hand shook while he held it. He hastily brushed a tear away, and we all stood round in silence till the little grave was filled, and the little mound raised over it. “ I suppose we may go now ? ” in tremulous tones, he said. As we rode back to the city there was no word said until he himself brake the silence with a question addressed to me. “ Do you think God makes any difference between the children of believers and unbelievers when they die ? ” It was easy to see what suggested the question. “ God is love,” I said, “ and in the Father's house are no step-children.” He seemed satisfied, and seeing the bent his thoughts had taken, I said no more.

Next Sabbath morning was cold and snowy. As I passed along to the meeting place a little after seven—the untrodden snow all around, I feared we would have few members out ; but thirty of us met around a blazing fire, and the meeting was unusually warm and pleasant. We had just begun our morning hymn, when unexpectedly, and for the first time, my friend James entered the room. There was a tender, subdued look about him. The subject that morning was the impotent man healed at Bethesda. The idea brought out in conversation was the weary, aching, blighted, sinful heart seeking and finding healing. For the sorrowing father the theme was suitable. The gospel appeared to him in a new light. The observations made that morning by fellow-workmen went deeper than the words of the most eloquent preacher ever had—the arrow of conviction by God's blessing pierced his soul. His wife saw when he returned that there was an unusual seriousness about him, but said nothing. At breakfast he opened his mind to her more fully than he had ever done. “ I see now, May, where I have erred. I have too much neglected the main thing. Oh I wish I were like you ; you have something which cannot be taken from you ; I have nothing but what I may any moment lose.” These words kindled in May's heart the dawn of hope, and earnestly she prayed that that sickness might be unto life. But many weeks passed without bringing him nearer to the rest he sought. Because of its very simplicity he missed the meaning of the gospel message. “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved ” seemed too easy a process for him. Had he been bidden do some great thing, at any cost he would have done it ; but to sit still and believe, in order to salvation, that he could not comprehend. Many an anxious conversation we had together, but seemingly in vain. In a singular way he found peace at last. On a Saturday afternoon he and his wife had gone to plant some flowers on their infant's grave. The spring came early that year, and the afternoon was warm and balmy. The cemetery stands on the brow of a hill which overlooks the city. After decorating the little grave, they sat down on a tombstone to look at the splendid panorama which lay spread before them. *Life and beauty were springing up all around them in the cemetery. But turning away from all the beauty round her, May's eyes filled with tears as she looked at the little mound they had been adorning.* “ You should not weep,” said James quietly, “ Johnny's safe with God.” “ I know that,” was her reply ; “ but Johnny's away, and I have no one left but you, and you are not saved.” As he told me after, that word shook his whole being. “ May,” he said, “ what must I do to be saved ? ” “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,” with intense earnestness she replied. “ In a moment,” he said, “ I saw it all. It was as if a blind man had been suddenly restored to sight. I felt how easy it was to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.” It was to both a happy Saturday night. Like Mary of old, they had found Jesus at the grave. With glad hearts they walked home, through the crowded streets, little said by either. Whilst May was busying herself in preparing supper, James was looking earnestly into that new world opening before him. The evening meal over, “ May,” he said, “ I'll read a chap-

ter, if you'll pray." And so on that Saturday night their family altar was set up on which the fire is burning still.

James soon came to be the soul of our Sabbath morning meeting. A number of his fellow-workmen he induced to attend. I have seldom met with one whose appreciation of the Bible was more intense, or who more consistently adorned its doctrines. Soon the cloud was rolled from that home. Another baby came to brighten it. A little while after its birth I called. James was sitting at the fireside with the baby in his arms and May at his side. Of course I too had to take it in my arms a moment. "We have been somehow speaking a good deal about Johnny to-night, and resolving not to set our hearts so much on this infant as we did on the first. He was an idol, and God took him. And during the last half hour the words of my old favourite Byron have been ringing in my ear :

' Ah, ever thus from childhood's hour,  
I've seen my fondest hopes decay,  
I never reared a tree or flower,  
But 'twas the first to fade away.

' I never nursed a dear gazelle  
To glad me with its soft black eye,  
But when it came to know me well,  
And love me, it was sure to die.' "

But checking himself, he said, "Well, God's will be done."

The Crimean war was past. The towns on the Baltic shore, which during the calamitous war had languished, began again to resound with busy industry. One day a letter came to James B. from an old shopmate, saying that one of the departments of an extensive machine-shop wanted a foreman, and offering him the situation. The offer was a very good one, and after much reflection and prayer it was accepted. Amid our deep regrets at losing him and our warmest wishes he sailed with his family for Sweden. He is now a prosperous man in that foreign land. He was not long there till he established, for the sake of his young countrymen employed in the works and others, a Sabbath morning Bible meeting. And some have learned to love the Bible there who did not care for it at home. He rarely writes home without asking about his "beloved Sabbath morning meeting." May is the honoured centre of a loving Christian circle. The Bible joins together those who are separated by seas and continents.

"One family we dwell in him."

Happy they who can say in the words of the children's hymn,

"Holy Bible, book divine,  
Precious treasure, thou art mine."

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."—*Scottish Cong. Mag.*

## THE OLD LIBRARIAN.

On the last night of the year an old man sat in his room alone. The earth was cold and still as a white corpse laid in its shroud. The moon "looked round her with the heavens all bare." The leafless trees stood out in sharp and stiff relief against the clear and cloudless sky. Within the room the silence was profound; not a sound could be heard louder than the slow breathing of the old man, or the fall of the burning embers in the grate. His head leant upon his hands, as, gazing into the glowing recesses of the fire, he wandered back in memory along the path which he had journeyed since childhood. Hour after hour passed, until the whole world seemed asleep, and he alone awake. At last, the clock from the old church tower slowly beat eleven, and as its echoes died away in the clear air, his attention was attracted by a shadow which slowly shaped itself into the form of a man older and more venerable than himself.

Was he in a dream? It could not be! All was so real and palpable. The venerable stranger with white hair, a long beard, and garments of faded green, ornamented with withered flowers and gatherings from autumn fields and orchards, having a pure white cloak hanging from his shoulders, approached, and gazed into the face of the inhabitant of the lonely and silent chamber. He carried a number of large volumes which he laid on a table, and then stood up and folded his arms as if waiting to be questioned. "Who art thou? and why art thou here?" was asked, with a subdued and trembling voice. "I am," replied the mysterious visitor, with a hollow, death-like sound, like a wintry wind muffled by falling snow, "I am the *Old Year*, and I am sent to you with these volumes in order that you may peruse them." "These volumes! what are they?" "They are the records of thy life which I have been watching every day during my own existence. Here are twelve large volumes, each volume is a month, and it contains several week sections, each section being divided into chapters, which are the records of a single day, itself occupying many pages." "My life! impossible! who has written it? Who *could* have written it?" "One-half of it has been written by an unseen hand, but the other portion by yourself." "That cannot be! I never saw those books before; I never wrote a line in them, stranger." "I am no stranger. If you only look at me attentively, you must recollect how often we have met. You have had to do with me every day and hour for a long time: and whether you knew it or not, intended it or not, recollect it or not, you have, nevertheless, with your own hand, and by a very mysterious process, which I have no time now to explain, written your autobiography." "I! pray let me look into one of the volumes?" "Certainly. Here is one of last month. Turn up any week or day in it, examine it, and prove the truth of what I say." "I confess—yes, it surely is my hand! How wonderful, truly! I was not aware until now that this was possible." "Well then, since you are so far satisfied of this fact, perhaps you would like to take a glance at the contents of the volumes. They are of very little interest to any other person in the wide world; but to yourself I would suppose they must have a greater interest than any history ever written." "Give me, then, one of the volumes." "Which, pray?" "The volume of January last year." "Here it is." "Yet, I remember—no! I would rather another volume. Let it be February—*but—alas!*—" "What mean you?" "The fact is, I feel it very difficult to make a selection. On the whole, I would rather not read any of them when I begin to think of the past." "But, mortal, you *must* read them all! ay, *all*, word for word, line by line, on a coming day, when time shall be no more; consider, therefore, whether it may not be better to read them now." "Wherefore?" "I shall tell thee wherefore by-and-by. In the meantime, *READ!*" said the Old Year, with a stern countenance which pierced the soul of his hearer. "I have no time to argue, for I must depart. Quick!" "Give me, then, any one. I dare not, I cannot, choose for myself." The Old Year selected one volume apparently at random, and presented it to his listener, saying, "Open any of its pages, and I shall explain to thee its meaning." The old man took the volume and opened it. The left side of the page was written with one kind of ink, the right with another. The records of a single hour occupied a page. "Read, consider, question," said the Old Year. "Tell me, then, O Year, what are all these things I see on the pages to the left hand, written with pure bright characters." "These pages always record whatever has been given to thee from on high, day by day, hour by hour. All thy temporal mercies, for example, such as thy food, clothing, home, money, etc. And you will observe several notes below which record how these things were provided, and who laboured and suffered in order to bestow them on thee. Pray read a single page, and see what has been done for thy perishing body." "But I perceive that many of these same mercies are repeated." "Yes, because renewed from day to day." "But I would take a year to read over this record! For I see ten thousand things marked here as given: 'Friends,' 'relatives,' 'deliverance from danger,' 'afflictions,' 'comforts in trial,' 'talents,' 'gifts,' 'opportunities of receiving good,' and of 'doing good,' 'teachings by conscience,' 'advice,' and other things innumerable." "Thou art right. Didst thou not receive all these

things? Were they not given to thee?" "I admit it; but I never thought there were so many things given me by God." "If you look here at the end of each day, you will be amazed at the summing up of God's gifts." "But there are some things I cannot understand in this record. What mean these strange characters?" "They represent things given and done by God in wisdom, mercy, and love, which cannot yet be understood or explained." "And what are those days with such large full pages?" "Holy days, given specially for thy good. In these are recorded also what God said to thee on such days for thy good." "It cannot be! there thou art wrong. Seldom have I cared to hear what he said." "Be it so, but yet He said it, and said it to thee, and here it is, all down!" "And can it be that all which has been done for me and given to me is here?" "All!" "And what is on the other side? It seems to be written by my own hand." "It is so! In those pages thou hast thyself written all which thou hast been and done every day and hour during the past year. Begin and read at the top of any page; read down; turn the leaf, and read on till the day is ended. Learn what thou hast thought of thy God or thy fellow men! Search any day for evidence of the reality of thy love to either! Learn thy character as a responsible being from what thou thyself hast here recorded. Come, read thy life! Remember there are no lies here; no false names given to thy motives or to thine actions; all here is truth. Every falsehood and hypocrisy is here revealed; all that has been done from selfishness, pride, and vanity; every call to duty, and how it was met by thee; all thine inner and outer life; every farthing of thy money spent is noted down, with thy motives for spending it; what use thou didst make of thy time, thy talents, thine influence; every sin of word or deed, all are here! Come, turn up any week-day or Sabbath-day, or any day during the year, and read what thou hast thought, proposed, said, done, or left undone. *Read!*"

The old man grasped the volume. Some chapters he passed rapidly by. But he searched for some days whose records he thought might be most favourable to himself. As he read both pages, his face got pale, his hands trembled. He closed the volume, and said, "I cannot stand this history! It is too true! I never saw it before, or thought of it! Are these the only volumes?" "These! why, there are as many for every year of thy life!" "And where are they?" "All gone, where these must go in a very short time, to be laid up in the Universal Library above; there to remain with those of all other men, until each life is read at last by its own writer in the hearing of the world, and in the light of the Great Judgment." The old man fell on his knees and cried, "Oh, I see nothing, nothing in these volumes but goodness, mercy, wisdom, patience, love—everything on God's part that is worthy of Himself; but on my part!—woe is me!—day by day, week by week! Alas! how dreadful! My life has been wasted on merely selfish ends. I have been rich towards *myself* only, and not toward God, and therefore I have been poor indeed. I have been proud, vain, blind—without God, without Christ in the world. I beseech you, destroy the volumes!" "That is impossible," said the Old Year; "they do not belong to me now. As they are written, even so must they remain, until we meet again. No power could destroy one of thy thoughts or actions." "What can I do? oh, tell me!" The Old Year said, "One half-page remains yet to be written, for it is near midnight; and all that thou hast said, and art now, shall be inscribed in it. But another year is about to come to the world. That New Year has probably received, it may be, twelve volumes, it may be only a single page. Thou wilt thyself fill the allotted space, whether small or great. So live, then, each hour that the page which records it shall narrate the life of a true and a good man." "But, oh! how can I blot out the past?" "That cannot be. But if thou livest the present well, and evidence is afforded in this new book of thy true repentance for the past towards God with real faith in Christ, then those old books will be so marked by the blood of Jesus that they will not cause thy death. Farewell."

The clock struck twelve, and the Old Year vanished. Then lights flashed into the room, and the old man in the chair had vanished also. But a father and

mother approached a little bed, where lay a boy, who had just started from his sleep, to receive a warm kiss and embrace from his beloved parents, and to hear a loving prayer offered by them of "God bless you, darling, and may you have a Good New Year!" The boy returned the embrace with all his heart, but he could not forget his dream, when he thought he was an old man, sitting at the fireside; and so he prayed more sincerely than ever, and said, "I am resolved, God helping me, so to live, that when the books are opened at the end of my life, their pages may not put me to shame, or utterly condemn me, but so that Christ may be able to say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' May God so teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom.—*Norman Macleod, D. D.*

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### SPRING TIME OF THE HEART.

Nine parts out of ten of your griefs are cured the moment you accept with cheerfulness the lot which God has appointed you in this life. Nine hundred and ninety-nine parts out of a thousand of human trouble are only rebellion; and the moment a soul says, 'God, thy will be done,' that moment its trouble is over, and the time of the singing of birds has come to it. . . . Some of God's most heroic soldiers are bedridden ones. Look at that sweet child of eighteen, full of aspiration and hope, to whom has been denied, not loving father, not loving mother, not sisters and more than anxious brothers, but health. She has made weary fight for one year, for two years, for three years, and at last she says. 'If God has planted me to grow as a nightshade here; if I am to be as a flower in the forest, that knows no sun; if it is here that God wants me to show patience and zeal, then I am content with my lot, I accept it, and I will ask and expect nothing more. Let this be my sphere of duty, and let my life be spent on the bed, the couch, the cot, if God wishes it. If sickness be God's will, even so. His will be done, not mine.' The time of the singing of birds has come to such a heart. To such a heart spring has come, and summer is not far off. Such I have seen.—*H. W. Beecher.*

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### SEIZE THE ROPE.

Three years ago a party of five, two gentlemen and three ladies, crossed the Niagara River in a small boat, many miles above the Falls. They were young and light-hearted. They had a merry passage, spent a happy hour on the Canada side, and then embarked for their return. All went well until they neared the centre of the stream. Just then there came down upon them a fierce gale of wind, rushing down the mighty river. The boat shot forward. It was in the mad current. The men plied their oars. They were strong and stalwart; but a power stronger than their's held them within that dark line of swiftly-moving waters.

They left the landing they aimed for behind them. They looked with speechless lips into each others' white faces.—They knew that they were going down the current. The oarsmen strained every muscle. If they could only breast the current for awhile, relief might come. One of the fragile oars snapped. One more hold gone. Never a word was spoken. Death and eternity stared them in the face.—Upon one solitary oar and one single oarsman hung five precious lives. Surely, very surely, they were going down with the dark current.

Two of the five were Christians, and they gave me the joyful assurance that when the first great terror was over, they fell back upon hope and faith, and that to them the near prospect of death was swallowed up in victory.

Suddenly, when the hands of the oarsmen were bleeding and torn, when the signal of distress had long fluttered in vain, and the agitation and alarm had sowed the seeds of death in one fragile frame, a little boat was seen coming cautiously toward them. It turned back. It durst not venture too near. Not a word from the five. They seem very near God and eternity.

Another and stouter craft put off, rapidly at first, then very slowly. It must not come within the power of the infuriated current. One moment passed. No

nearer. A rope was uncoiled. "Seize the rope!" shouted the boat's crew. An eager hand caught it. The stout craft shot rapidly off, and the rescued boat was drawn from the hurrying current.

Sinner, you, too, are drifting swiftly and surely down a subtle current. A noble craft comes to your rescue. A rope is flung out to you. It is Jesus, the great Redeemer. Seize that rope, and escape the destruction which awaits you.

### A PARABLE.

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."—Jer. viii. 20.

It was spring. A little seed lay in the warm ground. In the air above, the birds sang their spring songs. The green grass began to clothe the earth with its spring raiment. It was the time of nature's great revival.

To the little seed God sent messengers. His sun with gentle warmth irradiated it, saying, "Burst into life, little seed, burst into life." His warm rains fell upon its hiding-place, saying, "Burst into life, little seed, burst into life."

"To-morrow," said the seed; "to-morrow."

To-morrow came. And again the warm sun renewed its kindly message, and the spring rain its invitation unto life, and again the seed replied, "to-morrow."

So passed May. Every day brought a new invitation. Every day was marked by new delay.

June came and went. July. The rain no longer fell. The sun still shone, but upon an earth hard and dry by reason of the summer heat.

Then at length the seed awoke from its inaction. "Now," it said, "I will begin to live. Now I will bring forth germ, stalks, leaf, blossom."

But now no rain fell to supply its thirst. No sun tenderly warmed it into life. The life-giving period had passed, and the little seed had died, murmuring sadly, "Too late! too late!"

To you, dear reader, God's invitations come as oft-repeated as the rain drops in the spring showers. Upon your heart the radiance of a Saviour's love shines, inviting to eternal life. To minister, to friend, to Saviour, and to God, your answer is ever the same—"To-morrow, to-morrow."

But it will not be always spring. God's Spirit shall not always strive with man. The heart long shone on by God's love, but never answering it with upspringing life, grows hard and dry. And the soul which often says "To-morrow," at length cries sadly, "Too late! too late!"—*British Messenger*.

### EFFECTS OF FAITH.

If I look into the gospel-glass, my looking is a figure of my faith; for unless I look, I can neither see Christ nor myself. When I look, what do I see? Christ crucified, and God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. My eyes, my soul, are fascinated with wonder and solemn delight. My heart melts, my eyes overflow, my head is as water, while I look on Him whom I have pierced. The burthen of guilt gently unlooses and rolls into his quiet sepulchre, and the peace of God calms all the tumult of my breast. For a season I am so engaged in the contemplation of the heavenly vision, that I have no leisure to consider myself; but at length I catch a glimpse of my own countenance and image. I recognise the same features, but how wonderfully they are changed; what a spirit is lighted up in these faded eyes! Peace is enthroned on the brow so lately wrinkled by care—celestial splendours play upon my temple—all my gaping wounds are healed, and not a scar is left behind. My tattered, filthy rags are exchanged for a robe made white in the blood of the Lamb. Immortal vigour braces every nerve—I tread on air—and Abba Father bursts spontaneously from my loving heart.—*Melville Horne*.

## GROWTH IN KNOWLEDGE.

If I wish to be thoroughly acquainted with the beauties of a palace, I may feel that I need to examine it again and again. At an early period, I made a rough sketch, but the resemblance was extremely imperfect, the proportions were ill taken, and many beauties overlooked. Better informed admirers were satisfied that I saw and could relish the excellencies of the building, while they told me I had much pleasure in reserve from continued observation. I have found it to be so. The palace is by no means altered since I first beheld it; but I have seen it in various states of the weather, in different lights, at different distances, from different quarters. Through the gracious condescension of the prince, I have even been allowed to draw near, and, in common with many others, to measure, though still very imperfectly, the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of it. I do not despise the first rough sketch. Blessed be the master who taught me to draw it. I confess, however, that I seldom compare it with the original, without feeling that it needs some touches of correction or improvement. I see excellent drawings made by others, which I greatly admire, and acknowledge to be superior to my own. These afford me many an important lesson, but still they are not my standard; it is the object itself that is the model to us all. And when any delineation of it, whether by others or myself, is found to vary from the original, there can be no dispute, whether the pattern or the copy requires alteration.—*Greville Ewing.*

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## THOUGHT, OUR DIGNITY.

Man is a reed, and the weakest reed in nature; but then he is a thinking reed. There is no occasion that the whole universe should arm itself for his destruction. A vapour, a drop of water is sufficient to kill him. And yet should the universe crush him, man would still be more noble than that by which he fell; because he would know his fate, while the universe would be insensible of its victory. Thus all our dignity consists in thought. It is hence we are to raise ourselves, and not by the aid of space and duration. Let us study the art of thinking well: this is the foundation of ethics.—*Pascal.*

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## CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES.

Remember that lofty trees grow from diminutive seeds; copious rivers flow from small fountains; slender wires often sustain ponderous weights; injury to the smallest nerves may occasion the most agonizing sensation; the derangement of the least wheel or pivot may render useless the greatest machine of which it is a part; an immense crop of errors may spring from the least root of falsehood; a glorious intellectual light may be kindled by the minutest sparks of truth; and every principle is more diffusive and operative by reason of its intrinsic energy than of its magnitude.—*Dr. Gregory.*

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## STATE OF THE HEATHEN.

What a bleak and barren wilderness, what a dreary solitude does their moral state present to the compassionate eye! Stretch the wings of your contemplation, and pass over them with a momentary but painful survey. From climate to climate not a house of God is presented to our eyes, not a pious family, not a religious example. Listen! no voice of prayer rises on the winds—no notes of praise are wafted to the heavens. Look! no sabbath smiles with peace and mercy on the desolate waste—no dews of Divine grace, no showers of life-giving rain descend on the sterile soil. "The heaven over their head is brass, the earth under their feet is iron."—*Dwight.*