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The Canadian Independent.

"ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVIL CHRIST, AND ALL YE ARE BRETHEREN."

Vol. 29.]

TORONTO, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1880.

[New Series. No. 15

Topics of the Week.

—General Roberts, the hero of Afghanistan, is a staunch teetotaler, and almost every English regiment serving in the Afghan campaign has a Good Templar Lodge attached to it.

—During the sixty-four years of its existence, the American Bible Society has issued 37,408,208 copies of the Holy Scriptures. During the last year, its issues were 1,366,113, of which all but 226,961 were circulated in America. The New Testament has been translated into Japanese, and part of the Old.

—A Sunday school has been opened at Wittember, in the church to whose door Luther affixed his ninety-five theses. At first it had seventy scholars, but it grew so rapidly that it was soon found necessary to use another part of the school. The scholars now number 400, of whom three-fourths are girls. Five of the teachers are men and eight women.

—The marriage of Rev. Auguste Laine, a priest of the church of Rome, to Madame Lopez, in Paris, has afforded M. Loyson (Pere Hyacinthe,) who officiated, an opportunity to comment on the marriage of priests. He remarked that this union marked a great advance as compared with his own marriage in 1870, when he had to obtain in another land the bare legal sanction denied him at home. He denounced the celibacy of the priest-hood, and maintained that marriage no more degraded the priest or rendered him unfit to discharge his religious functions than it unfitted other professional men. He has never known any priest too holy to contract marriage, but he had found many that were unworthy to do so.

—Mr. Joseph Thompson, the African explorer, has returned to his home at Gateaway, Scotland. Mr. Thompson accompanied Mr. Keith Johnston as an assistant in the expedition of the Royal Geographical Society, and on the death of that gentleman assumed command of the party, including 170 blacks, and completed the task appointed. He is an abstainer, and travelled 6,000 miles without needing to be carried once, though often enfeebled by fever. A bottle of brandy was taken by the expedition, lest it might be required as a medicine, and it was brought back unopened.

—The Rev. E. Fawkes, vicar of Woolney, in the compulsory expulsion of a small congregation of Wesleyans, who met for worship in a cottage belonging to himself, has done a very un-Christian and unwise thing. This Guy Fawkes way of "blowing up" Dissent doesn't suit modern taste, and the sooner the few remaining bigots in our National Church are plainly told so by their friends the better. We may as well add a word of warning to a very High Church contemporary, the *Church Times*, which offends in this way habitually. Its columns seem to be freely at the disposal of every rampant bigot, every crazy noodle, who thinks the world is rounded by a shovel hat of Ritualistic cut. For example, in a recent number, we find "A Lay Churchman" writing as follows:—"We should, every man of us, rise to defend our churchyards. Metaphorically speaking, we should line and loophole the churchyard walls, and if necessary die (surely a good place to die in—with open graves behind us) fighting for our just rights, betrayed by the Bishops, Prime Minister, and Lord Chancellor; from all

of whom I feel inclined to say, as Oliver Cromwell said of some one else, 'The Lord deliver me.' —*The Western Mail*.

The formal annexation of Tahiti and the Society Islands to France appears to have given much satisfaction in Paris, where, if one is to believe a somewhat gaudy newspaper, "the emotion over this happy event is indescribable." This annexation does not, it appears, stand alone. Contrary to the express terms of the treaty of 1817, the French have also assumed the protectorate of the Leeward Islands. An I. says a correspondent of the *Times*, "The French have cajoled the people of Raiatea and Tahaa to accept their flag. Other groups will certainly be swallowed up, and this means a check to British commerce and influence in these seas. Probably the French will soon tire of the fever of annexation in this archipelago of islands like Germany, which has washed its hands of Samoa. Most of them could, at any time during the last quarter of a century, have been incorporated in the British Empire. But such possessions, as our experience at Fiji goes to show, do not pay. It is, however, to be hoped that the French Republic, in its new acquisitions in Polynesia, will respect the Protestant Christianity of the native races, and lend no countenance to the mischievous intrigues of Romish priests.

—What will the Evangelicals say? And the High Churchmen? The Rev. C. F. Lowder, vicar of St. Peter's, London Docks, died lately in the Tyrol, where he was taking his holiday. Mr. Lowder, who was a High Churchman of a very pronounced type, has long been known for his firm adherence to a ritual and practices which connected his name with many exciting scenes in the history of Church controversies during the last twenty-five years. He was from 1851—for seven years—vicar of St. Barnabas, Pimlico, under the Hon. and Rev. Robert Lillicoll. He afterwards became curate to the Rev. Breun King, at St. George's-in-the-East, and established a successful mission in Wettable-square. Amongst those who joined him in that work was Mr. Mackenzie. All kinds of institutions were started, having for their object the material and moral good of the people in that neglected neighborhood; and in time the handsome church of St. Peter's was erected. He seems to be better remembered as "Peter Lowder," and was held in high respect by his parishioners. The late Mrs. Felt, the Archbishop's wife, was one of his warmest supporters; as were also many persons of exalted rank. At several Ritualistic churches on Sunday, the congregations were asked to pray for the repose of his soul, and to "remember in their prayers the bereaved congregation, by petitioning that a priest of Catholic views might be sent to fill the vacant cure."

—Exeter Hall having been purchased for the Young Men's Christian Association, at a cost of £25,000, the time-honored structure is now being adapted to suit the requirements of its future occupants, at an additional outlay of something like £15,000. The *Builder* publishes plans showing the alterations now in progress, from which we learn that the whole area will be devoted to the work of the Association, and will comprise a spacious reading-room and library, supper-rooms, and domestic offices. The lower hall will be suitably enlarged, while the

large hall will be so arranged as to secure increased accommodation and facility of egress and access. There will also be added a gymnasium, lecture room, and spacious night and Sunday schools, together with the necessary class rooms. These alterations will occupy some months, but the whole will be well out of hand before the May meeting of 1881.

—The Premier is irrepresible and incorrigible. He reached Chester Station from Mentmore (Lord Rosebery's seat) at about half-past seven, in company with Mrs. Gladstone. Knowing that the Bishop of Chester (Dr. Jacobson) had been unwell, Mr. Gladstone and his wife made their way on foot to the palace to make inquiries, and then Mr. Gladstone started off for the Hawarden Castle, in the bright star-light, just as if he were twenty five instead of seventy. This is not the way in which Prime Ministers moved about in the days of my youth, but then, men of Mr. Gladstone's type are rare. I heard the other day that when he was visiting his brother, Sir Thomas Gladstone, at Fasque, on the last occasion, he was accustomed to go forth upon unconsciously long walks amongst the hills. One day, "towards evening," he walked into a station after a long stretch, and was recognized by the adoring station master. The man invited him into his house for a rest until the train became due, asking him if he could offer him anything. Mr. Gladstone said he would like a bannock and a cup of milk, if he could oblige him. This request was readily complied with, and in due time the train came up, and bore him safely toward Fasque.

—The *Nonconformist* says:—"Those who have been in the habit of sneering at the burials grievance as fanciful will be rather surprised to find how promptly the provisions of the new Act have been had recourse to. There have been during one week, and in different parts of the country, some half-dozen burials under the Act. However much disposed Dissenters may be supposed to be to make the most of their grievances, their bitterest antagonist will hardly charge them with dying prematurely in order to illustrate an Act of Parliament. In due time, we doubt not, even clergymen of strong views will wonder why they have so long resisted this reasonable concession, as to which Bishop Cloughton has written in such suitable terms, and has been honored by the endorsement of Dr. Parker. We observe that the redoubtable Archdeacon Denison proposes there shall be a clerical conference at Leicester in connection with the Church Congress for the purpose of agreeing upon a course of passive resistance in respect to Nonconformist burials, except to prohibit such arrangements on Sunday, Good Friday, or Christmas-day. This is unwise churchmanship. Is the venerable Archdeacon bent on playing into the hands of the Liberation Society? Here is an account of a funeral under the new Act, and how the Clergy are meeting the new law: It was attended with incidents of a very painful character. We give the particulars from the *Birmingham Post* of Monday last: At the beginning of last week a young man named John Parsons, a collier, died from the effects of bruises received in Lord Dudley's Saltwells Colliery. It was decided to bury him in Netherton churchyard, this being the only available spot within the district in which his home was situated.

As the deceased man had been, during his life, a member of the Baptist body, and, as all his relatives belonged to the same religious community, it was thought well that the Rev. W. Millington, the pastor of the chapel at Netherton, should read a service over the grave, under the provisions of the new Act. As, however, the funeral was to take place on Sunday, the family found it necessary to ask permission of the vicar of the parish, the Rev. S. J. Marriott. The Rev. W. Millington accordingly called at the vicarage, and found that the vicar was away from home. He, however, saw the curate, the Rev. E. J. Crowther, and mentioned the desire of the family. At the same time Mr. Millington asked for Mr. Marriott's address that he might ask for the permission. Mr. Crowther replied that he would write to the vicar, and he did so. In due time, Mr. Marriott, who was in Leicester, replied that the service, agreeable to the friends of Parsons, might be read in the churchyard. Arrangements were then made for the interment of the body on Sunday, but on Saturday notice was received that the vicar had withdrawn his consent, and to inquiries the only answer vouchsafed was that the requisite notice of forty-eight hours had not been given. It was pointed out that this could not be done, as much as there was not time between the receipt of the notice of withdrawal of the consent and the day fixed for the burial. The friends and relatives of Parsons took legal advice, and were informed that the consent could not be withdrawn under the circumstances, and so it was determined to proceed with the funeral as though Mr. Marriott had not revoked his promise. Yesterday afternoon, about half-past four, the funeral procession left the Baptist Chapel, Netherton-hall, where Mr. Millington had held a short service, and proceeded to the churchyard. Here four police officers guarded the gates, and allowed no one to pass into the grounds except those connected with the funeral and the reporters. The Rev. E. J. Crowther met the body at the church door, and walked with the procession to the grave. The Church of England service for the dead was then read by him, and the body was lowered into the grave. The moment the benediction was pronounced, Mr. Millington, who was standing at the head of the grave, commenced a service. He was interrupted by Mr. Crowther, who said, "Mr. Millington, I cannot, Mr. Millington, I do not allow you to read any service here." Mr. Millington continued without noticing the interruption, and then the curate interposed, and said, "In the name of the vicar in the name of the vicar, the Bishop, and the Queen, I forbid you to read that service. You will hear of this again." Mr. Millington still continuing, Mr. Crowther retired; but as he passed the father and mother of the deceased, he exclaimed, "It is no use; you should have given proper notice." Mr. Parsons replied that it could not be done, and then the curate went into the church, and Mr. Millington concluded a brief service. In the course of this he prayed that all the clogs on religious freedom might be speedily swept away, and that a more generous spirit might prevail in religion than had been shown that day. The assemblage then dispersed. Notwithstanding the heavy rain during the whole of the afternoon, some 200 persons hung about the churchyard.

INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSON.— Sunday Oct. 10.

JACOB AND ESAU—Gen 27:22-40

GOLDEN TEXT "Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil"—Isa 40:31

To be learned—Verses 22-40. Time—1770 B. C.

INTRODUCTION AND CONNECTION.

Again we pass over a period of some twenty-five years of which we are told nothing of the history of Isaac and his family, until the morning of the day in which the events of our present lesson transpired. Isaac, who was old and suffering from enfeebled sight, supposing his end near, felt within him the prophetic impulse to bless his sons preparatory to his own decease; and accordingly he called his eldest and favorite son, Esau, and bade him procure some venison, and prepare for him some food of which he was particularly fond, and in the preparation of which he knew Esau to be skilled, in order that, having eaten of it, he might give him his final blessing. Rebekah heard the order, and covering the blessing for her favorite son, Jacob, who had already purchased (ch 25:28-34) the birthright from his brother, she sent him to the herd for a kid, which she herself prepared in a way to suit her husband's taste, disguised her son, and sent him in, to procure his father's blessing by falsehood and deceit, as he had already, (ch 25:28-34) by cruelly taking advantage of his brother's hunger, secured the birthright. In this transaction the character of Rebekah appears in the most unfavorable light; and Jacob, who yielded readily to her suggestion, showed himself not only eager for the accomplishment of her purpose but very unscrupulous in regard to the means by which it was attained.

LESSON NOTES.

(22) And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father, etc. Isaac was at first surprised (v. 18) at the shortness of the time that had been taken in securing and preparing the food; and when questioned by his father, Jacob not only boldly declared that he was really Esau, but that the reason of his speedy return was that the Lord had brought the animal to him (v. 20.) Such barefaced falsehood, in which Jacob even had the hardihood to mix up the name of God, is most revolting. But we must not forget that we view Jacob's act in a far stronger light than that in which he committed it. We look at it as it shows in the clear light of the Gospel, and after more than three thousand years of religious progress. Jacob committed it at a time when there was no Bible, and no knowledge of God except such as was rudimentary and obscure. Comparing his guilt with what our own would be in the same circumstances, is like comparing the sin of a six-year old child with that of a mature man. Besides, there is no evidence to show that Jacob's heart was renewed at that time. Although God led him by the hand, and had purposes in regard to him, which had been already indicated to his parents, yet he had little or no experimental knowledge of Him at that time.

(23-25) Isaac was not satisfied. The food had been prepared too quickly. It is possible, too, that he had previously discovered Jacob's eager desire for the birthright, to which Esau was so manifestly indifferent, and which he had so recklessly sold (ch. 25:28-34). However, with all his questioning and care he did not discover Jacob's fraud. He took the savory meat, and ate it, and Jacob brought him wine and he drank.

(26-27) Thus strengthened and refreshed Isaac said, come near unto me, and kiss me, my son! Great was the danger of being detected, Jacob, in his fixed determination to have the blessing, ran the risk; he gave the kiss, and Isaac, satisfied by the odor of the sweet herbage that pervaded his garments, that there was no deception, explained with child-like satisfaction—See! the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed. All this is very painful. A son, thus stooping to deceive his fond old father, blind, and apparently near his end, is a sad picture, and one from which we would turn away. Had we not remember that God often overrules the sins of men to bring them to repentance, or to bring them into circumstances where they shall learn more of themselves and more of Him, than they otherwise would. God made Jacob's sin the means of bringing him into circumstances wherein he was humbled in spirit, and very sorely chastened; and Rebekah soon learned by bitter sorrow the folly of seeking to obtain a legitimate end by unholy means.

(28) Therefore—because the examination had satisfied him—Isaac proceeded to give the blessing. The reason that both Isaac and Esau were each so anxious to secure this blessing for himself, was, that the blessing of the dying was supposed to be prophetic. In this case it was really so: The blessing Isaac pronounced upon Jacob was prompted by the Holy Spirit, and had Jacob not interfered, he would not only have had it all the same, but have saved himself the guilt and shame of his falsehood and deceit. God give thee of the dew of Heaven: The dew, in that country, where rain was so uncertain, was one of the greatest of temporal blessings. The fatness of the earth—not only its riches and choicest products, but abundance of those more common and necessary.

(26) Let people serve thee, etc. Only a small portion of this blessing was enjoyed by Jacob personally; but it ensured to him in his posterity all the temporal blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, and the additional right of supremacy.

not only over the nations, but over the posterity of his brother. As the spiritual blessings were promised to Abraham and his seed, and belong only to the heirs of the same precious faith, the promise that in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed was not given to Jacob at that time; but was afterwards given to him by God Himself; (ch. 28:14), yet not until his spiritual understanding began to be opened, to entertain higher ideas of God and his own relation to God than he had had before.

(30-33) The simple, artless story of Esau's coming in with the food he had prepared; his father's surprise at learning that he had only then returned; the agitation, grief and disappointment of the old patriarch, need no comment; their meaning is plain to the youngest child. But we need not waste our sympathy upon Esau. He had despised his birthright, though knowing well its value; sold it for a dinner; and it was too late to bring it back—(Heb. 12:17). Thus it is often with sinners now. They scorn God's promised blessings, and refuse to accept them, forgetting that God's time is now; and at length, when they would fain receive them, they learn too late that they are gone forever. Isaac knew well that the blessing he had pronounced upon Jacob was prophetic, that God had given it and it could not be recalled; and all he could say was—I have blessed him; yea, and he shall be blessed!

(34-36) Esau cried with a great and bitter cry, and said, etc. It was only then that Esau realized what he had lost. His father by that time saw through the whole proceedings, and replied—Thy brother came with subtlety (deceit) and hath taken away thy blessing. It is hard to be overreached by a stranger,—much more so by a brother. Esau's anger was only natural, yet he should have remembered he had sold his birthright, and confirmed the bargain by an oath. Still, there is no defending Jacob's conduct. It was base and wicked. Had he waited God's time, the blessing would surely have been his; but this neither he nor his mother were willing to do;—they took the matter into their own hands, and the consequences of their rashness and impiety cast a shadow over all their future lives. Jacob—Supplanter. Jacob was a prophetic name. He was indeed to Esau a supplanter in a very bad sense; but we must keep in mind that it was God's purpose that Esau should be supplanted. He had proved by his indifference to his birthright, and his selling it so cheaply, that he was unworthy of it. Jacob's mistake and sin were in taking the matter into his own hands, and not leaving it to God.

Again, both the natural and spiritual seed of Jacob were designed by God to be supplanted;—the former, of the corrupt Canaanites in the land that had been given to Abraham; (Lev. 18:24, 27, 28;) and the latter, of the wicked throughout the whole earth—(Psalms 1:6-8; Luke 1:32-33; Rev. 20:4.) He hath supplanted me these two times! This was a false charge Esau, in selling his birthright, acted deliberately and freely. It is true, Jacob took an unbrotherly advantage of Esau's need; but then Esau could not have been in such a famishing state as to make his act in any sense necessary. He was not supplanted there; he despised his birthright, and sold it for a dinner of pottage. His whimpering about being supplanted on that occasion, is simply childish. Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

(37-38) Isaac answered—hold I have made him thy Lord, (thy superior) etc. What shall I now do unto thee, my son? Esau's pitiful cry is very touching. Oh, how bitter is the knowledge that the blessing we learn too late to value, is gone,—gone forever! Esau had despised his birthright.

(39-40) We are told (Heb. 11:20) that Isaac blessed both his sons by faith. His words were prophetic; and though not intended for Jacob, they were certainly given to him. Isaac's faith assigned the blessing to the person to whom he was speaking, not to the one to whom he intended to speak. God's purposes often run counter to man's—it was notably so in this instance.

All the prophecy embodied in Isaac's blessing upon Esau was ultimately fulfilled; but that part which referred to subjection to his brother, was fulfilled in his posterity and not in himself. Esau probably remained for a number of years in Canaan; but at length satisfied, apparently, that it was really Jacob's, he withdrew to Sier, (ch. 36:8) the possession of which was confirmed to him by God—(Deut. 3:5; Josh. 24:4.)

Esau's life, in a worldly point of view, seems to have been very prosperous and happy;—that of Jacob, though full of rich spiritual experiences, was, on the other hand, a life of much toil and sorrow.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

Jacob's sorrows were sanctified to his spiritual good; he lives in the sacred record as God's "Servant,"—as the third in that grand trio with whom the faithful are to sit down in the kingdom of heaven.

Esau's prosperity, alike with his disappointment and pain, failed to bring him to God. He lives in the Scripture record as the profane person who sold his birthright.

What God promises He will surely perform. Any attempt, like that of Jacob and his mother, to take the accomplishment of God's purposes into our own hands is sinful, and will prove disastrous to ourselves.

Rebekah prepared the way for Jacob's sin, and both aided and encouraged him in accomplishing it.

In a few days her son was taken from her, and she saw him no more on earth.

Confidence in God's faithfulness to His promise (Gen 25:23) would have saved Rebekah from the sin and folly of her intermeddling.—Unbelief is the fruitful parent of all sin. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.

QUESTION SUMMARY.

(For the Children.)

If you read the whole story you will find that Jacob was trying to make his father believe that he was Esau; and you will see what he did in order to make him think so (22, 23). Did he succeed? Do you not think Isaac was suspicious a little that somebody was trying to cheat him? (24). What makes you think he was suspicious? What did Jacob say? Was that very wicked? Was it as wicked in Jacob as it would be in you? Why not? Because Jacob had not God's law as you have, nor the teachings of Jesus, the Bible, the Sunday School, and many other means of knowing what is right. (25-29). Relate what is found in those two verses. What was it made Jacob quite sure at last that he was speaking to Esau? (28) What did this part of Isaac's blessing promise to Jacob? (29) How many things does it promise here? Did these all come to Jacob? Not all of them to Jacob's self; but all of them to Jacob's descendants. (30) What happened as soon as Jacob had got his blessing and gone? (31) What did he bring? and what say to his father? (32, 33) What made Isaac tremble so? Because he was afraid that Esau had lost the blessing. And had Esau lost it forever? How are you sure? (34) How did Esau feel? Ought Esau to have felt very bad, do you think? Yes, he ought. He had despised his birthright, and sold it for a mess of pottage! Oh, how foolish he had been! But are you not doing the same thing, only ten thousand times worse, when you despise the Lord Jesus, and refuse his salvation? Esau's blessing was gone forever—so may yours be, if you are not careful! (35-38) What is the meaning of subtlety? What is the meaning of Jacob? What is a supplanter? One who gets another's place. Did God intend Jacob should have Esau's place? Why? Because Esau despised his birthright. Did God intend Jacob should get it in the way he did? No, God would have given it to Jacob if he had waited. (39, 40) Did Esau get any blessing? Yes, and a very good one if he had made good use of it. What does it call Esau? The profane person who sold his birthright. Did Jacob ever become good? Yes, and God loved him and called him His servant!

Sunday, Oct. 17.

JACOB AT BETHEL—Gen. 28:10-22.

GOLDEN TEXT—"Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou shalt"—Genesis xxviii 15.

To be learned—12-16. Time—1770 B. C.

INTRODUCTION.

The intermeddling of Rebekah and Jacob for securing the blessing resulted, as they might have foreseen, in Esau's bitter resentment. He hated Jacob, and resolved that as soon as the day of mourning for his father's death were ended, he would kill him. Esau's character is not hard to understand. He loved a lawless, unsettled life—witness the occupation he chose. He despised his birthright and all the bright prospect of opening up to him who possessed it—witness the contemptible price he set upon it, and the flippancy with which he parted with it. He was, when roused, of a malignant and murderous spirit—witness his contemplated revenge upon his brother. All these reveal a character altogether unfitted to be the successor of his grandfather and father, the heir of such vast and far-reaching promises, and the one with whom God should hold personal intercourse. Jacob, though deeply faulty in some respects, was a man of steadfast purpose,—every thing he attempted in life evinced that. He appreciated and valued very highly the promises that pertained to his family—witness his unscrupulous eagerness to secure them for himself. He was amiable in his disposition, his ready compliance with his mother's plan for securing the blessing is but one phase of it. He was, notwithstanding some faults of character, of a deeply religious cast of mind,—under divine guidance and discipline he became eminently pious, and won from God his new name, Israel—one who prevails with God.

LESSON NOTES.

(10) And Jacob went out, etc. Isaac, when his grief had had time to abate, seems to have recognized God's purpose of grace towards Jacob, in preventing his partial love for Esau from accomplishing its purpose, and, accepting the artful pretext of his wife as the true reason for wishing Jacob out of the way, he called him to him, repeated the blessing he had formerly given him, and then sent him away to his mother's relatives in Padanaram, with the command to take a wife from among them, and on no account to marry a Canaanite woman.

(11) This was, most likely, the beginning of hardships for Jacob. Until that day he had been accustomed to the society and tender care of his mother; and we can only imagine his home-sick loneliness while journeying on until the sun was set, or the sinking of heart with which he arranged the stones for his pillow, and lay down to rest on the

hard earth under the open sky. It is probable that that day had been to Jacob one of much heart's aching and sincere penitence for the conduct that had thus rendered him homeless and a wanderer in the world; for it is only reasonable to suppose that God had in some measure prepared him for the gracious revelation of Himself he was about to make.

(12) And he dreamed. This is one of the many instances recorded in the Bible, of God's revealing Himself and His purposes to men in dreams. It was the time of the world's childhood; and God adapted His methods of instruction to the weakness and ignorance of those He taught. Behold, (mark, notice,) a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, etc. This ladder would probably signify no more to Jacob than that, however unlikely it might seem, God had really opened up a way of communication between heaven and earth—between men and him self; and that angelic messengers might avail themselves of it, in order to come and go between God and men. We, with the whole Bible in our hands, and with Christ's own words (John 1:51) show that that ladder typified Christ,—that with its foot upon the earth and its top in heaven, it signified that, uniting His divine nature with our human nature, He would, at once, link the Creator with the creature; and that, by Him as a medium of communication, angels should come and go on fitly errands between God and men.

(13) And behold, the Lord stood above it. Notice: It is only in and through Christ, whom this ladder represents, that God can descend to deal with men, it is only through Christ that we may deal with God, or that angels may go between Him and us. I am the Lord God of Abraham, Jacob had, doubtless, heard much of this great Being; he is now told that the same God is speaking to him. Of Abraham, thy father, and of Isaac. He is reminded of his noble parentage, as if to lead him to seek to be worthy of it. He who is the son of Abraham and Isaac, God's chosen servants, should deport himself accordingly—how blessed a man likened with the world! The land whereon thou hast, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. Jacob is still further identified with Abraham and Isaac, as an heir of the promised inheritance.

(14) Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west and to the east, etc. and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Just previous to receiving this promise, Jacob had been favored with a revelation of Christ. It was only a pictorial representation, if we may so call it,—God but dimly understood, indeed, but it was calculated in itself strongly to arrest the attention and stimulate his faith; and seen in connection with his renewal of the promises by God Himself, must effectually have fixed in his mind the idea of God's personal nearness to, and abiding interest in him.

(15) I am with thee . . . will keep thee . . . will bring thee again into this land. Nothing strengthens, stimulates, and encourages like the assurance when believed, that God is, and will be with us. To Jacob, these assurances would prove of incalculable value in the life of toil, privation, and disappointment that awaited him, and the last would be an unfailing source of confidence and hope. For I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. In other words,—God would have a special and peculiar care over both Jacob and his seed until He had brought to pass all that was involved in the promise. This promise is but partially fulfilled even now. How much remains yet to be fulfilled for the natural seed of Jacob, we may learn by a careful study of the Old and New Testaments. In its application to the spiritual seed of Jacob, it will only be fulfilled when all Christ's people are brought home.

(16-17) Jacob awakened . . . and said,—surely, the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not! I supposed I was alone—utterly alone and desolate—was I. But the Lord is surely here. And he was afraid. There was nothing in what he had heard to terrify him; but every thing to comfort and assure. Still, his fear was very natural.

He realized the presence of God as he never had before. He was alone, in the night, in silence and darkness. In his dream he had seen the Lord, and heard His voice. How those solemn and yet tender words would thrill and agitate him, and fill him with new and strange emotions. We can almost fancy we see the lonely, startled man lifting his hands in surprise and fear as he sits there beneath the stars, and hear his half-whispered exclamation,—how dreadful is this place!—not dreadful in the sense of to be dreaded, or shunned; but because of the presence of the high and holy God with him, a sinful, but humbled man. This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. It is possible that Jacob, in his simplicity, imagined he had literally found the entrance—way to heaven, for at this time all his ideas of God and heaven must have been very obscure, and mixed with much that was childish and fanciful.

(18) We may suppose that, for the remainder of the night, there was very little sleep for Jacob, while the blessed assurances and promises he had just heard would repeat themselves over and over in his mind. Rose early in the morning, doubtless with the first flush of day—and took the stone that he had put for his pillow, and set it up for a pillar, partly to mark the place where God had revealed Himself to him, and, probably, also, as a memorial of the solemn vow he was about to make. Poured oil on the top of it, thus signifying its consecration to a holy use. Bethel,—the house of God, Luz,—the

Canaanite name of a city built very near the same place.

(20-22). Jacob has been criticised very severely as here proposing to serve God on condition of God's being true to his promise. Dr. Johnson defends him against this charge, and says:—"Our translators have given rise to the mistaken impression that so generally prevail in regard to Jacob's vow by the insertion of the word then in v. 21.

But the *apocrypha* (the conclusion in a conditional sentence), "properly belongs in the verse following, —then this stone. The words of Jacob are not to be considered as implying a doubt, far less as stating the condition or terms on which he would dedicate himself to God. Let it be changed to since, and the language will appear a proper expression of Jacob's faith and evidence of his having embraced the promises. And the vow, as rendered should stand thus:—*Since* God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on so that I come again to my father's house in peace, and if (since) the Lord shall be my God, then this stone which I have set up for a pillar shall be God's house: where I shall erect an altar and worship Him."

And *that* which then shall give me, I will surely give thee unto thee. The giving of the tenth, or tithing, when Israel became a nation, was established by law. In patriarchal times it was a free will offering. If in those days and under such a large proportion was given to the Lord, and we find that much more was given under the Levitical law, what ought Christians to give, who enjoy all the rich privileges of the gospel? Not the tithing of the Israelites nor the free-will offerings of Christians are asked by God because He needs them, but because they need, to give them. It is a privilege to give to God; and we injure ourselves and insult God when we give to His cause from a sense of duty only. Jesus gave Himself for us—not from duty but from love; and, then, nothing should be esteemed too much to give to Him!

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS.

God is often nearest His people when He seems farthest away,—kindest, when He seems most unkind. Never in his life, probably, had Jacob felt himself so far from God as when he lay down on his pillow of stones. Yet God had chosen that hour as the one in which to reveal to him Christ.

Jacob converted his story pillow into a memorial pillar. Let each one be set up before God as a stone of memorial, to remind them of His loving-kindness and compassion.

Jacob vowed a vow of consecration on the spot where the Lord visited him, accepting the Lord as his God, and giving himself to be God's servant. Many Christians go away from the place where God has visited them, and forget both the place and the favor.

Jacob, of his own free will, vowed to the Lord a tenth of all the Lord should give him. Few Christians vow to the Lord any definite proportion of what He gives to them; and many, when asked to give, either refuse, or give grudgingly!

QUESTION SUMMARY.

(For the children.)

(14). Why did Jacob leave his home in Beer-sheba? Why was his mother anxious to have him go? (ch. 7: 13-15). What did his father command him to do? Why was Isaac unwilling Jacob should marry a Canaanite wife? Because the Canaanites were idolaters, and Isaac feared lest such a wife should lead him into idolatry.

(15). Where did Jacob sleep the first night? What did he have for a pillow? (12, 13). Relate Jacob's dream. Who did he see in his dream? Where did the Lord stand? What was the first thing He said to Jacob? Why did he say that? What did the Lord promise to give to Jacob and his seed? What did He say Jacob's seed (that is the Israelites) should do? In whom were all the families of the earth to be blessed? In Christ, who is called the seed of Jacob because He was descended from Jacob. Had God made the same promise to any one else? Yes: (see ch. 12: 2, 3). (16). What did God promise to Jacob just for himself alone? (16). Would Jacob be very glad of that promise? Why? What did he say when he woke up? (17). Why was he afraid? Because he knew God was so great and holy, and he such a sinful man. What did he say about the place? (18). What did Jacob do early in the morning? Why did he set up the stone? To mark the place, and to remind him and every one else who should ever come there that God had been there with him, and had blessed him. What did he call the place? What does *Bethel* mean? What did the Philistines afterwards call the place? Why did Jacob pour oil on the top of the stone? In order to set it apart to a holy use. What did he vow to give to God? Was that a very great deal for Jacob to give? I do not think it was. It was only one dollar out of every ten, or one bushel of grain or one sheep out of every ten that God gave him. What have you ever given to God? If you have not given Him your heart, remember you are not His child. He asks you for your heart—will you not give it to Him to-day?

The *Whitehall Review* noting Col. Ingersoll's blasphemous boast that he has defied the Almighty for years and has never been harmed by him, is reminded of the withering reply of a clergyman to an English skeptic who was indulging in a similar style of bravado: "You forget, Tom, that the Almighty is capable of infinite contempt as well as of infinite justice!"

Our Story.

PASSAGES FROM THE DIARY OF AN EARLY METHODIST.

A work bearing this title, from the pen of the late Richard Rowe, has been issued by Messrs. Strahan and Co. Nathaniel Pidgeon is the hero, and in the following entry from his diary he describes some of the annoyances to which he was subjected because of his new-found faith:—

I had marvelled that the Vicar, of whose rage against the wondrous work here, in which God had deigned to make me a humble instrument, I was well advised, had not before striven to let it, but to-day, at his instance, I was brought before two Justices, the constable using more violence than was necessary; for, indeed, there was cause for none, since I went with him quietly, as needs I must, although at great inconvenience to my worldly business. I know little of the niceties of the law, but, methinks, the two Justices knew less, and that the Vicar's lawyer, one Mr. Minchin, brought from Bath, played on their ignorance in order to bring against me a hotch-potch of accusations. First, I was told that I must forfeit a shilling for every Lord's day I had absented myself from church—"and sure," said one of the Justices, thinking to show his wit, "if you be so wondrous good a man, you'll not grudge that, for 'twill be given to the poor. 'He that hath pity on the poor lendeth to the Lord,'" he drawled through his nose. "Beant'this good Zerpitur, pearson?" he added, turning to the Vicar; and, indeed, all his talk was of like illiteracy.

Next they gave me to understand that if I contumaciously persisted in absenting myself from my parish church for another month, I must pay £20 to the King, and £10 a head for my wife and children likewise absenting themselves. But here the Vicar put in his word. "Nay, nay," said he, "twould serve the saucy stubborn fellow right to punish him with the utmost rigour of the law, but if we bear too hard upon him, 'twill punish those who would come to church right willingly, and he would suffer them." To all this I answered quietly that myself and family were constant church-goers—none more so. "A lie!" shouted the parson. "Deny an thou dare, thou wert wandering about drunk on Fast Day." "Tis a railing accusation," I replied, "and Fast Day fell not on a Sunday." Winking at his employer, who showed much confusion, Lawyer Minchin suddenly asked me whether I called myself a Quaker, and when I had answered "Nay," then he cried, "We will swear him on the book. Thou mayest be harmless as doves, Mr. Pidgeon, in thine own conceit, but, methinks, thou hast not the serpent's wisdom though thou mayest have its venom. Wilt take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy?" "I am willing," I answered. "What, and subscribe the declaration against Popery?" he thundered. "Even so," was my reply.

"Don't believe us, your worships," shouted the landlord of the Blue Boar, who had followed me into the justice-room, glad of heart, and none even lifted a finger to silence him. "Ay, though," he went on, grumbling, "he'd swear his head off, but you needn't believe us none the more. Who heeds what a Papish swears? He's a Papish, or else he's a Presbyterian, and they're both tarred with one brush."

Having let him have his say out without interruption, the lawyer turned sharp upon me. "Do you call yourself a preacher, Mr. What's-your-name?" he asked. I answered that, as he well knew, my name was Pidgeon, and that at times I expounded the Word of God to them who were willing to listen to me. "Ay, and to them that beant," cried out the Justice, who thought himself a wag. "I've heard thee bawling, little to my liking." And at this, of course, there was a great laugh. When it had died away, the man who raised it laughing long-

est, the lawyer said to me, "Mr. Preacher, have you subscribed the articles of religion mentioned in the statute of Elizabeth?"

"I have subscribed no articles," I answered. He interrupted me with a mocking "Ha, ha, I knew that I should have thee first or last," and an inquiry whether I was willing to subscribe to the articles.

"I am a member of the Church of England, I replied, "and therefore willing to subscribe to any of her articles. What are those of which you speak?"

"Those," said he, "which concern the confession of the true Christian faith, and the doctrine of the sacraments as taught by the Church of England?"

"With all my heart," said I, "will I subscribe to these."

At this, changing his tone to one still more sneering, he rejoined, "Come, now, tell the truth for once in thy life, Nathaniel. Art not an Anabaptist, Nathaniel?"

"What is an Anabaptist?" I inquired.

"Sure, Mr. Preacher, you're a bungler at your trade," he answered. "If I've to teach you divinity, you must pay me my fee. Though Anabaptist doctrine is devilry, not divinity. Why a fellow who wants to damn babies by putting off their christening, and to make grown folk catch their death of cold by dipping them who have been sprinkled, as is reasonable, in their youth."

"I am a Pædobaptist," I answered. Whereupon, without giving me time to say more, my learned host of the Blue Boar shouted in triumph. "Hear us, your washups! The lawyer's got it out of us, I could ha' sworn he wer a Baptist, or zum zuch divilry."

Taking no heed of the foolish man's interruption, I went on, "As to the mode in which the rite is to be performed, the Prayer Book saith that if the child may well endure it, the priest shall dip it in the water discreetly and warily."

Thereupon the lawyer asked me of my meeting-house. "I have none," said I, "but preach now in the open air, and anon from house to house, as doors be opened."

"Doors be opened!" he exclaimed, taking the word out of my mouth to mock me; "then more licenses will be wanted; and which one of them hast thou registered in the bishop's court, or the archdeacon's, or at quarter sessions?"

"None," I answered, "I knew not that it was necessary."

"I thought as much," cried he; "and I shall bring proof, your worships, that albeit he had obtained a license for his meeting-house, or meeting-houses, still would he not be exempt from the statute penalties, inasmuch as he hath not preached with unlocked, unbarred, and unbolted doors, but on the other hand, hath preached with locked, barred, and bolted doors." At this iteration the Justices very wisely shook their heads, as if 'twere some great point of law indeed.

Then he called a lewd fellow, on whom we have more than once been compelled to close our doors to avoid his disturbance, who declared on oath that, having at sundry times endeavoured to enter our meetings, he had been shut out—nay, more, giving lying and self-contradictory circumstances, that I had three times assaulted him (whereas 'twas he who once laid violent hands on me), so that he went in fear of his life because of me. Thereupon I was bound over in two sureties and my personal recognisance, to keep the peace towards him and all His Majesty's subjects for six months. Doubtless 'twas thought I should find none willing to become bound for me, and that thus I might be committed to spend my Christmas holidays in prison; but Mr. Saunders, who had ridden over from Bath to enquire what had happened to me, became one. The other, to the vexation of the lawyer and his brother magistrates, was, of his own offer, the Justice who kept the

mob off at Robert Farrant's. He loves not Methodists; but he is an upright man who abhorreth unrighteous judgments. I must write to Mr. Wesley touching this matter of licensing and the rest. He knows the law, and fears not to put to shame them who, from ignorance or malice, would wrest it to the injury of the innocent.

Pidgeon accompanies Wesley in a tour through the North of England, and is with him in Newcastle at the time when the inhabitants of that town were in fear of an attack from the Pretender's army. The following quaint entry, dated Wednesday 25th (September, 1745), purports to have been written in the diary in Newcastle:—

Our good friends within the walls forever dining in our ears, some, that if we tarry without, the wild Highland men will devour our defenceless children, and others, that the Orphan House is so placed that so soon as the town guns begin to play, 'twill be levelled with the ground. Mr. Wesley this day made a survey, and he assures me that, on the other hand, the guns are so planted that not a ball can strike us, while the fire from Newgate on the one side, and that from Pilgrim Street-gate on the other, would blow to pieces any who attempted to come nigh our house to do us harm. To-day he told me somewhat of his former visits to Newcastle. The colliers round about seem to be little less wild than the Scots, their children running half-naked, and the men, to show their approval of Mr. Wesley, shouting aloud in the midst of the preaching, and clapping him on the back until his breath was well-nigh gone. But the Newcastle mob, he says, hath some humanity left at its wildest. Once, being moved with compassion for the poor creatures who spent (as many still spend) their Sabbath in wandering about the Sandhill, like sheep having no shepherd, he went straight to them from church and started a psalm. Thousands soon gathered round him, but the most part spent the time in shouting and pushing; the throng heaving and tossing like a troubled sea. So after singing and praying for an hour in the midst of the tumult, he was constrained, through lack of voice, to leave them without a sermon. Nevertheless, not a stone, brickbat, rotten egg, or dead cat was thrown, nor was any violence offered to him. On another occasion, during his stay in the town, the Edinburgh Company of Comedians announced the performance of a farce entitled *Trick upon Trick*, or, *Methodism Displayed*. A multitude of men and women assembled to witness the performance, but, in the first act all the seats erected on the stage gave way with a sudden crack, and those who sat upon them were thrown headlong. The play still continuing after order had been restored, in the second act all the shilling seats sank suddenly. This caused panic, and many forced their way out of the building in terror. But still the play went on, when lo! at the beginning of the third act, the stage itself went down six inches, the actors skipping nimbly off in their fright. But having been persuaded by their master to return, and the piece going on, towards the end of the third act all the sixpenny seats fell without the least warning to the ground, and with loud outcries many more rushed out. Then he who was to play the Methodist, fearing that none would be left to witness his performance, came forward and affirmed that, notwithstanding all that had happened, the farce should be performed. As he spake the stage sank six inches more, and actors and audience fled in wild confusion.—*Leeds Mercury*.

When scientists want me to stay and argue with them, I say to them, in the words of the prophet: "Abide ye here with the ass, while I go yonder and worship."—*Daniel Butler*.

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TORONTO, OCT. 7, 1880.

WE would again appeal to the friends who have not paid their subscriptions to do so without delay. For a few weeks past, pending the printing of the new sheet, the numbers have been directed by hand. Now that they are again addressed in the usual way, the amount due can be seen at a glance, thus "1 July '79," means that the paper is only paid to that date, and that Two Dollars is due, "1 July '80," one year due, and so on. Look at the direction—see what is due, remit it, and we will thank you.

A NOTE FROM THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE

The truthfulness of our remark, some time since, on Christian union, that our denominations are very largely close corporations for the promulgation of special forms of the gospel, has received further confirmation, if such be needed, by the attitude of the Pan-Presbyterian Council (of which we trust soon to give an account towards the Cumberland Presbyterians) who sought representation in that body, which representation was practically refused. The basis of the Council is Presbyterian as to polity, Calvinistic as to creed. The Cumberland Presbyterian church arose in the first instance from a revival, much needed, which soon demanded additional labourers in the field. This occurred about the beginning of this century, in the Cumberland County of Kentucky. Some supposed irregularity was found in the preparation of candidates for the ministry which led to disputes between the Presbytery and its superior judicatory, the Synod, resulting in a separation. The Church now numbers over 100,000 members. The record of its constitution requires on the part of its officers adherence to the ordinary accepted Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, "except the idea of fatality that seems to be taught under the mysterious doctrine of predestination;" the record further qualifies the teaching of the Confession which declares that Christ, by His atonement, hath purchased redemption "for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him," by the expressive words, "he tasted death for every man." The holding of the principles involved by the italicised words, has evidently been considered sufficient reason for the virtual rejection of the overtures made for admission to the Council. And yet it may be fairly asked whether at least one-half of the ministers and three-fourths of the laity in the churches represented in the Council do not hold, substantially, the views for the avowing of which the Cumberland brethren are excluded. We revere confessions as standards of unity, but the custom of creeds is truly the plague of wise men, as our old school copy had it, and the fool's idol. We regret, as we are sure many will, the course

thus deliberately adopted by a Council from which we, at least, expected better things.

ROBERT BROWNE AND THE BROWNISTS.

(Concluded.)

Planets move in an elliptic orbit round the sun. As in the centre all lines drawn to the circumference from the centre are equal, in an elliptic the sum of the lines joining the two foci to the same point in the circumference is constant or equal. In the brownists we may have a solar system in which both foci or centres are occupied by suns, and thereby a more symmetrical system than our own. Roman Catholicism has one centre, the Pope; so has Episcopacy, viz.: Apostolic Succession. Dr. Dexter likens Congregationalism to an ellipse with two centres—the self-completeness of the local church—the duty of fellowship between such local churches. Brownism has generally been viewed as an exaggerated manifestation of the former, a "way of rigid separation," an entire forgetfulness of the other and complementary principle. Dr. Dexter, in his Congregationalism, gives good reason for asserting that Browne was very far from being a separatist. In the organization of his church at Norwich, the Brownist church, provision was expressly made for "seeking to other churches to have their help, being better reformed; or to bring them to reformation." Browne wrote "A Book which showeth the life and manners of all true Christians, and how unlike they are to Turks and Papists and Heathen folk." He therein declares "there be Synods, or the meetings of sundry churches, which are where the weaker churches seek help of the stronger; . . . a Synod is a joining or partaking of the authority of many churches met together in peace, for redress and deciding of matters which cannot well be otherwise taken up." "The Church," writes Browne, in his True and Short Declaration, "is called the pillar and ground of truth and the voice of the whole people, guided by the elders and forwardest, is said to be the voice of God. Therefore the meeting of many churches, also of every whole church and of the elders therein, is above the apostle, above the prophet, the evangelist, the pastor, the teacher, and every particular elder. For the joining and partaking of many churches together, and of the authority which many have, must needs be greater and more weighty than the authority of any single person." The Church thus defined, as under authority to Christ, was to be no democratic rabble, nor an Adullamite cave, nor a coterie of Diotrefeses, but a self-consistent and logical whole, and presenting a system rather remarkable, developed as it was by a young man not yet thirty years old, in the sixteenth century in prelatial England, with no other seeming help than the Bible read in the Spirit's light. It may be well to show its contrast with the prelatial system. Prelacy rules by a delegated power; the hierarchy in perpetual succession in Christ's vicarage, which it is the duty of the faithful to reverence and obey. Brownism sought to realize a Christ not afar off but present, imparting his life, wisdom and power to all believers, arousing and keeping alive

the sense of personal responsibility on the part of each and every believer. It sought to "thrust every soul into immediate and vital contact with the Divine Spirit and the Divine Word." Brownism thus read presents a more manly ideal and truer godliness than the system sought to be amended or supplanted, and if "a sun-dial is of vastly more use in a Hottentot kraal than a chronometer with all its improvements, that is not the fault of the chronometer." If churches cannot realize Browne's ideal, we must seek for the failure otherwise than in principles which are manifestly true, a lesson our churches specially need to learn in this disintegrating, doubting, world-conforming age.

We conclude this paper with some words on the last half of Browne's life spent in conformity to the Established prelatial Church of his country. Three possibilities seem to exhaust all hypotheses regarding his last career. (1) He was thoroughly dishonest, a disappointed time-server. This is, to say the least, highly improbable in the case of a man who went into exile with a faithful band, and endured sore trial and social pressure, still holding on his way for nearly a score of years. Time-serving would have sooner given over. (2) Did his convictions change? Dr. Dexter notes some peculiarities of expression regarding him on the part of two Nonconformist writers contemporary with his Achurch incumbency, one from Henry Ainsworth, who says to a Church of England man: "How well Mr. Browne approved of your Church, though he live not in it himself, if you ask him, I suppose he will tell you." The other is from the unknown author of a Dialogue printed A.D. 1611, and says, "And yet I think if he were asked, his conscience will not suffer his tongue to say that it is not the truth." During his conformity it is said he continued to denounce the Church of England, that he had preached on the Lord's day in a private house not far from Ludgate, and sympathized with the separatists still. Not very like a convert who shows generally his zeal for the new by denouncing the old faith. (3) One other hypothesis remains. It would appear that he was of that nervous, irritable temperament readily brought by disease to insanity. Frequent allusions to illness are found, and there is evidence that he underwent imprisonment in thirty-two dungeons, in some of which he could not see his hand at noonday. Enough to make a man insane. Letters of his to his kinsman, Lord Burleigh, when he was teaching the grammar school at Southwark, enclosing some Latin tables, and talking about correcting college metaphysics "by the laws of creation, covenant and sanctification," are certainly not in the vein of his earlier works, and strange comments in the church register are in keeping with the conclusion to which a perusal of the letters points, e.g., "Died Marie Hobson, an ould poore maied," May we not see then, in a shattered mind, the solution of the mystery which hangs over the last forty years of Browne's life? Thus may we understand the Lord Secretary's constant sympathy for him, and his presentation of an insignificant living in the Church as soon as legal objections could be overcome. Had *Trouble-church* Browne been a per-

vert with his early vigour of mind, he would, in all human probability, have been active, under his powerful kinsman, bidding for a bishopric instead of writing quaint conceits in his parish register. The account given of his death agrees with what might be expected from a semi-insane person. Imprisonment for a blow struck the village constable who demanded some payment due. The fact that after forty years' ministry no friend proffered even a carriage for his body's burial, as our author puts it, "comports much better with the supposition of a poor crazed dotard who has worn out the patience of his generation, than with any other conception of what would be possible in a village both Christian and English."

True, we have to do more with the truths Browne put forward than with the man; nevertheless, the truths will be appreciated none the less by justice done to their propounder's memory.

It would seem that to Robert Browne and his little company at Norwich we owe the discovery of the New Testament Church in something like its integrity among English speaking people in modern days, and that, instead of esteeming him a renegade, we may add him to the number of martyrs from among the Congregationalists. His blood was not spilt, but his genius was overthrown and his life wrecked—

- "In confirmation of the noblest claim,
- "Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
- "To walk with God, to be divinely free,
- "To soar and to anticipate the skies.
- "Yet few remember him.
- "No hand embalms and sanctifies his song;
- "And history, so warm on other themes,
- "Is cold on this."

Let it be so, there is yet a record to be unrolled; it will open when thrones, principalities and powers have passed away. And there we leave Robert Browne and the Brownists in the utmost confidence.

IS PERINESS A CHRISTIAN VIRTUE?

Putting a fair interpretation upon the actions and words of some professing Christians, it would seem as if they believed it was. Here is a case in point:—Some months ago, a certain mission committee—which shall be nameless—was engaged in making its appropriations for the year. In the course of its work, it reached the case of one of its missionary employees who had been, in the committee's estimation, so injudicious in his administration of several fields previously that they could summon no confidence regarding his administration in the field where he is now laboring. Accordingly a resolution was passed—amid deep regret that such a step was rendered necessary, and with the most kindly Christian feeling,—to the effect that the committee could no longer engage him—So-and-so—as one of its missionary agents. The District Secretary was instructed to inform the church, where this gentleman was officiating, of the action of the committee, which he did as courteously as possible, under the delicate circumstances. The result was that the District Secretary was treated to a lengthy letter full of personal abuse and acetic acid, winding up with a demand for a personal hearing before the committee. The district committee being about to hold its autumnal session,

the secretary wrote the offended brother, saying that he was sure that the committee would arrange for a personal interview, and announcing the time and place for the meeting. A few days passed and then came a reply by postal card, stating that the writer could not come, and then adding, "I am intending to leave here, and in all probability Canada, and leave the aristocrats and autocrats to themselves." The "aristocrat and autocrats" were duly under-scored for the purpose of emphasis. With such facts before us, we do not think we are offending against fair criticism or Christian charity when we pronounce such language unjustifiable perversity, and adjudge it unworthy of any man bearing the name of the meek and holy Christ, let alone a man who is engaged as a public instructor of Christian virtues.

We have no intention of defending the course of the committee. That must stand or fall on its merits. But we must protest against such a reply as its dismissed employee makes, as pert and unchristian. And, furthermore, it is doubly pert when sent on a postal card. Such words would surely be severe enough if hidden in an envelope. But they are altogether too mean and contemptible when written so that the post office authorities and letter-carriers may read them if they are so minded. This is not an isolated case of perversity which has come under our notice. But we could earnestly wish that it were the last we should ever see emanating from a professedly Christian source. When a man has been living the religious life for twenty years, one naturally expects to see him outgrowing the childish things which, in earlier and irresponsible years, were forgivable. And it is lamentable to see the old Adam so sadly triumphant when years are ripened and hairs are silvery. Surely Christians should watch over their words. The warning which the apostle James gave concerning the tongue is equally applicable to the pen, as the pen issues unspoken words. Choice words are beautiful in their effects. But hasty and pert words are not gleaned from the vocabulary of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul never felt more sorely wounded than by certain unkind epithets spoken of him by his Corinthian brethren, and his keen sense of justice rose in Christian protest against them. And so does every true man, who has caught the spirit of Christ, protest against these wild, ungoverned, tartar-like words, which are sometime sent forth in bitterness from unthinking minds. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

FREE DISTRIBUTION OF THE INDEPENDENT.

We have received from two Montreal friends ten dollars and three dollars respectively, to aid the circulation of the *Independent* by free distribution. We shall be glad therefore to send to ministers and others, as many copies as they can advantageously distribute, with the special object of obtaining fresh subscribers.

Our publisher has been compelled to direct the paper by writing upon it for the past few weeks. As some subscribers preserve their copies, and may wish to have them without the defacement, we will send a fresh sup-

ply of September issues to any who will intimate their wish by a P. O. card.

Obituary.

Rev. Dugald McGregor, of Uptergrove, Mara, Ont., died on Sunday morning, 19th inst. He was buried on the 21st, in the burying-ground attached to the North Mara Presbyterian Church. The services connected with the funeral were conducted by the Rev. John McNabb, of Beaverton, assisted by Revs. A. Ross, E. Cockburn, J. Gray, and H. Sinclair. Many friends came from a distance to pay the last tribute of respect to a Father in Israel. The occasion was one never to be forgotten. The crowded church, the draped pulpit, the solemn hush, the sobbing of young and old, all added to the solemnity of the occasion, and told, too truly, that a father and a friend was no more.

Mr. McGregor was born in Easdale, Scotland, in the year 1810. In early life he gave his heart to the Saviour, and enjoyed the hallowed influence of a home where his godly parents trained up a large family "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Giving evidence of possessing no ordinary talent for speaking, and his heart all aflame with love to Jesus and for souls, he was encouraged to enter the Christian ministry. Studying for a time, along with a few other young men, under the aged and venerable Rev. Mr. Wilson of Helensburgh, Mr. McGregor was engaged as city missionary in that place. Filling the position for about two years, he was then called to the pastorate of the Congregational Church at Clachan, Argyle-shire. During this pastorate which continued about fifteen years he frequently visited the Western Islands of Scotland, where a remarkable work of grace took place in connection with these visits. Hundreds of souls were then led to the Saviour and will be his crown of rejoicing in the great day of the Lord. In the year 1857, Mr. McGregor received a call to the pastorate of the Congregational Church in Manilla, Ont., Canada. This call he accepted and arrived in this country in the month of May of the same year. The Manilla pastorate extended over eighteen years, was fruitful in good works, and terminated in a rich outpouring of the spirit of God. The Word faithfully preached during these years at length bore fruit abundantly to the praise and glory of God. In the year 1876 Mr. McGregor resigned the pastorate of the church in Manilla, and was, the same year, called to assume the pastoral oversight of the North Mara Presbyterian Church. In this field he labored with great comfort and success until his death which took place after an illness of about five weeks. Possessed naturally of a robust constitution, he, however, succumbed to a severe attack of typhoid fever.

In characterizing the habits and preaching of the subject of this sketch, it might be observed that promptness, fidelity, perseverance, and strict integrity marked his whole life. He was naturally emotional and retiring in his disposition. He had a high reverence for sacred things, and a robust faith in God and the truth. His hold of the promises of God was firm and strong. He possessed an unwavering confidence in the glorious destiny of the Church of Christ on earth. God, in Providence, he ever recognized. The power of prayer he well knew. His habits of meditation gave an intensity to his spiritual experience and greatly enriched his mind.

Throughout a ministry of over forty years Mr. McGregor emphasized the Bible doctrines of human sinfulness, atonement through the vicarious sufferings of Christ, the Spirit's work in salvation and sanctification, the necessity of a change of heart, and a life of holiness

and Christian service. Preaching in English and Gaelic during his entire ministry he thus came in contact with different types of mind, which enabled him to understand more accurately the laws of mind regulating the conduct of man. He was liberal and yet conservative. Liberal, in non-essentials, he was conservative of truth. With the liberalism of the age, as it affected the integrity of God's Word, he had no sympathy. Traditional theology he respected in as far as it truly represented God and man's relation to Him. To one of his sons he remarked during his illness that, the older he was getting, the more was he convinced that what the church and the world needed to-day was a clearer enunciation of, and a truer faith in, the grand, old, rugged doctrines of the Bible. To another of his sons who was to preach for his people that day, he said: "Give them a good sermon, speak to them about the blood of Jesus!" Mr. McGregor was an able minister of the Gospel. He loved to expound God's Word, and ever kept near the Cross of Christ. He had a passion for the salvation of souls. While never forgetting that believers needed the bread of life, to ensure their growth in grace, he never failed to make a powerful appeal to the unconverted in his congregation. The three "R's" of a sainted servant of God he never forgot, viz., Ruin, Redemption, and Regeneration. These were the lines along which his life work ran. In speaking of the glories of redeeming grace and love he seldom could control his feelings. In a word he had a strong hold of the truth and the truth had a strong hold on him. With John he might say, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." He loved to speak of God as a covenant-keeping God, and fairly believed in the promises of God's Word made to all who cultivate the spirit of true religion in the home circle. Family piety and instruction he ever enjoined upon all. Mr. McGregor leaves behind him a widow, five sons and two daughters. These sons are all actively engaged in the work of the Christian ministry and are labouring in Canada, a circumstance which gave great joy and comfort to the father and pastor, now no more. The tears of a sorrowing family and beloved flock, now mingle. Another standard-bearer has fallen. Another voice is now still in death. He died triumphant in the faith, remarking shortly before his death, "I am as sure that my soul is saved as truth can make it." To cheer and comfort the bereaved, as well as to incite all ministers and Christian workers to earnest work for Christ, a voice is heard from heaven saying, "Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth! Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

News of the Churches.

THE Rev. James Howie has resigned the pastorate of Zion Congregational Church, Guelph.

THE Rev. S. T. Gibbs has accepted the unanimous call to the pastorate of the Congregational Church, Kalamo, Eaton County, Mich., U. S. A., and commences his labors Oct. 10th.

ATHOL.—The corner stone of a new church building was laid on the 24th of Sept. The need of a new church has been much felt for a long time, but circumstances prevented the congregation from erecting it sooner. The edifice is to be built about two miles south of where the old house stands. It is possible that the old stand will not be abandoned but what will be done is not yet fully determined upon.

REV. JAMES DAVIES writes from Atwood, Antrim County, Michigan:—Glad to say I enjoy the change; happy in my work, and my labors are being blest.

May the blessing of God rest upon the churches on both sides of the line, and upon every Christian enterprise. May grace, mercy and peace be with you. We rejoice in the welfare of our brother, while we regret that, for a time, he is lost to the Canadian Churches. We hope to see him back some day.

ST. FRANCIS ASSOCIATION. This Association, so called from the name of the "District" (watered by the St. Francis river and its tributaries,) met at Granley, on Tuesday, 14th Sept. The meeting was thin as regards members, but the pastor, Rev. R. K. Black, was very cordial in his welcome to the brethren who came. Rev. W. W. Smith preached the first evening, on the "Parable of the Tares," the principal thought being that there are ever two influences around us, sowing good and evil seed in our hearts, God's Spirit and the Great Enemy. A very commodious brick chapel is building, and is now ready for the pews, but for the present, a well lighted, airy basement is used for worship. Here the Association met. The essays read and discussed were, in the order named, "Church Attention," by Rev. W. W. Smith; "How to deal with the Unconverted and Non-church-members," by Rev. Geo. Purkis; and "Immortality, as taught in the Old Testament," by Rev. R. K. Black. On Wednesday evening a public meeting was held, Mr. Black presiding. Rev. L. P. Adams spoke of the aspects of his particular field of winning souls, and Mr. Smith presented "An Aim for Life." Mr. Adams was chosen Moderator for the present meeting; Rev. Dr. Duff was continued in his office of *Scribe*, which is an annual appointment; and several essays were provided for, for the next meeting, which will (D. V.) be in Waterville on the Second Tuesday in May next. Cost.

A ROBUST HOLIDAY.

The pastor of the Eaton Church, Rev. W. W. Smith, having engaged to fill the pulpit of Rev. John Wood, in Ottawa, for two Sabbaths, drove the whole distance, (235 miles, and return), with a horse and buggy, taking his daughter with him. He had the opportunity of thoroughly exploring the "French Country," both in going and returning, and having taken "a Minister's Fortnight," which is three weeks *minus* a Sabbath, got back to his work near the New Hampshire boundary none the worse for his robust holiday.

SUNDAY, the 17th, and Monday, the 18th, are the days named by the London Sunday School Union for prayer on behalf of Sunday Schools. We earnestly trust that the commendation, which is endorsed by the International Lesson Committee, will meet with a universal response among the Sunday Schools of our churches. Let the arrangements be made next Lord's Day. The following plan is put forth by the Committee:—That on Lord's Day, morning, Oct. 17th, from 7 to 8 o'clock, private intercessory prayer be offered on behalf of Sunday Schools. That the opening engagements of the morning school be preceded by a meeting of the teachers for prayer. That ministers be asked to preach, morning or evening, or both on topics connected with Sunday School work. That in the afternoon the ordinary engagements of each school be shortened, and a devotional service be held. To this service the parents of the scholars might be invited. That at the close of the evening service, the teachers, in union with other Christians, meet for thanksgiving and prayer. That on Monday morning, October 18th, teachers again bring their scholars, one by one, in private prayer before God. That in the course of the day the female teachers of each school hold a meeting for united prayer and thanksgiving. That in the evening each church or congregation be invited to hold a meeting, at which the interests of the Sunday School should form the theme of the prayers and addresses.

REV. WM. HARRIS, FRANKLIN ALLEN,
Sec'y, Princeton, N. J. Chairman, N. Y.

Married.

In Toronto, on the 29th Sept., by Rev. R. Hay, father of the bride, assisted by Rev. J. Burton, B. D., and Rev. W. H. Warriner, B. A., Mr. Alex. Lorimer Hay, merchant, of Burlington, Vermont, to Miss Jessie Edith Hay.

WINNIPEG CHURCH.

Since the last acknowledgment, the following sums have been raised for the Winnipeg Church. At Hamilton \$91.00, Burlington \$5.00, Paris \$6.00, Brantford \$7.00, London \$28.00. A friend in St. Paul, Minn. for charitable church objects \$25.00. With previous acknowledgment making a total paid and subscribed, of \$145.85. The friends of Winnipeg are deeply grateful to those in our own churches, and many of different denominations who so willingly assisted in this work. This sum with what has been and what can be raised in Winnipeg is still insufficient to erect a church that will meet the requirements of the place. It is therefore earnestly hoped that churches and individuals who have not yet contributed will do so, that the work may go on. Contributors will please note that unpaid subscriptions for 1880 are now due and may be forwarded either by the treasurer of their church or direct to Rev. W. Ewing, Winnipeg.

W. EWING.

Winnipeg, Sept. 16th, 1880.

THE LANARK CHURCH AND ITS NEW PASTOR.

Editor of "The Canadian Independent."

DEAR SIR, Knowing that matters of interest to any section of our particular branch of the church are of special interest to you, I take the liberty of sending you a few notes concerning this Section, known as, The Lanark Village Congregational Church. As you are doubtless aware, our former pastor, the Rev. J. Brown, left us early last spring to seek a new home and new fields of labor in the far West of our great Dominion. Well, after about six months of supply work, we are again in possession of a settled pastor. The Rev. B. W. Day having received the unanimous call of the church, and, having accepted the same, has commenced his labors in the Master's service amongst us. By previous arrangement, Mr. Day, with his family, was expected to arrive in our village on the evening of the 10th ult., and the members and congregation in connection with the church resolved to give their new pastor a social greeting on the evening of his arrival. Accordingly, before eight o'clock, "the appointed hour," the manse was filled with a lively and cheerful company, of both old and young; and the tables groaned beneath the weight of the entertainment provided. But alas! disappointment is the lot of humanity in this world. Every sweet must have its bitter intermixed. While all this was going on, a card was received from Mr. Day, who was then in Perth, only twelve miles distant, stating that by some blunder—railways are always making just such blunders—the car containing all his stuff, including horse and carriage, had been left behind at a station between Brockville and Smith Falls, and would not arrive until late in the evening, and consequently he could not get to Lanark until a late hour. However, the good people, determined on not being altogether disappointed, resolved to await his arrival, which finally took place about eleven o'clock. Then, after a cordial greeting, all sat down, and the hour being so late, the party did not remain long together after supper was ended, but after a little more music and talking, all quietly and pleasantly dispersed to their several homes, apparently well pleased both with their new pastor and his family, and with their evening's enjoyment, notwithstanding their long waiting.

After the crowd dispersed, it was discovered that some of the friends had been sensible enough to remember that, possibly, Mr. and Mrs. Day might chance to be individuals of like appetites with ourselves, and consequently might require something more substantial for the maintenance of the body than mere

greetings of welcome and one social supper: sundry bags and parcels, therefore, were found in the storeroom, which gave ample evidence that both the groceries and vegetable gardens had been compelled to pay tribute to the arrival of the new pastor and his family.

Yours truly,

ONE WHO WAS PRESENT

Lanark, Sept. 27th, 1880.

BOND STREET CHURCH, TORONTO.

The Rev. Dr. Wild, of Brooklyn, whose call to the above church and acceptance, we chronicled a week or two ago, began his pastorate last Sabbath, and was welcomed by the church and congregation at a social meeting the next evening. Failing a report from the church, we cut the following from the *Globe*: "At the Bond Street Congregational Church last evening a social meeting was held to welcome Dr. and Mrs. Wild and family to the city. After devotional exercises a verbal welcome was given in person by Mr. Edward Beckett, the chairman on the occasion. A solo by one of the gentlemen of the choir, Mr. G. Taylor, was sung very acceptably, as were the selections from Mozart's "12th Mass" by the choir. Welcomes from the different Sabbath Schools, attached to the church, were given to the new pastor. The whole proceedings were of a most agreeable character. After the ceremony of welcoming the pastor and his family had been gone through, refreshments were served in the vestry."

Literary Notes.

The following are on our table from the Standard Series of J. K. Funk & Co., New York.

Canada Health Journal. The first number of the fifth volume is before us. It is written in a popular style, giving information of value to every family on the preservation of health.

The National Sunday School Teacher, Adams, Blackner & Lyon, Chicago. We have had occasion to notice this magazine before as an excellent help for teachers, and we can heartily repeat our past commendation.

As the November No. will commence a fresh volume, and all manner of good things are promised we would advise that every family where there are young people, or what is the same, young hearts, should subscribe for it.

The Missionary Herald of the A. B. C. F. M. is one of our most welcome visitors, and from which we are able to glean many interesting facts about missionary work. Every pastor ought to take it—it is invaluable for missionary prayer meetings.

The Salon of Madame Necker, Vol. II. We have here some of the inner history of France during one of its most terrible, yet instructive times, and that from a contemporary pen. Madame Necker was a centre of literary and political life in her day.

The Thoughts of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. This translation, by Long, is esteemed the best open to an English reader. Of Aurelius it has been said that from its gallery of stateliest pictures heathen antiquity can furnish no nobler, purer, or more lovable picture than this crowned philosopher.

We have received also from the same house, in a neatly bound volume Stuckenburgh's "Christian Sociology," which we shall review as soon as read. It appears as the first of a new and important promised issue. Price, \$1.50. It is a new book in a new field, and if the introduction is sustained throughout we shall have the pleasing task of a favourable review. The press mark of J. K. Funk & Co. promises to be a guarantee of sterling worth.

The Hermits, by Charles Kingsley, is a re-publication of the second volume of "The Sunday Library for household reading." No one should tire reading English from Kingsley's pen, and his tales of "the hermits" open up in sympathetic lines the lives of devoted, much misunderstood and misdirected men.

John Ploughman's Pictures, by C. H. Spurgeon, Illustrated, is the last issue of the series on our table. This is, as declared, plain talk, which well deserves pondering. Racy, moral, religious, childhood and maturity alike may find therein instruction with amusement. Truly, we have not seen a poor book in all the series. The term "Standard" is no misnomer, and these for 15 cents each!

St. Nicholas for October closes the volume and a capital volume it has been too. The story of "Jack and Gill," and their companions is furnished, and will be immediately published in a complete volume. It has been described as "the strongest and tenderest current child-story in the language, full of rollicksome heartiness and beautiful sympathies—a story in which the girl-readers are honestly and safely delighted to meet live, manly boys; and boy-readers actually find themselves capable of being as interested in a home-scene as in a tiger-hunt—in a bright-faced, noble girl as in a gorilla."

The Phonetic Teacher, J. R. Vieroy, editor and publisher, St. Louis. Devoted to what is called "The Spelling Reform," and when we tell our readers that a part of its contents is "Discussions of vital cures in filoloji, etimoloji and orthoepi; and a pedagogical treatment of reading and spelling!" we expect their appetites will be so whetted for more of the same aliment that they will subscribe for the paper. (50 cents per year, published monthly.)

Scribner for October concludes the twentieth volume. It is not too much to say that its literary merit is equal to any that have preceded it, while the quality of the illustrations have been of the highest class. We are not surprised to find that with the attractions it offers *Scribner* has a large circulation in England, upwards of 10,000, we judge that its circulation in Canada is proportionately as large, and steadily increasing. The publishers promise a November number of unusual strength.

THE CANADIAN CONGREGATIONAL YEAR BOOK.

This pamphlet contains two hundred and thirty-seven pages and is the most complete thing of the kind that we have ever seen. It is divided into six general divisions. The first division is somewhat general, containing several pages of leading historical facts, relating to the progress of Christianity and the Congregational polity from Wycliffe down; a brief history of the rise and growth of Congregationalism in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; the number of Congregational churches, ministers and members in every country kingdom, state and island in the whole world; the names of the several missionary societies, home and foreign, in these different countries, together with the number of missionaries they employ, the names of their officers, the amount of funds raised by each, the names of the several national and state bodies for fellowship, with the date of their organization and a list of their officers; the names of all the theological schools belonging to the denomination throughout the world, with the date of their formation, the length of their course of study and the number of their professors and students; the names of the several Congregational periodicals, with the place of publication and the names of their editors or publishers, together with the titles of the leading books relating to Congregationalism and its ordinances, the names and post-office addresses of the

Congregational ministers and churches in Canada, together with their Associations and their ecclesiastical record and official list for 1880.

Part second contains the minutes of the annual meetings of the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, and the Congregational Union of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, together with the constitution, rules, declaration of faith, and full statistics of the churches connected with these bodies. There is also given, at length, the address of the Chairman of the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec—Rev. J. F. Stevenson, D.D.—which is, with very slight changes, the same that he afterwards delivered before the Society for Religious Inquiry at the University of Vermont.

Part third is devoted to the interests of the Congregational College of British America, containing the course of study, rules, a catalogue of the officers, teachers and Alumni of the institution, which is a theological school to prepare men for the ministry.

Parts fourth, fifth and sixth are devoted to the benevolent work of the churches. They give the constitutions, officers, reports and receipts of the Canada Congregational Missionary Society; of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Missionary Society; of the Newfoundland Missionary Society; of the Indian Missionary Society; of the Congregational Provident Fund, for the relief of needy ministers or their families, and finally of the Congregational Publishing Society. This Year Book shows that the Congregational churches, in the British Provinces, on our northern borders, are thoroughly organized, earnest and enterprising. They have one hundred and sixteen churches and seventy-two stations; sixty-four ministers and eight thousand and twenty-one members. A body of Christians that shows such system, energy and organizing power and can put forth such a valuable Year Book will certainly be heard from in the future and we extend to them our hearty God bless you. *Vermont Chronicle, Sept. 18th.*

THE TRIFLER.

If the earthly history of some of our brethren were written down, if a faithful record were kept of the way they spend their time, if all the hours of idle vacancy or idler occupancy were put together, and a very small amount of a useful diligence deducted, the life of a bird or quadruped would be a nobler one, more worthy of its powers and more equal to its Creator's end in forming it. Such a register is kept. Though the trifle does not chronicle his vain words and wasted hours, they chronicle themselves. They find their indelible place in that book of remembrance with which human hands cannot tamper, and from which no erasure save one can blot them. They are noted in the memory of God. And when once this life of wondrous opportunities and awful advantages is over—when the twenty or fifty years of probation are fled away—when mortal existence, with its facilities for personal improvement and serviceableness to others, is gone beyond recall—when the trifle looks back on the long pilgrimage, with all the doors of hope and usefulness, past which he skipped in his frisky forgetfulness—what anguish will it move to think that he has gambled through such a world without salvation to himself, without any real benefit to his brethren, a busy trifle, a vivacious idler, a clever fool! *James Hamilton, D.D.*

The London Missionary Society, and the cause of Missions in India, have suffered a serious loss by the death of Rev. M. A. Sherring, a valued missionary, and the historian of Protestant Missions in India. The Church Missionary Society has also been greatly tried by the death, by drowning, of one of its honored secretaries, Rev. Henry Wright, a man who gave his time and fortune to the cause.

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?

BY REV. A. J. TINSWORTH, CHELSEA.

There is a new intellectual and spiritual flora developing in our age, or being most painstakingly cultivated,—it is perhaps too early to determine which. Whether we have really passed the boundary between two ages, and are now in another moral clime from that our fathers lived in, or some particularly busy husbandmen of the devil are forcing certain plants in our intellectual and spiritual garden which will prove unsuited to stand the climate of our nineteenth century Christianity—we cannot say; but one thing is sure, there are appearing in these late years among us, as all along in the history of men's thinking they have appeared somewhere or other, certain noxious weeds of speculative inquiry, which cannot thrive under truly Christian skies, and which, if they do come to thrive among us, will furnish all the proof any one need ask that we are passing through an intellectual, but particularly a spiritual, crisis in our civilization.

For illustration, hear this significant question: "Is life worth living?" which, from being whispered here and there in private circles of men and women, made misanthropic by disappointments, or spiritually dyspeptic by elegant idling, victims of self-worship, contempt for the average humanity, *ennui*, vanished faith, has grown into an articulate vocalism, has even got itself printed and distributed by express and post to reviewers' hands first; then, through their indorsement and condemnation alike, has made itself heard far and wide, till it has become a familiar question wherever liberal education reaches. The significance of this question is that it covertly purposes not so much to ask whether, as to deny that, life is worth living. Not every one so asks it; perhaps not he who gave the question widest currency by definitely framing it in printed words; but the action which speaks louder than words, which continually illustrates the question, the atmosphere in which it moves and by which it lives, admits of no doubt as to the moral force of the question.

It goes of itself to say that such a question, so asked, is not a natural product of a Christian consciousness; to thrive, it must have other than a Christian soil, other than those moral-climatic conditions which are properly called *Christian*. To ask it, with the inclination already formed to answer it negatively, one must have turned away in dissatisfaction from the very premises of the Christian faith. Life is too loosely bound up with God, and too pregnant with possibilities opening before the Christian out of it, to be despised under its worst conditions. If such a question grows naturally in the soil and climate of our age, we have lost more than we suspected of the Christianity out of our times and our civilization.

If this question have any such real hold upon our thinking as shows it to be not an exotic transplanted to our Christian years from the Sotic wastes of Rome, or the atheistic deserts of France, but indigenous, growing freely in our open fields and common gardens, then of the speedy appearance of another plant of the same order we may be quite sure. If life is not worth living, what more logical or natural than that here and there one, tired of it, should throw away the worthless thing? There can be no reasoning from cause to effect if increased disdain of life do not issue in increased courting of death as the short and easy way out of it. The state of mind which asks and welcomes the question, "Is life worth living?" will be followed, unless men's common sense throws their logic, by a state of mind welcoming suicide as a quick release from the "weary, stale, flat and unprofitable uses of this world." Hamlet's will be the inevitable soliloquy:

To die: to sleep.—
No more:—and, by a sleep, to say we end
The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to,—'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd.

And we may expect a literature questioning the value of life and inferentially denying it, to be followed by a literature coolly canvassing the scientific and moral right of suicide.

But we are not left to *a priori* reasoning, safe as that might be; history furnishes more than one close parallel to the state of things which may force itself painfully upon our notice presently. Take what they call in England "agnosticism"—fashionable unbelief, unbelief assuming to give social and intellectual rank, dignifying itself as the creed—or want of creed—of certain upper classes. In this we have a striking repetition of what was true in Rome in the time of the Julian Emperors. Belief in the gods had vanished; luxury had enervated the people on the one hand, misery and poverty had maddened them against life on the other. Faith was dead and life was a disappointment. What was the issue? Hear some of Rome's agnostics: *Pliny*, declaring: "There is nothing certain but that nothing is certain; the best thing that has been given to man amid the many torments of life is, that he can take his own life." *Seneca*: "Seest thou yon steep height? Thence is the descent to freedom. Seest thou yon sea, yon river, yon well? Freedom sits there in the depths. Seest thy neck, thy throat, thy heart? They are ways of escape from bondage." Thus that sated, spoiled, atheistic people answered the question: "Is life worth living?" Their philosophy defended, their literature panegyricized suicide, and by logical consequence suicide was frightfully common.

Then look at France for connection between atheism and flippant disregard of human life. Sweden, a conservative, Christian state, furnishes suicides at the rate of one in every 92,000 inhabitants; the United States one in every 15,000; London one in every 21,000; England one in every 13,000; *Paris one in every 2,700.* Unbelief—disdain of life—suicide; these are three steps in a logical movement of human life, not noticeable in individual cases except here and there, but sure to take their places in the order of development when large masses of men share in the thought which lies at their beginning, when nations and ages give themselves up to the disintegrating work of unbelief.

It is worthy of note that the two men most conspicuous in English history as champions of unbelief in the Christian system of truth, Gibbon and Hume, were both strenuous defenders of the right of suicide.

The Christian religion is often charged with abandoning a proper concern for the present life out of undue regard for one to come. Men scoff at Christ's teaching in the question: "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" In their hearts and their practical conduct they affirm that it is folly to forego immediate and tangible advantage for any such chimera as an inheritance in heaven. And with this practical antagonism to Christ and His teachings there is coming to be joined more and more in our day the avowed and open opposition of certain schools of science and the bitter resistance of such men as Mr. Ingersoll, whose pet idea is that it is man's sole business to attend to this life; that the future is too hazy and problematical to make it worth while to bother one's self about it. But Christ is grossly misrepresented when he is made to teach less than a proper concern for the life that now is. His teachings show His acquaintance with the underlying truth which His critics seem not to know, but which a thoughtful common sense and history abundantly justify, that this life is most truly conserved and utilized by him

who lives it, keeping the other in view; that the value and reality of this life fade away before that man who ignores the other. "He who knows no goal in the life beyond, has no true aim in the present life; but when a man has found the goal of existence in the other world . . . life continually retains for him the sublime significance of a school for the life to come, and, in darkest seasons, never becomes empty and unmeaning."

This life, considered in itself, is too palpably inadequate to the demand of the human spirit that it have opportunity to assert itself, for men to fasten their attention and regard long upon this life exclusively without coming to feel unrest and dissatisfaction with life and contempt for it. And no exaltation however lofty, no idealization however refined or æsthetic, no purpose in this life however pure and noble, can long bar out of the spirit of man that deep and radical disappointment in life which comes of ignorance of the heavenly complement of the earthly part of it; or secure man against that canker of discontent with this life which eats out at the same time its significance and its joys.

This life is like a seed; he who buries it, giving it up to the use of the laws which promise a future for it and him, shall at the same time show his truest knowledge of the nature of the seed, and reap his harvest. While the harvest first, and presently the seed itself, shall seem of no reality or value to him who holds it ever in his hand, seeing in it no potency and promise of a future. *Congregationalist.*

Is one of the Rondout Churches on a recent Sunday, the supply, a minister from New York, after listening to the fine singing of an anthem, is reported to have said: "Now that the choir have had their little fun, we will commence the worship of God by singing the 90th hymn."

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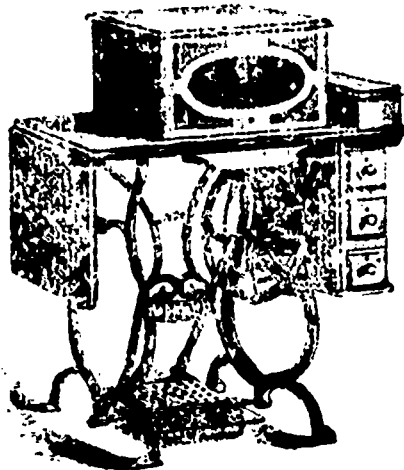
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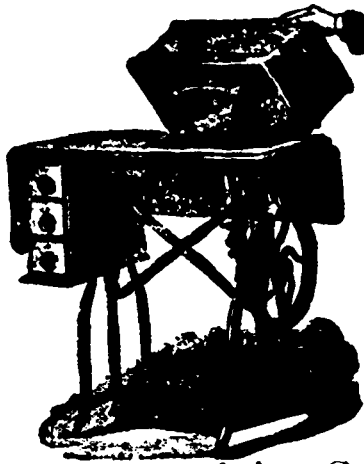
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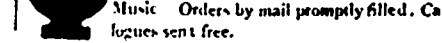
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