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# The Canadian Independent.

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

Vol. 27.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, January 8, 1880.

New Series. No. 2.

## Topics of the Week.

At the Reformed Presbyterian Church Sunday school entertainment, Cincinnati, O., on December 29, sixteen Chinamen took part. There are but thirty-four Chinamen in the city, and twenty-four are pupils of this school.

REV. DR. WILLIAM TAYLOR suggests the propriety of having missionary biographies in Sunday school libraries. The English navy, he said, had been manned by boys who had read the life of Nelson, and so the mission field might be manned by boys drawn to it by reading such lives as Livingstone's or Moffat's.

It is authoritatively stated that the attention of the Governments of Europe has recently been directed towards formulating anti-Socialistic measures. The recent attempt upon the life of the Czar of Russia is to have the effect of quickening the apprehensions of the Powers, and some stringent measures are soon to be adopted in the hope of crushing the evil. But will they succeed? we don't believe it. Mere brute force has little power over social evils of the kind referred to.

A COLOURED preacher in Georgia lately put the matter of heaven negatively after the following fashion: "Hebben ain't no place for a man who has to dodge roun' a corner for fear of meetin' some one who'll ask for dat little bill dat nebber was paid." The grammar may not be very presentable and the whole get up of the sentiment may be thought rather home-spun but there is a right good sound of common sense and correct idea about it which can stand discussion, and might occasionally be repeated to advantage.

THERE seems every prospect of the destitution in Ireland being very severe during the coming months, and in all quarters meetings are being held and organizations formed in order to send food to the starving. It is only but far on the other hand to add that some who claim to know the facts as well as those who are the greatest alarmists affirm that the destitution is not nearly so great as represented, and that a good deal of the cry is got up for political purposes. We fear the destitution is only too real, and in any case it is best to err on the side of charity and brotherhood.

AFTER remarking on the perils of ignorance, a Republican journal points out two enemies to the Republic in France, of which it speaks as follows. "The first is the 'clerical enemy,' it is powerfully organized, and its influence extends over the whole land. We must fight it to death, by saving our children from its detestable influence, and, by not letting it come forth from the threshold of its temples, or allowing it to mix in the business of the State. The second enemy of our institutions is the 'authoritative Socialist element,' which recruits its adherents in our industrial centres, where the workmen have no time for getting knowledge. Only a few read and write at all. These have passed through the clerical schools, where they have been imbued with authoritative theories, and, arrived at manhood, under the pressure of want and misery, they have passed from the religion of Catholicism to that of Socialism. Of yore they assented to the strangest dogmas, now they accept, undiscussed, the most impracticable theories. The 'notion of possibility escapes them.' They believed in the cure's miracles, now they believe in the social ones promised them by their new teachers."

MR. HAMMOND has concluded his labours in Lon-

don, Ontario, and an enthusiastic paragraphist credits one thousand conversions to his instrumentality there. We have no great liking for computations of conversions that have no basis in certainty, and think that unless they are very guarded they are in bad taste. We are, however, quite prepared to believe that much good has been accomplished in London, as in many other places, by the Children's Revivalist. As Mr. Hammond intends visiting Montreal soon, some "conservative" Christian objects to him and his methods, in the Montreal "Witness," and is answered by "A Church Deacon" in a very convincing manner, adducing facts which we know to be such. The following is the important part of his letter.— "The writer was one of a group of six or seven boys, the Secretary of the Liverpool Y. M. C. A. was another, who during Mr. Hammond's last visit to Montreal, used to meet at each other's houses for prayer. We had all enlisted under our great Captain as a result of Mr. Hammond's work, though some of us were not fond of Mr. Hammond, but were affected by the religious spirit then pervading the city. Two others of our number were active Christians in honourable positions in our city. The others also, so far as I know, remain true, and our number now represents, I think, four denominations. I was then in the High School, and well remember what a change was effected in my own form; swearing, then too common, was all but permanently abolished, and those who stood to their colours, although at first made fun of, were respected for the stand they had taken, and increased in influence. This is but one account of several that could be given of the value of true revivals by A CHURCH DEACON."

THE St. Louis correspondent of the Chicago "Interior" gives a rather distressing view of the state of religion in that city. We hope things are not so bad as he represents. Still the tendencies he speaks of and condemns are too common everywhere, and churches and localities in Canada could easily be found that would have very little reason to cast the first stone at the Christians of St. Louis, though we have not heard of any among us who have got the length of church dances "for the accommodation of society people."—"An unusually large number of our churches have resorted, this season, to fairs, concerts and bazaars for the purpose of raising funds for church purposes. This kind of work used to be left to the smaller churches, but now the large and fashionable have lifted it clear out of the reach of the feeble churches, and in so doing have not improved its morality, to say nothing of its prosperity. It is gratifying that none of the Presbyterian churches have resorted to genteel gambling, but it is humiliating to know that any Protestant church has done so. When our church notices in secular papers and our large posters announce that certain costly articles will be raffled for, and that certain evenings will be devoted to dancing, for the accommodation of society people, you don't have far to go to prove that piety is fast becoming an obsolete word. If revival was ever needed, it is needed now in the St. Louis churches. Even our music is degenerated to mere art in the hands of amateurs, and many of our sermons avoid theology from fear of being called old foggy. But still there are pupils and choirs that are not ashamed to preach and sing the gospel. In our churches also are many members who are live, working Christians." When such plans are thought to be necessary to keep any church afloat, the sooner it goes down the better. In Canada we have not got public church dancing parties, but we have plenty of private ones countenanced and encouraged by church members and office-bearers.

## SABBATH AND EXPENSIVE FUNERALS.

Efforts have long been made but with very partial success to put a stop to Sabbath funerals. It has been, and is, urged that such a practice greatly interferes with the proper ministerial work of the day, breaks in upon the Sabbath quiet, and is liable to abuses of various kinds. It is acknowledged that there are cases of such a kind that interment on the Sabbath is not only allowable but an absolute necessity, and, of course, to these no objection could ever be urged. But, such will be found to be the rare exception, rather than the ordinary rule. Usually the Sabbath is fixed on because it is a day of leisure at any rate, and because thereby the funeral can be got over without interfering with the ordinary business hours or work of the week. If the parties were so poor that every hour taken from ordinary labour implied so much less food and comfort, we should feel that even in that there was a very valid reason for Sabbath funerals, for no one could say that such necessarily, and in all cases, implied sin. On the contrary, if ever individuals may be expected to be thoughtful in spirit, tender in feeling, and devoutly reverent in the presence of God we should naturally expect that this would be when they—dying men—gather together to carry dead ones to their last resting place. In such a country as this, however, it is comparatively rare for people to be so very poor that the time taken from ordinary toil for the purpose of burying a relative or friend, could be regarded as so important as to justify of itself having the funeral on Sabbath, while in any such instances we are persuaded there would be no difficulty in having the requisite clerical attendance even on the Lord's day.

But, when ministers are directing their attention to this matter, as we see that in many localities they are, and are seeking to educate people to more correct ideas about it, they might very properly and profitably go a good way further than most of them seem to have any idea of doing. If funerals were conducted in a becoming common sense fashion, many a poor family would have good reason to rejoice and be thankful. We say nothing of the painfully unpunctual manner in which they are generally managed, though this even is a matter of no little importance. The company may, for instance, be invited for three o'clock, but it is as likely as not, that it will be four, or half-past, before an actual start is made. In winter accordingly it is as much as one's life is worth to attend a funeral, while for men in business it is an unnecessary annoyance and loss which might be easily obviated by the hour mentioned being rigidly kept, whoever might be present or whoever was expected.

What, however, is of chief moment is the foolish and unnecessary expense incurred on such occasions—expense which in very many cases can be ill-afforded and which yet will not be dispensed with from fear that it might be regarded as shabby to the living and disrespectful to the dead. The comparatively poor will not attempt a change lest their straitened circumstances should be made public and the tongues of gossip be let loose at their expense. Accordingly the well-to-do, the liberal, and the religious ought to lead the way, and introduce a more rational and less expensive fashion. Many a poor, respectable family, at the very time when every dollar is precious, is thus senselessly and cruelly taxed by Mrs. Grundy, and from fear of what people will say are all but forced to wrong the living in order to be free from the suspicion of dishonouring the dead. Ministers and elders could do a good work in this respect, by themselves setting the right example and by inducing the wealthy members of their congregations to study simplicity and inexpensiveness in their funeral arrangements. Why

should there be all the absurd paraphernalia of scarfs, hat-bands, pall-bearers, any number of cabs, etc., etc.? One does it and, therefore, another must. Anything else would be thought strange and, therefore, if necessary, the last dollar must go. There surely ought to be enough of Christian principle and consideration to have all this changed. But one won't begin, and neither will another, and so the evil continues and has always a tendency to become worse. A good many years ago there was a meeting held in a Canadian town, of the leading people in all the different Christian Churches in the locality, to consider this matter and to apply a remedy. All present ministers, elders, deacons, etc.—pledged themselves that whenever death entered their households, they should have everything connected with the funeral on the plainest and least expensive scale. Mutual congratulations were the order of the day. Everyone felt that so far as that neighbourhood was concerned, the change to the better was as good as accomplished. It was not, however. The very first time one of these pledged ones was tried in the way indicated, the promise was forgotten, and the funeral was as expensive as ever. The whole movement accordingly came to nothing. Why so? All were, we believe, perfectly honest in their expressed wish for a change. All would have been glad to see it universally made. *But none had the courage to lead the way.* Is it the same still? We fear so, and with this additional feature in many cases, that every extravagance is excused under the plea of decency and propriety, till with perhaps the majority the conviction has been arrived at, that there is no extravagance at all. People surely can shew their sorrow and can honour their dead after a better and more rational fashion. If they were but to think of the widows and orphans more, and of the lugubrious displays of the undertaker less, it would be better for all round. In the crusade against Sabbath funerals, then, let funeral extravagance and inappropriate expensive observances not be forgotten. One's grief ought not to be gauged, by the depth of the hat-bands, the breadth, length and number, of the scarfs, the decorations of the coffin, or the expensiveness of the monument. At such times individuals are not inclined to haggle over details. This renders it all the more necessary that public opinion should so make simplicity and plainness the rule, that anything else will never be tried.

#### MR. SPURGEON ON THE DRAMA.

Addressing a meeting at the Metropolitan Tabernacle upon the subject of "Timely Cautions," Mr. Spurgeon said: "I see it publicly stated by men who call themselves Christians that it would be advisable for Christians to frequent the theatre that the character of the drama might be raised. The suggestion is about as sensible as if we were bidden to pour a bottle of lavender water into a great sewer to improve its aroma. If the Church is to imitate the world to raise its tone, things have strangely altered since the day when our Lord said: 'Come ye out from among them and touch not the unclean thing.' Is heaven to descend to the infernal lake to raise its tone? Such has been the moral condition of the theatre for many a year that it has become too bad for mending, and even if it were mended it would corrupt again. Pass by it with averted gaze; the house of the strange woman is there. It has not been my lot ever to enter a theatre during the performance of a play, but I have seen enough when I have come home from distant journeys at nights whilst riding past the play-houses to make me pray that our sons and daughters may never go within the door. It must be a strange school for virtue which attracts the harlot and the debauchee. It is no place for a Christian, for it is best appreciated by the irreligious and worldly. If our church members fall into the habit of frequenting the theatre, we shall soon have them going much further in that direction of vice, and they will lose all relish for the ways of God. Theatre-going, if it become general among professing Christians, will soon prove the death of piety. One finds the taste for such things increasing on all hands, inasmuch that we cannot enter places of entertainment once dedicated to science and art with-

out finding ourselves before long in the presence of something like a theatrical performance. I do not doubt that things which may be in themselves harmless enough have tended to create and foster the taste which leads ultimately to the theatre and its surroundings. Who can suppose amusements surrounded by the seductions of vice to be fit recreations for a pure mind? Who could draw near to God after sitting to admire the performances of a wanton woman? and I am told that some who have dazzled London society are such. When manners are growing every day more lax and licentious, shall the Nonconformists of England cease from their godly protest and lower the standard of their lives? If they do so their spiritual power is departed, and their reason for existence is gone. If there ever could be a time when Christians might relax their rigidity it surely is not now, when the very air is tainted with pollution and our streets ring with new-boys' cries, vending filthy papers and abominable prints. It is sad to hear our people talk about acts of sin nowadays; how young men and women, without blushing, talk of deeds which deprave and destroy as though they were trifles or themes for jest. It is a thousand pities that the ends of justice should require the publishing of unsavoury details. I suppose there are grave objections to certain cases being heard more privately, otherwise it would assuredly be better for public morals. As for those who not only commit lewdness but take pleasure in those who do it—oh, my soul, come not thou into their secret. My heart often cries, 'Oh, that I had the wings of a dove that I might fly away and be at rest.'"  
—*The Freeman.*

#### DANCING.

While we have no direct data whereby to determine how, when, or where dancing had its beginning, yet very early records, both sacred and profane, shew, not only that it widely prevailed among rude as well as civilized nations at a far by-past period, but that the dance formed an all but indispensable element alike in their religious ceremonies and warlike celebrations. In short, all their dances were either of a sacred or soldierly character, and thus in both they danced before their altars, and around the statues of their gods. In addition to this the Greeks were wont to deify human passions, and institute and perform dances in keeping with the characters assigned to such deities. Among the more sedate Romans, however, it was reckoned disgraceful for a free citizen to dance except in connection with their religious services, hence the well-known declaration of Cicero that "no one dances unless he is either drunk or mad," and hence, also, in their festal entertainments, in early as in later times, the dancing was performed only by hired and professional dancers. All this is in full keeping with the surprise, as story tells, of the foreigner, who when he first saw, in our higher circles, so many voluntarily subjecting themselves to the frequent fatigues of the fashionable dance, wondered why they did not get their servants to do it for them. The Jews, too, in common with other nations, had from an early period their sacred dances, which were performed as expressive of their gratitude and gladness, in connection with some special manifestation of the divine favour, or in commemoration of past mercies. The Jewish dances, however, whether sacred or social, were ever performed by the sexes separately, and while in each both sexes seem to have taken part, yet they remained in distinct and separate companies, and there is no evidence in sacred history to shew that dances were promiscuously engaged in by both sexes together, except, it may be, when in the worship of the golden calf, all classes intermingled in the foolish and frantic revelry.

From a careful consideration of all that scripture says in regard to dancing, it is evident that dancing was a religious act, performed exclusively on joyous occasions, usually out of doors, in the day time, and only by one of the sexes, seeing that there is no instance in which both sexes are united in the exercise; and further, that those who perverted dancing from a sacred use, to a mere merry-making amusement, were regarded as infamous, and to be classed with the "vain

fellows" so void of shame, alluded to by Michal, or with those families of whom Job speaks, whose dancing only increased their impiety and involved destruction, or with the shameless daughter of Herodias whose dancing terminated in the rash vow of Herod and the cruel murder of John the Baptist.

In view of all, a Presbytery in the neighbouring Union published the following declaration, which may not be unworthy the attentive consideration of the churches and families of our own Dominion:

"The practice of dancing in either private or public assemblies, this Presbytery regards as eminently worldly and sinful. It has been condemned by the highest judicatory of our Church and by most, if not all, other bodies of Christians. It is engaged in but by few professors of religion comparatively, and by those not noted for high spirituality or devotedness of life. It is regarded by worldly people as an amusement peculiarly their own, and when participated in by church members, furnishes the former with occasions for triumph and boasting, and brings reproach upon the cause of Christ. It fosters the keeping of late and unseasonable hours at night, consumes much precious time in preparing for, engaging in, and recovering from the season of mirth with which it is connected. It wastes the physical energies through exhaustion or exposure, in some instances producing death. It diverts the mind from serious and sacred things, and places beauty, dress and display before sobriety, worth and wisdom. It sinks the moral beneath the physical, or makes animal pleasure a higher good than spiritual joy. It is inimical to revivals of religion and harmonizes not with a spirit of devotion. If the propriety of it were only questionable or doubtful, even then to engage in it is to stifle, and to sin against, conscience. But it is at variance with the principle which Paul propounded, and is opposed, we believe, to that blessed Book which teaches us 'that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.'" DELTA.

#### NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH.

This truth, declared by the inspired penman, man seems slow to fully appreciate. There is a sort of feeling that God has been good, and exercised some love in providing salvation for sinners, and that therefore He must be willing that sinners should be saved. But now that the provision has been made, God simply observes the issues with little more than indifference. He is pledged to give eternal life to whomsoever will believe, and He will do it. He has promised to turn none away who come to Him, and so He will not. Men may admit all this, and yet fail to realize that there is something in the heart of our Heavenly Father more than the unwavering adherence to His promises and declarations. This is indeed much; but besides this He is, we are clearly taught, interested in the matter of man's accepting the provision. He desires man's salvation—"not willing that any should perish." We would come probably more fully to realize and appreciate this fact, if we would dwell in thought more upon some of the acts of God which manifest it. These shew how very great His interest must be. The not leaving the sinner to perish in his sins, but making a provision for his escaping their consequences; the price that was paid for the redemption of man, the coming of our Saviour into this world, His life of humility and suffering, and His terrible death, all the details of which are so wonderful; the coming of the Holy Spirit to take of the things of Christ and shew them unto us; the giving to us the Word of Truth, in which the way to life is so clearly set before us, and in which so many appeals and arguments are found, urging the sinner to walk in it; the human ministers, and all the various means which He has ordained, and to which He gives such efficiency, to bring these truths to the knowledge of those for whom salvation is provided, and to impress them upon them—all these surely shew unmistakably that He who has done, and is doing this, must be deeply interested in those for whom it is done.

When we see a father lavishly spending his hard-earned money, carefully securing the very best in-

structors, and sparing no pains to place his son under the very happiest and best influences, no one would for one moment doubt that that father felt something more than simply a cold sense of duty to meet his obligations to his son, or to fulfil some previous promise which he might have made. There is evinced a deep interest in his son's welfare.

But if a man under these circumstances shews interest, how much greater is shewn by Him who has done almost infinitely more to secure an almost infinitely greater good for lost man. Surely, He is "not willing that any should perish."

Again, 'tis hard for a man to realize that our Heavenly Father is interested in him as in individual. He thinks only of a general interest.

He is ready to admit that God must be interested in the salvation of all men, but fails to realize that He is in him personally. Yet so it is. Many of the truths of God's word are addressed to the individual. It is, "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," and "him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." It is the individual. When the law was enacted giving liberty to the slaves of the Southern States it was for all, but was it any the less for each individual slave? Were not the makers of that law interested in each individual case? And any poor slave, however humble, might avail himself of it if he would, and the benefits which he received were just as secure to him, and just as great as if he had been the only one who could receive any benefit; as great as if the law had been provided especially for him.

So this salvation is for each individual just as much as if it were only for him; as if God had looked simply upon him and made all this provision for him alone.

The truth, then, evidently is that God is not willing that I, an individual, should perish. Think of that.—*Rev. G. L. Smith, in Philadelphia Presbyterian.*

#### SIX EAR-MARKS OF A LIVING CHURCH.

The brave little band which issued from the upper room in Jerusalem under the baptism of the Holy Spirit were the pioneers of Christianity. We look back to them as a model. Young as that church was, and confined to a single city, it possessed the six traits of a living, healthy church of Christ. There were six things in which they "continued steadfastly"—or as the Rhemish version has it—"they persevered." Would that all our churches now would lay hold of the same practices, and hold fast to them!

1. Their first characteristic was study of the Word. The "apostles' doctrine" signifies the teaching of fundamental truths by such men as Peter and John. The young converts were not fed on the syllabus of sensationalism, but on the strong meat of Bible doctrine. The gospel was a new revelation fresh from heaven; its two cardinal principles were repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ; and on these bottom doctrines every convert needed to be well established. It is a grievous wrong to a young convert to admit him into the Church, if he cannot "give a reason for the faith that is in him." The surest way to make him a loose, weak-backed member ever afterwards is to leave him without thorough instruction both in a Bible class and from the pulpit. False doctrine can only be kept out by putting the Bible in.

2. The second ear-mark that belonged to that Jerusalem church was their "fellowship." They began to love one another, and to manifest their fellow-feeling by meeting often, by knowing each other well, and by bearing one another's burdens. I'll warrant it that no stranger ever came into one of their meetings without being spoken to and welcomed. It has been left to some of our modern churches to allow "outsiders" to come to the house of God and go away again, without even a nod of the head, much less a kind word of greeting. Brethren, this conventional stiffness is a disgrace to a Christian church. No sinner who is out in the spiritual cold of impenitence is likely to come very often for warmth into an ice-house.

3. Nor did that early church neglect the ordinances which Christ had appointed. We are told that they continued steadfastly in the "breaking of bread."

This phrase describes something more than a social meal together. It refers to their frequent commemoration of their crucified Lord in the eucharistic supper. This feast of love was celebrated as often as once a week, and probably in a very simple fashion. It is a bad symptom in a church now-a-days when its communion seasons cease to be a full, devout, and joyful gathering of the whole flock. Why do not more revivals spring from these periodic festivals of redeeming love? Because Christ is not invited to His own table, and welcomed there by penitent, broken, loving hearts.

4. Of course that company which had just come out of a Pentecost were a praying church. When no breath issues from his patient's lips the doctor gives him up as dead. When no breath of sincere prayer issues from a church member's lips he is "dead in sin." As soon as Saul of Tarsus began to pray, he began to live.

The grievous lack of many a church, even in its devotional meetings, is a lack of prayer. Addresses and sacred song do not make up for the want of prayer, which is the one indispensable channel of blessings from the throne. Our people are surfeited with preaching. Then if they add to this starvation of prayer, how can they grow in grace, how can they become strong for God's great work of saving sinners? Those Jerusalem brethren had fifty-two "weeks of prayer" in every year.

5. Such a praying and brotherly-minded church were the very ones to sell their possessions in order to have money to give to the Lord. What costly gifts they laid at the apostles' feet for Christian charities! That Brother Barnabas was the leader and model for all the Arthur Tappans and James Lennoxes and John Wanamakers who have blessed our modern churches by their beneficence. Satan had not yet taught churches how to indulge themselves with ceiled houses and carriages, and to turn off their Master with candle ends.

6. To any church which continues steadfastly in Bible study, brotherly love, attendance upon worship, prayer, and deeds of charity, "the Lord will add daily such as are saved." Our translation of Acts ii. 47 is a clumsy one. The Greek text signifies that the Lord brought into that apostolic ark "saved ones," who would otherwise have been lost.

In the family register of our churches there ought to be more frequent additions of names under the head of "Births." And when we return to the apostolic spirit of love, faith, and hard work, there will be a constant addition from the world of precious souls new born into an everlasting life.—*Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D., in American Messenger.*

#### "THE LIMITATIONS OF LIFE," AND OTHER SERMONS.

Dr. Taylor is tolerably well known in Canada, but not nearly so much so as he deserves to be. Perhaps this has been unavoidable. He has but seldom visited the Dominion, and his public appearances before a Canadian audience, whether as a preacher or a lecturer, have been but few. It is generally known that some years ago he came from Liverpool to occupy the pulpit of the Broadway Tabernacle as occasional supply for a few weeks; that his preaching was of such a character that he was eagerly solicited to become pastor; that he consented to do so, and that ever since he has far more than realized the highest expectations of those who were chiefly instrumental in bringing him to New York. This is about all that the most of Canadians know of one who is among the most prominent and influential preachers and writers on this continent. Those of us who visit New York make it a point to hear the famous preacher of the Tabernacle, and then spread his reputation as best we may among our "kinsmen and acquaintance." But generally it is a matter of faith rather than experience. It is concluded that there must be something uncommonly attractive about both the man and his message, but wherein that attractiveness consists could not very generally or very clearly be stated or defined. We are accordingly glad that this volume of sermons has appeared, to make us all better acquainted with "the

man and his conversation," for though there is only a portrait of the preacher given, and the commanding presence, the deep-toned voice, and the kindling kindly eye of the living man are necessarily absent yet in every one of these sermons the marked individuality of Dr. Taylor comes out in striking relief, and if he "hold" not his readers "with his eye," he holds them at any rate with his masculine vigour of thought, his tender and all but womanly sympathy, his affluence of illustration, his cogency of argument, his directness of appeal, his clearness of statement, his fervid earnestness, and his unostentatious piety. To make our readers acquainted with the aim and object of this publication, and in doing so to occupy as little as possible of our space, we cannot do better than place before them the author's preface in full:

"It would neither be just to myself, nor complimentary to those who may become my readers, to say that these sermons have been chosen at random out of that pile of manuscripts which is constantly accumulating in every minister's study, and whose final destination is the fire. On the contrary, they have been deliberately selected, not only because of the present and permanent importance of their subjects, but also, and especially, because, in the experience of many who heard them, they were felt to be helpful to them in their prosecution of the Christian life. There is not a discourse here reproduced which has not already been useful to some souls, and if, when preached thus through the press, that usefulness shall be widened, the great end of their publication will be secured."

The volume contains twenty-five sermons, on subjects which are certainly, as the author says, of "present and permanent importance." While they state clearly and effectively defend some of the great doctrines of the Christian faith, they are at the same time eminently practical, and when we say "practical," we do not mean that they are mere secular essays, "of the earth, earthy," but such discourses as teach practical religion, and bring Gospel principles to bear upon every-day life. The first sermon—that which supplies a title for the book—has for its text Paul's "autographic endorsement" to the Epistle to the Colossians, "Remember my bonds," and the following are its opening words:

"What an exquisite pathos there is in these words of Paul! He is now 'such an one as Paul the aged,' and the tremour of years is in his hand. He is, besides, 'the prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ,' and the chain by which his right arm is bound to the left arm of the 'soldier that kept him,' impedes the free motion of his wrist, so that he cannot write with his usual ease. Hence, as he takes the pen from his amanuensis and appends the salutation whereby this letter was to be authorized, he delicately apologizes for the uncouth irregularity of the characters which he has traced by adding this clause, 'Remember my bonds.'"

From the apostle's condition and conduct under his "bonds," the preacher draws practical lessons for the Christian under all the "imitations of life." From the numerous cases in point which are adduced, the following may be taken as a sample:

"I am sorry that there should be need for such a style of remark. But the tendency of much that is said nowadays is to make one dissatisfied with himself if he be not engaged in some way, in one or other of the common departments of ecclesiastical work. Now, it is good to have a church which will realize John Wesley's idea, 'at work, all at work and always at work.' But it is not good to advocate this in such a way as shall wound those who, because of the limiting conditions of their lives, cannot respond to the call as, in other circumstances, they would. I have known a gentle heart well nigh broken because a minister, more remarkable for zeal than wisdom, almost as good as declared that those who were connected with the church, and who did not engage in a certain kind of work were unworthy to be called Christians. But if he had only known it, the truth was that the quiet one whom he had almost crushed was every day doing a kind of service for Christ which required far more self-denial than that to which the preacher would have summoned her, and one, too, which she could not have neglected without sin."

But our space is more than exhausted; only we are sure that our readers will thank us, should they be induced by what we have said to purchase the volume and thus be able to judge for themselves. If things were as they ought to be with the reading Christian people of the Dominion, the demand for such a work ought to be such as to justify the issue of a Canadian edition, and not a pirated one either.

We cannot skip the seasons of our education. We cannot hasten the ripeness and the sweetness by a single day, nor dispense with one night's nipping frost, nor one week's blighting east wind.

THE  
CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, JANUARY 8th, 1880.

All communications for the Editorial, News of Churches, and Correspondence Columns should be addressed to the Managing Editor, Box 2648, P.O. Toronto.

Pastors and church officers are particularly requested to forward items for "News of the Churches" column.

POWER FROM ON HIGH.

BEFORE this reaches the readers of the INDEPENDENT, the "Week of Prayer" for 1880 will be well nigh over, though its influence upon us will, we hope, have only just begun. Such an observance ought to be to all the churches of Christ "the beginning of days." It has been placed at the commencement of the year, rather than at Lent, at which season Dr. Bacon suggests it should be observed, that it may bring with it a divine inspiration, and may permanently raise and sustain the tone of the general church life throughout the year. Without that result we doubt if it does not actually do harm instead of good. A week of prayer, *without prayer* in any true sense of the word, is an anomaly, an abortion, a reproach. Of such sacrifices the God of Israel has said "These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day." Humble, believing prayer, on the other hand, is as the incense of the evening sacrifice. And in respect of the effect of such services upon ourselves, we may say as Paul said of religious teaching and observances generally "The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life."

What, then, shall be the effect of the week of prayer on us for 1880? Shall it be a mere *spurt* of religious feeling, a momentary *effervescence* to be followed by a corresponding flatness and indifference? It will probably, as in past years, be the occasion of some "revivals," and additions to the churches. A few drops of heavenly blessing will doubtless fall upon the parched land—perhaps even a shower that shall water the earth. But far more needed, as it appears to us, is the increase of general religious vitality in the Church of God. That is *true* revival. We need to pray more that we may feel how much more there is to pray for, and so go on to "pray without ceasing," to continue "instant in prayer," for it all centres here. As a Christian pastor, the writer is impressed more deeply than ever with the fact, and that it is a fact, that what we want, and must have, if we are to do God's work well this year, is the power from on high. The great Sower did not go forth Himself to sow until He had been baptized of the Holy Ghost, and, for the same reason, He forbade His disciples to leave Jerusalem until they had been endued with that power. And can we do without it? Very much is said about raising the standard of ministerial ability and attainments—of the need of a higher style of pulpit ministrations, and of something to suit the literary tastes, and cope with the keen criticism of the age in which we live. No doubt. The Lord send His people the best "brain and brawn" in the land for our colleges and pulpits! But our great want is not "excellency of speech and of wisdom," not even the clearer and fuller setting forth of the gospel which is God's wisdom and power, but the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire. We have prophesied long enough to the "dry bones;" now let us prophesy to the Breath, that it may breathe upon them, and they shall live. We have honoured the Word, have we sufficiently honoured the Divine Spirit, by Whom alone even that Word can be made effectual?

GENEVA, CANTERBURY, OR —

FOR some time past the readers of the Toronto "Globe" have been treated to articles on Geneva, Canterbury, with an occasional by-look to Rome. It does not seem to have entered into the minds of either party in the case that another alternative church might be quoted, *viz.*, that of Jerusalem, which though it may, as Bishop Lightfoot says, have presented "the earliest instance of a bishop," was evidently independent either of formulated creed, or

external church authority. Indeed the newspaper controversy reminds one of the Irishman to whom was referred the question whether "either" should be pronounced *e-ther* or *i-ther*, when he replied, "Its nather, but its *a-ther*."

An impartial umpire might say in *re* Geneva *re* Canterbury—It is neither, but a church, or rather churches, to which no merely local name can be affixed, it is Congregational.

If the question to be settled is, What was the ascertained government of the New Testament Church? the matter should not be so very difficult. More recent and exact inquiry has not falsified the conclusions of Mosheim and Neander, who are still respectable authorities on Church History. Mosheim writes of the first century: "All the churches in those primitive times were independent bodies, none of them subject to the jurisdiction of any other. For though the churches which were founded by apostles frequently had the honour shewn them to be consulted in difficult and doubtful cases, yet they had no judicial authority, no control, no power of giving laws. On the contrary, *it is clear as the noon-day* that all Christian Churches had *equal rights*, and were in all respects on a footing of equality. Nor does there appear in the first century any vestige of that convocation of the churches of the same province which gave rise to councils and metropolitans." Neander with equal decision though more elaborately asserts the same, *etc.*, the condition is stated as "a sisterly system of equality in the relation of churches to each other," and the "choice by each separate church of its own presidents, presbyters, or bishops." And Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons (A.D. 150-204), in a letter to Victor of Rome, expressly disapproves of the attempt being made "to impose one form of churchly life upon all churches, declaring that nothing was needed but faith and love, and that these so far from being injured by differences in outward things, would only shine forth more clearly through their very differences."

In brief we have no authority for asserting Presbyteries and Synods in the modern acceptation of those terms to have had even the shadow of an existence during apostolic days. Nor can the gathering at Jerusalem of which the history is given, be fairly pressed into the service, for we have no evidence of a strictly representative character as endued with ecclesiastical authority, nor that any churches were represented at all save those of Antioch and Jerusalem. If, as our Presbyterian brethren in their standards maintain that God is only to be worshipped by the ordinances He has appointed, and that government in form is such an ordinance; or if, as our High Church friends assert, there is special virtue in Apostolic Succession, than neither with Episcopacy nor Presbytery rests the *jus divinum*, but with a body which though in Canada comparatively small, is yet exerting some scriptural influence on surrounding churches and is called CONGREGATIONAL.

TRUTH AND TEACHINGS.

PROFESSOR DAWSON, of Montreal, in a lecture delivered last week for the Young Men's Christian Association of Toronto, said that the supposed conflict between Science and Religion was due, not to any real opposition of the two, for there was none, but to the dogmas of the scientists on the one hand, and the dogmas of theologians on the other; the former made science responsible for their own interpretation of its teachings, and the latter fastened on the Bible, in an equally unauthorized way, their views and theories of the Divine government. These are reasonable words, and we thank Dr. Dawson for them, though others have given utterance to the same sentiments, but in this case there will be no suspicion of disloyalty to the truths either of Science or the Word of God.

We cannot get too firmly impressed on our own minds, or too emphatically teach to our young people not only that there is not, but that there cannot be, any conflict between the revelations of God—Nature and the Word; the truths which the stars, the rocks and

the rivers teach, are not in opposition to those taught to holy men of old by the Spirit of God.

We, as Protestants, take for our rallying cry that famous utterance of Chillingworth's, "The Bible, the Bible alone the religion of Protestants," but the fact is that we, after our fashion, are bound by the traditions of men; we have our Bible, it is true, open before us, free, untrammelled—thank God for that, but do we bring opinions and teachings uttered in its name to the test of its pages? Verily, no, but we receive men-made doctrines, which are given to us, honestly and sincerely enough, but erringly, and measure the truths of nature and science by them, a process which too often drives our young men into doubt and unbelief, makes shipwreck of faith and everlasting hope.

In speaking thus, we are of course referring to those points where more especially the Bible and Natural Science touch, we are not referring to the cardinal, purely Biblical truths of our faith, though even there is an accretion of human thought and teaching which appears at times as if it would completely cover and hide the Divine.

What then shall we say? More bible study, not simply Bible reading, that is good as far as it goes, but diligent, earnest, prayerful Bible study. But will not that lead to a still greater diversity of thought and opinion? Will it not multiply sects? We think not; we have a profound conviction that as men are found diligently inquiring for the truth, minor differences will vanish and they will come nearer together in faith and practice. But were it otherwise, we should still rejoice that it was a seeking for truth that had produced such effect, feeling assured that the ultimate result must be good. "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

THE PEW TO THE PULPIT.

IN the "Contemporary Review" for December appear a series of letters addressed by John Ruskin, the celebrated artist and author, to the clergy of the Church of England. They were produced in reply to an invitation by the secretary of a clerical society to Mr. Ruskin to give his views and opinions on clerical work and duty, apparently, for this is not positively stated, we only gather it inferentially. The importance of these letters, coming as they do from a man of such eminence and so highly considered in the communion to which he belongs, can hardly be overrated. The Rev. F. A. Malleon, to whom they were addressed, evidently thinks that they point to important changes in the Church, for he says in his "Introduction" to the letters, "The draught may be a bitter one for some of us, but it is a salutary medicine, and we ought not to shrink from swallowing it," and again, "If we do go forward straight in the direction which Mr. Ruskin points out, I know we shall come, sooner or later, to a chasm right across our path. Some of us, I hope, will undoubtedly cross it."

What, then, it may be asked, is the purport of these letters? Put into the briefest form, we would say that they advocate practical teaching by the clergy, and something like purity of communion. Mr. Ruskin starts with asking two questions—"What is a clergyman of the Church of England?" and, giving the answer himself, supposes "that the clergy of the Church of England are teachers, not of the Gospel to England, but of the Gospel to all nations; and not of the Gospel of Luther, not of the Gospel of Augustine, but of the Gospel of Christ,—then the second question would be: Can this Gospel of Christ be put into such plain words and short terms that a plain man may understand it? and, if so, would it not be, in a quite primal sense, desirable that it should be so?" Then, in the next letter: "And might not such definition—'what the Gospel is'—acceptable to the entire body of the Church of Christ, be arrived at by merely explaining, in their completeness and life, the terms of the Lord's Prayer—the first words taught to children all over the Christian world?" Again, "My meaning in saying that the Lord's Prayer might be made a foundation of Gospel teaching, was not that it contained all that Christian ministers have to teach; but that it contains what all Christians are agreed upon as first to be taught." In subsequent letters he enlarges upon the

separate petitions, shewing, as he thinks, how this teaching would be developed.

With reference to the second point we notice—purity of communion—we cull one or two sentences. "Without dwelling on the possibility—which I do not, myself, however, for a moment doubt—of an honest clergyman's being able actually to prevent the entrance among his congregation of persons leading openly wicked lives, could any subject be more vital to the purpose of your meetings than the difference between the present and the probable state of the Christian Church which would result, were it more the effort of zealous parish priests, instead of getting wicked poor people to come to church, to get wicked rich ones to stay out of it." Further, "Lest in any discussion of this question it might be, as it too often is, alleged that 'the Lord looketh upon the heart,' let me be permitted to say . . . that, while indeed it is the Lord's business to look upon the heart, it is the pastor's to look upon the hands and lips; and that the foulest oaths of the thief and the street-walker are, in the ears of God, sinless as the hawk's cry or the gnat's murmur, compared to the responses, in the Church service, on the lips of the usurer and the adulterer, who have destroyed not their own souls only, but those of the outcast ones whom they have made their victims."

It is not our purpose now to criticise or further to follow these letters; we shall return to the subject. We only wanted to give the readers of the INDEPENDENT an idea of the new movement in the Established Church of England, the welfare and purity of which must largely affect the state of religion in the fatherland. These are brave words spoken by a strong man, and we shall await with interest the upspringing and fruition of this seed, for we think that it will not fall to the ground and die.

THE Annual Convention of the "Ontario Branch of the Dominion Alliance for the Total Suppression of the Liquor Traffic," is announced to take place in Toronto, on the 15th inst. The subjects to be discussed are of a thoroughly practical character, and we join the promoters in expressing a hope that all temperance workers, and friends of the cause, will attend the Convention.

How much easier it is to talk than to work, and how glibly men can speak and write about things of which they are practically ignorant. We notice in one of the Sunday school periodicals this month an article on Sunday school work by one who was once pastor of a church in one of our western cities, but whose utter indifference to, and neglect of his school disheartened the teachers, and helped largely to the final violent rupture of the pastoral connection. "Lord, have we not taught in Thy name?"

## News of the Churches.

**NORTH ERIN.**—The members of this church and congregation lately gave their pastor, Rev. F. Wrigley, a surprise, presenting him with \$10 in money and many other gifts of value.

**MANILLA.**—An entertainment took place in the Congregational church, on Christmas night. The lady members of the church collected amongst themselves the sum of \$45 which they presented to the Rev. D. McKinnon, their worthy pastor, as a token of their love and esteem. M. N. McFadyen, of Sunderland, occupied the chair. Interesting addresses were delivered by the pastor and J. McKinnon, of Manilla, and others. The attendance was good.

**SARNIA.**—The Ladies' Aid in connection with the Congregational church here, held a most successful bazaar on the 16th and 17th of December. A few months ago this society handed over to the Building Committee the sum of \$133, to help on with the new church. They then set to work energetically, as ladies can, to prepare for a bazaar to replenish their treasury. Friends from other churches, seeing their efforts to help themselves, contributed a number of small articles which helped to make up a grand display

of fancy and useful articles. The tables also were kept well supplied with roast beef, turkey, ducks, oysters and all the other good things of the season. And the "hum" resulted in over \$200, which we consider good for "hard times."

**FROME.**—The anniversary of Frome Sunday school this year proved to be one of the most interesting ever held. The plan adopted was the wise one of leaving the children to give almost the entire entertainment. Owing to faithful labours and careful training on the part of Misses R. Horton and F. Silcox, nearly every child in the school took some part, and with scarcely an exception all acquitted themselves perfectly. An innovation was made by dispensing with refreshments, except refreshments for the mind. Short addresses were given by the Revs. A. Kennedy (M. E.), and W. J. Cuthbertson. The church was tastily decorated. All present declared it the best entertainment of the kind ever witnessed. A new library has just been introduced, and the proceeds, amounting to over \$30, cleared all liabilities.

**WATFORD.**—An entertainment was held, on Dec. 30th, 1879, at Zion Church, Warwick, in connection with our Sabbath school in that place. A beautiful Christmas Tree, well laden with presents, presented a most attractive appearance. There were also excellent addresses by several clergymen, choice music by a choir of the young people of the Sabbath school, and some very little girls, and a band of musicians from Watford. also, some very good recitations. The whole entertainment was of a very high order, and reflects great credit upon those who laboured so faithfully to make it a success. There was a very noticeable departure, in this instance, from the old-time practice of expensive tea-meetings, entailing an endless amount of labour and toil upon the few. This was a truly enjoyable occasion, a literary and spiritual feast. Rev. H. J. Colwell, the pastor, presided on the occasion; whose family was very kindly remembered in the distribution of the presents. Proceeds, above expenses, \$36.

**QUEBEC.**—The Sunday school children under the inspiration of the Christmas-tide, prepared "Carols" which they invited the friends of the school to hear on Tuesday evening, 23rd ult. After tea, the musical and literary portion of the programme was attended to. The chair was occupied by the Superintendent, Deacon W. C. Young, who expressed his pleasure at seeing so many manifesting their interest in the school. The singing by the children was excellent. The pieces selected were of a suitable Christmas character, such as "In a Manger Laid so Lonely," etc. The Infant Class sang very sweetly "We are Little Travellers," and "Beautiful Sunshine." Readings, recitations, and singing, made up a very enjoyable programme. The proceedings closed with a brief address by the pastor, who thanked the friends who had so kindly provided this treat for the children; and the children for the pleasure they had afforded by their singing. He trusted that the interest felt in the school, by the parents, would be deepened, and that the Saviour King would have many loyal subjects from our Sunday school.

**PINEGROVE.**—The installation services in connection with the settlement of the Rev. Robert Hay, in Pinegrove, took place on the evening of New Year's Day. The evening was bright and sleighing good. Mr. Hay is no stranger to the people of this district, having been the pastor of this same church some eleven years ago—indeed, the present handsome and commodious place of worship was built during his former ministry. The respect in which he is held by the whole community was seen on that night, when men of all denominations crowded into the church to welcome him back again. Squire Wallace, having been called to the chair, spoke of the purpose for which they were gathered, and called upon the Rev. Mr. Unsworth, of Georgetown, who addressed the people on the distinctive features of Congregational Independency. Rev. W. H. Warriner, of Yorkville, followed, speaking of the relation of the people to their pastor. Rev. Mr. Pettigrew, Presbyterian minister, welcomed the new Pastor with kindly greet-

ing. Mr. Unsworth, being again called to the platform, shewed how the people could help their pastor, and, in the name of his brethren in the ministry, extended to Mr. Hay the right hand of fellowship. Mr. Hay replied in a few appropriate words, referring to his former labours among them, and looking forward to a ministry of labour and joy. A pleasing feature of the evening's programme was the children's Christmas Tree, and the happy union of pastor's reception and children's gladness seemed symbolical of the true relation of the ministry to the children. We wish Brother Hay much happiness in his work.—*CON.*

**INTERESTING PRESENTATION.**—During the late work of church building in Shedden, one member of the M. E. church, Mr. James Ball, was requested to act on the Building Committee with the Congregationalists. He immediately consented, and throughout the work acted with as great zeal and energy as any one concerned, besides giving liberally. On New Year's night his co-workers on the Committee, with their wives and a few friends, gave him a "surprise." After the greetings of the season had been exchanged, and some music rendered by Miss F. Silcox, the Rev. W. J. Cuthbertson rose, and in a speech highly laudatory of the exceptional Christian charity and true devotion shewn by Mr. Ball in his labours on this Committee, handed him an album containing the portraits of his co-workers, with their wives, and bearing this inscription, "Presented to Mr. James Ball, January 1st, 1880, by his co-workers on the Building Committee of the Shedden Congregational Church, as a slight expression of their high regard and cordial appreciation of his hearty interest and earnest labour in the erection of the above church. (Signed) W. J. Cuthbertson, pastor; Geo. Silcox, deacon; F. Warren, deacon; John Silcox, W. Silcox." Mr. Ball replied in a characteristically modest speech, disclaiming any particular merit, and expressing his conviction that the unbroken unanimity and good feeling that had marked the working of the Committee had been due to the fact that each had esteemed others better than themselves. This was followed by a few remarks from Messrs. George, John and William Silcox, and F. Warren. After partaking of refreshment, the remainder of the evening was spent in social enjoyment.

**COBBOURG.**—On the evening of Dec. 18th, 1879, three of the Sabbath school scholars, Misses Mattie Graham, Sarah and Kate Wood, visited the Congregational parsonage, Cobourg, and presented their pastor, Mr. Hugh Pedley, with a Christmas gift, consisting of a silver cake basket, butter cooler, and napkin ring, all of beautiful design. These were accompanied by the following address: "Dear pastor,—We, the children of your congregation and Sunday school, wish you to know that we are deeply grateful to you for the constant interest and sympathy you have, in so many ways, manifested towards us, and for the earnest and faithful instructions you have given us from Sabbath to Sabbath. We can never forget, dear pastor, the beautiful truths you have taught us out of God's Word, directing and alluring us to wisdom's paths, and admonishing us that, 'Twill save us from a thousand snares, to mind religion young.' If we have learned to love the blessed Saviour more; if we have derived increasing pleasure and profit from the study of the Bible, and have grown more attached to the house of God and the Sunday school, it is chiefly owing to your earnest and affectionate labours as our religious teacher and pastor. Dear pastor, as this is the happy Christmas time, we hope you will accept a Christmas offering from us—these pieces of plate—as a slight token of our love and gratitude. In conclusion, we all unite in wishing you a very happy Christmas and New Year. Signed on behalf of the children, Mattie Graham, Katie Wood, Sarah Wood. Cobourg, Ont., Christmas, 1879." The pastor, in a few words, expressed his surprise, and his admiration of the handsome presents, together with his special gratification at feeling that the young people of his congregation were in sympathy with him in his work as teacher, friend and pastor.

**COLDSPRINGS.**—One of the best soirees ever held in

Coldsprings, came off on Friday evening, the 2nd inst. The Coldsprings people know how to get up a soiree, and their enthusiasm was roused to a more than usual degree by the object for which this one was set on foot, the sending of a New Year's gift to the church in Winnipeg. The Coldsprings people are interested in our enterprise there for two reasons: they have their share of the missionary spirit which rejoices in spreading the Gospel, and some of their own friends have already gone west, with more to follow before long. So the proposal to hold their annual tea meeting and devote the proceeds to the building fund of Mr. Ewing's church, was taken up at once, and the affair came off just a week from the first suggestion of the idea. The night was fine and the sleighing good, and people came from far and near; the Cobourg church being represented by seven or eight sleigh loads of good folks, who took advantage of the occasion to shake off the soberness of city life and enjoy a hilarious ride into the country. Tea was served in the Town Hall, and after doing justice to the excellent provision, the large crowd present adjourned to the Council Chamber up-stairs, where a most enjoyable programme was introduced by a few appropriate remarks by the pastor. The musical part was entrusted to the choir of the Cobourg Congregational church, and they were ably assisted by Miss Appleby and her two brothers. Miss Appleby in her solo, and in the rendering of her part in the duett and quartette, won golden opinions; and the whole musical entertainment was received with delight by the appreciative audience. The making of the speeches fell to the lot of Messrs Beattie, Daboe, and C. S. Pedley, the two former gentlemen being the Presbyterian and Bible Christian ministers of the neighborhood, who by their presence and kind words manifested the sort of sympathy which, coming from the ministers of the different denominations in Winnipeg, cheered Mr. Ewing's heart on his first arrival there. After the usual votes of thanks the meeting broke up, singing "God Save the Queen." Somewhere about \$50 was realized, and it is whispered that the Cobourg people intend, some time soon, to hold a concert, so as to increase this sum by a corresponding amount.

Correspondence.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

DEAR SIR,—A person calling himself a Congregational minister, is at present collecting subscriptions on behalf of the "Waubuno" sufferers, in some of the frontier towns.

It would be well to warn your readers against him, as he has no authority whatever to canvass on behalf of the Relief Fund. G. W. HODGKINS,

Sec.-Treas. Waubuno Relief Fund. Collingwood, Jan. 5, 1880.

Religious News.

It is said that the "Old Catholics" desire henceforth to be called "Christ Catholics."

THE first Protestant Church in the Tyrol was consecrated on the 2nd of November at Innsbruck.

THE Baptist Missionary Society of Great Britain was founded in 1791, and the London Missionary Society dates back to 1795.

IN 1830 the native Christians in India, Burmah, and North and South Ceylon numbered 27,000. Last October there were 460,000.

THE Mennonites are about to establish a mission among the Indians in the island of Kodiak, six hundred miles west of Sitka, Alaska.

SEVEN Congregational churches in Alabama have grown out of missionary effort from Talladega College, and are ministered unto by students or graduates from its theological department.

A CONGREGATIONAL house of worship is in process of erection at Leadville, Col., and a church will be organized and a good and gifted man sought for its pulpit. The Greely Congregational church, Col., has made a contract for a convenient and tasteful brick edifice.

THE New Jersey Congregational minutes shew a list of thirty-one churches (eight of them in Pennsylvania, Maryland, District of Columbia, or Virginia), having a total membership of 4,685, with a net gain of fifty-three for the year; total charities, \$15,055, home expenses, \$67,802.

The Sunday School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON III

Jan. 18, 1880. JESUS BAPTIZED BY JOHN. Matt. iii. 1-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—Matt. iii. 17.

HOME STUDIES.

- M. Luke ii. 40-52 ... The Childhood of Jesus
T. Mal. iii. 1-12. ... The Messenger Promised.
W. Luke i. 1-25 ... His Birth Predicted.
Th. Luke i. 57-80. ... The Prediction Fulfilled.
F. Luke iii. 1-22. ... The Ministry of John.
S. John i. 19-34 ... John's Testimony concerning Jesus.
Sab. Matt. iii. 1-17 ... Baptism of Jesus.

HELPS TO STUDY.

Having recorded the principal events connected with the Saviour's birth, Matthew, omitting a period of twenty-five years, takes up the history at the beginning of His public ministry.

Of the Saviour's History during these twenty-five years all we know is that, at the age of twelve, He was, a second time, taken to the temple at Jerusalem, this being the period at which Jewish boys became "Sons of Commandment," and were expected to observe the ceremonial law; and that He lived retired and unnoticed at Nazareth, assisting Joseph in his humble occupation (Compare Matt xiii. 55 with Mark vi. 3).

For an account of the birth and parentage of John the Baptist see Luke i. He was six months older than Jesus, and is described in our lesson as making his first public appearance as the last prophet of the old economy, preaching the baptism of repentance, and introducing the Gospel dispensation. Our lesson naturally falls under two heads: (1) The Baptist's Ministry, (2) The Public Appearance and Baptism of Jesus.

I. THE BAPTIST'S MINISTRY.—Vers. 1-10. Under this head the following subdivisions may be found convenient: (1) The Preacher and his Subject, (2) A Religious Revival, (3) A Generation of Vipers descended from Abraham, (4) The Doom of the Fruitless Tree.

1. The Preacher and his Subject.—Ver. 1-4. The promised forerunner (Malachi iii. 1; iv. 5) now appears.

In those days: while Christ was living at Nazareth (Matt. ii. 23). Luke gives the exact time as marked by the national records, "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar" (Luke iii. 1).

Came John the Baptist, from the desert. (Luke i. 80). The title "Baptist" distinguishes John from his fellow prophets of the old dispensation. He may be regarded as their representative, closing the ceremonial era, ushering in the Gospel, and pointing to "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

That John properly belonged to the old dispensation is very plainly indicated in Matt. xi. 11; and in verse 14 of the same chapter he is identified with the "Elias" or "Elijah" foretold by Malachi. Even in his dress he resembled the Tishbite (2 Kings i. 8). His raiment of camel's hair and his ascetic mode of life constituted him the personification of repentance.

Preaching: proclaiming or heralding; in the wilderness: the uncultivated part of the country, uninhabited by men, but not desert or barren; his audiences followed him there.

Repent ye: change your minds, turn from sin to God. Why? Because you will be punished if you don't? Yes, that is true, but that is not the reason that John gives. He has a better reason... His is not a mission of despair but one of hope.

For the kingdom of heaven is at hand: there is hope; the Saviour is about to be revealed; He will save the penitent sinner; there is no occasion for you going down to destruction.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness. The prophecy referred to here is in Isaiah xi. 3. Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Eastern monarchs on their journeys sent heralds before them so that the roads might be put in good condition. Does not this voice still sound in our ears?

2. A Religious Revival.—Vers. 5-6. John's preaching attracted multitudes, some, no doubt, from their knowledge of the scriptures recognizing him as the forerunner, others drawn by curiosity, see Matt. xi. 7: "What went ye out into the wilderness to see?"

Confessing their sins. In "the baptism of repentance" they confessed their sins, and therefore their need of a Saviour.

3. A Generation of Vipers descended from Abraham.—Vers. 7-9. The self-righteousness of the Pharisees and the infidelity of the Sadducees precluded them from honestly receiving the baptism of repentance as long as they held to their old principles. They were bitterly opposed to Christ and to the principles of the Gospel. Children are like their parents. Pharisees, Sadducees, and in fact all, while in their natural state, are in their character, not like God, nor even like Abraham, but like the "old Serpent." In John viii. 44, we find Christ Himself saying to the Pharisees: "Ye are of your father, the devil."

Descent from Abraham could save no one; neither can

any sort of connection with the Church or with God's people, but real union to the Saviour, save anyone now. And still Abraham is not to be left childless, for

God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. To give a gentile a place among God's chosen would seem to a Pharisaic Jew as great a miracle as to make church members out of stones; and in one sense is it not even so? Can anything short of a miracle change the stony heart of either Gentile or Jew?

4. The Doom of the Fruitless Tree.—Ver. 10. The blow be struck at any moment. "Be ye also ready."

II. THE PUBLIC APPEARANCE AND BAPTISM OF JESUS. Vers. 11-17. The following sub-divisions may be made under this head: (1) The Announcement, (2) The Appearance, (3) The Baptism, (4) The Trinity Revealed.

1. The Announcement. Vers. 11, 12. John claimed no saving efficacy for his own ministry. His office and his aim was to direct attention to the Saviour.

Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. To unloose the sandals from the feet of a person who had just entered, and bear them away to be cleaned, was considered the most menial work; but to do this for Christ, John would consider an honour of which he was not worthy.

Whose fan is in his hand. Compare this with Malachi iii. 18 and iv. 1, and Isaiah xxi. 10. His wheat: the true children of God. The chaff: the wicked that are mixed with the good in the Church.

2. The Appearance.—Vers. 13, 14. In John i. 28, we find that John the Baptist was at Bethabara when Christ came to him. The Saviour was now entering the thirtieth year of his age. This was the age at which the priests entered into their office (Numbers iv. 2). John knew Jesus as his Saviour and was not willing to baptize Him or do anything that might be taken as implying superiority to Him. But Jesus overruled his scruples, giving as His reason, thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness; to attend to all proper ordinances, for the sake of example.

3. The Baptism.—Ver. 15, 16. When Christ insisted on being baptized, John yielded. Jacobus says: "A sense of personal unfitness should never keep us from performing any enjoined duty. He who commands also warrants and helps."

The preposition translated out of, in verse 16, is in most other places rendered from.

4. The Trinity Revealed. Ver. 16, 17. At the opening of His ministry, Christ received a public recognition from heaven as the Messiah. This seems to have been in answer to prayer (Luke iii. 21). The persons of the Godhead are nowhere more plainly distinguished than in this passage; the Son stands there in human form; the Spirit appears "in a bodily shape, like a dove;" and the Father speaks from heaven saying: This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

A SENSIBLE LADY'S REASONS FOR NOT DANCING.

1. Dancing would lead me into crowded rooms and late hours, which are injurious to health and usefulness.

2. Dancing would lead me into very close contact with promiscuous company, and evil communications corrupt good manners.

3. Dancing would require me to use and permit freedom with the other sex, of which I should be heartily ashamed, and which I believe to be wrong.

4. My parents and real friends would be anxious and grieved about me if I were out late and keeping company with they know not whom.

5. Ministers and good people in general disapprove of it, and I think it not safe to set myself against them. It is at least doubtful, and I wish to be on the safe side.

6. Dancing in promiscuous assemblies has a bad name, and I wish to study the things which are pure and lovely and of good report.

7. Dancing is generally accompanied with drink, and I see drunkenness produces much evil. I cannot countenance anything which leads to it.

8. I am told that dancing is a great temptation and a snare to young men, and I shall not have anything to do in leading them astray.

9. Dancing unfits the mind for serious thought and prayer, and I mean to do nothing which gets between my Saviour and me.

10. There are plenty of graceful exercises and cheerful amusements which have none of these objections connected with them, and of which I can innocently and profitably avail myself.

It is stated that the Roman Cardinals have advised the Pope not to reopen the Vatican Council. It could not, they say, be held in Rome at present, and no other place could be thought of.

The amount received on Sabbath, 28th Dec., in New York from collections in churches and other places for the benefit of the Protestant and Hebrew hospitals will probably exceed \$35,000.

ANOTHER important old manuscript has been found in a famous Greek monastery on Mount Athos, which it is believed may throw some light on difficult passages in the Epistles of St. Paul.

THE New Testament Committee of the American Bible Revision Committee held their last meeting on the 26th and 27th ult. It is expected the revised New Testament will be published by the English University Presses this year, which is the first semi-centennial of the publication of the Wickliffe Bible, the first translation into the English language.





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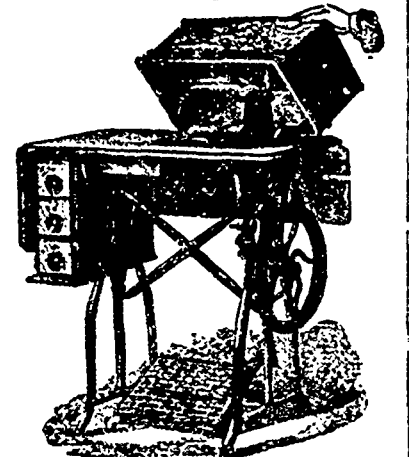
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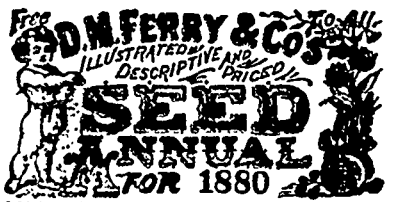
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