

old to attend the house of God at all. In the United States the adult Bible School has become a highly prized and very important institution. In Springfield, Mass. there is a large and flourishing Baptist Church which devotes every Sunday afternoon to the congregational study of God's word. While the children occupy the vestry and basement rooms with their classes, the adults of the church and congregation are gathered in the main audience room engaged in studying the Bible; and the number in attendance is almost equal to that present at the regular preaching services. There the aged pilgrim of 70 or 80 years may be seen reciting his Scripture lesson, and increasing his knowledge of the truths that save. By this means the church develops her strength and beauty.

The prime object of all Sunday School and Bible class instruction should be to assist those under instruction, whether young or old, to search and understand the word of God. The Psalmist says "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." But it is necessary to see the light in order that it be a guide to us. The great object then should be to lead souls to behold the light of God's truth. Let those who attempt to teach, never be satisfied till they see those whom they instruct laying hold of the thoughts contained in the passage before them. It will often require patient effort and thoughtful planning in order to set the scholars at work digging in the mine for the sparkling gems of truth, but until this is done, but little has been accomplished.

Finally, if we, either children, or those more advanced in years, would be holy or happy or useful, or strong to resist temptation and to labor for Christ we must "Search the Scriptures."

For the Christian Messenger.

#### ONTARIO CORRESPONDENCE.

THANKSGIVING DAY IN ONTARIO—THINGS TO BE THANKFUL FOR—MATERIAL PROSPERITY—GOOD GOVERNMENT—RELIGIOUS FREEDOM—SUCCESS AND FAILURE IN CHRISTIAN WORK.

The recommendation of the second Sabbath in December, as a day of Thanksgiving and Prayer in Ontario, naturally suggests the inquiry, What have we to give thanks for? The answer is not far to find. During the year so rapidly drawing to a close the bounties of Providence have been neither few nor small. In whatever direction we may turn we cannot fail to find occasion for gratitude. The harvest has been on the whole an abundant one. The farmers' barns and cellars are bounteously filled. Commercial activity and enterprise have been conspicuous amongst us and in the main, successful. On every hand we find tokens of material prosperity. New railways are being rapidly constructed by private enterprise in various sections of the country, and fresh projects, some of them of startling magnificence, are being continually broached. Some of them may be long in finding means of accomplishment, but those who are accustomed to watch the progress of large conceptions, through all their stages from incredulity and ridicule, through half-sceptical investigation, painstaking inquiry, exact calculation and organized effort to practical accomplishment and triumphant success,—those who have been compelled perforce to have faith in tunnelled mountains, Atlantic Cables, Suez Canals and St. Lawrence Bridges—would scarcely be wise to scout at Grand Ship Canal or North Pacific Railway schemes. At any rate the birth of many as well as the rapid carryings out of some such projects, and similar ones on a smaller scale, affords substantial evidence of a comfortable and solvent state of feeling amongst the monied classes. Another incidental testimony to the generally prosperous state of Ontario is furnished in the rapid growth of many of its towns and villages. Numbers of these, if we may judge by such practical tests as increase of buildings, and increase of rent rates at the same time, are rapidly outgrowing their old habiliments. To refer to our metropolis as an illustration of what is going on in a smaller scale, in numerous towns and villages throughout the land, I find from the yearly statement of the *Globe* that the total estimate of the value of new buildings "commenced, finished and occupied" during the year 1870, reaches the handsome figure of one million one hundred and eighty thousand dollars.—The steady and rapid growth of this fine city will be better seen from a comparison of this statement, with those of preceding years. In 1867 the estimated value of new buildings was \$300,000; in 1868, \$305,000, and in 1869, \$924,000. In alluding to

these facts I am far from believing such evidences of material advancement, to be synonymous with the best and highest, the only real, progress of a people. Yet, as tokens of favour from the bountiful Giver, they should be set before us, and stimulate our sluggish gratitude. There is perhaps no emotion more healthful and elevating in its exercise than that of gratitude, and we are so prone to utter loud and long lamentations over what we call bad crops, and hard times, and to forget our every day blessings, that it is a delightful task occasionally to present and to dwell upon the brighter side of the picture.

This bright side contains many other details of even greater importance, upon which those whose duty it may be to call the people to thanksgiving, may well dwell. Our immunity from the horrors of war and of pestilence, our priceless boons of self-government, free thought and free worship, and our abundant opportunities for learning, practicing and diffusing the truth, are features of our situation as a people and as individuals, so sweet in themselves and so glowing in contrast with the bloodshed, misery and darkness raging in various quarters of the earth; that they should not fail to inspire songs of devout, unmingled praise.

The mind involuntarily turns to the further inquiry, What use is being made of all these gifts and with what success? In other words, what is the ratio of that which is after all the only real progress, the progress of morality and true piety?

These precious and immortal fruits of vital truth cannot of course be weighed or measured by any instruments which we can use, nor can their value be set forth in dollars and cents. The seed sown broadcast from the pulpit, scattered by the wayside or dropped here and there in the by-path, germinates unseen in many a heart. Here and there good fruit, nourishing and bringing to perfection of its core, the seeds of other fruits, endowed like it with powers of infinite reproduction and increase, is brought to light and we rejoice in it. In multitudes of other cases the same living, and life giving processes are going on, we may hope, in regions hidden from mortal view. In all cases the husbandman's work is to sow in hope, to cherish an unflinching faith in the genuineness of the seed and the omnipotence of the source whence come both the germinating power and the vegetative and fructifying influences.

Nor should we fail to bear in mind that all progress in this as in other directions is relative. Comparing the visible results of christian work in this, or any country, with the rapid and triumphant spread of the Gospel in its power, which we would fain see, and, apart from the teachings of experience, confidently expect, we are tempted to despondency and despair. Nor are such considerations without their value if they lead to a deeper sense of the short comings and feebleness of the workers. But when, on the other hand, we remember that all those great changes which are going on in the physical world, and which are so wonderfully transforming the face of nature, are carried on slowly, almost imperceptibly, by Him with whom "a thousand years are as one day," we can hardly fail to draw encouragement and hope from the analogy. And measuring by the relative standard, it may perhaps be doubted, whether there has ever been, at any previous stage of the world's history, more wide-spread, earnest labour, or more tangible proofs of success, in religious effort, than during the year now drawing to a close. This is, I know, the hopeful view. Many entertain a widely different opinion. The question is whether such do not fail to appreciate rightly, not only the enlarging missionary effort, but the constant though less observed increase of evangelical influence at home, the natural outgrowth of increasing spiritual life amongst Christian Churches and peoples.—But be that as it may, on the whole, the last remark is, I think, true of Ontario, and this is what I commenced to say, long since. Taking this fact, as I trust it is, in connection with the actual additions to the ranks of believers which have been made in our own and other churches during the year, we have another loud call to christian thanksgiving. We can only hope and pray that this feeling of gratitude may be united with so real, so deep and so pervading a sense of the actual, fearful discrepancy between the feeble, half-hearted efforts put forth by christian churches, and the tremendous ends in view—such a sense of short-coming and imperfect consecration to the great work for which such churches, and all their members, exist,—as may lead to profound humiliation for the past, and more whole-souled effort in the future.

J. E. W.

For the Christian Messenger.

#### "WEEK OF PRAYER OFFERINGS."

Mr. Editor:

How many among your numerous readers feel sufficient interest in the cause of missions, to give their first week's earnings toward the support of the same? or say those who do not contribute a tenth, to give as an extra offering the 52nd part of the earnings of 1869. This would be but a small return for the many blessings enjoyed during the year now near its close, yet how greatly encouraged would be those indefatigable brethren, Normandy of the French Mission, Rand of the Mic-mac, Dr. Tupper and the members of the Foreign Board, and other ministers interested in our Home Mission, by the amount of funds which would pour in from the members of our churches.

Yours, &c.,

WEEK OF PRAYER.

### Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, DECEMBER 21, 1870.

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL.

There is doubtless some wise design in all that is permitted to transpire and continue in this world in relation to the Church of Christ.

There is no scripture authority for observing the Nativity of Christ as an annual festival, or any of the other feasts and fasts to which some parties attach so much importance. The New Testament knows nothing of Christmas days or Good Fridays and we sometimes think the observance of such days as part and parcel of anti-christian practices, calculated to detract from the spiritual character of Christianity—the only way of life and salvation.

It may be, however, that there being so much tendency in us to lose sight of Jesus the Son of man, and to forget that he was indeed a human being—capable of suffering to make atonement for sin—as well as a divine person; these things have been permitted to continue, that they may assist in keeping this fact more prominently before the world. A large amount of religious sentiment, and kind feeling flows forth at this season of the year, probably resulting from these considerations. Before another week has passed, the usual Christmas greetings will have been mutually exchanged by our readers and their friends. If the fact that God gave his Son to be the Saviour of the world, be the source of these demonstrations of friendship, it will be well for all parties giving them, and a source of true joy now as at all times.

We would gladly offer our hand to our readers, young and old, and most sincerely do we wish them, one and all, a happy and merry Christmas.

We have received from the Education Office a "Manual of the Laws and Regulations relating to the Public Schools of Nova Scotia as in force November 1870. Prepared and published for the use of School Trustees, Teachers, and others." In a preliminary note we are informed that the Manual has been compiled by Mr. McVane. It will be found very useful and convenient, especially as copies of the Law have become extremely scarce.—The Manual brings up the "Regulations" to November, yet we see no notice of the Illegal Minute of Council relating to Examination of Teachers. It is strange that the two Minutes in respect to licensing teachers issued by the present Council are so grossly illegal that they could not be permitted to find a place in this official Manual!—Witness.

We have not received from the Education office the "Manual" above referred to, although we perceive that several of the other papers speak of a copy having been sent to them. It may possibly be by an oversight of the Superintendent, for the time being, but as other public documents published by the Educational Department have been withholden from us, whilst they have been sent to the other papers, it may be that he imagines himself at liberty to make use of such public property according to his preferences, and forgets that he has public duties to perform on such matters. We shall not however allow such littleness to interfere with our discussing the educational affairs of the Province, as we have always done, in a broad, liberal spirit, and demanding such measures as will be for all the people alike, without reference to relationships, creed or party.

A spirit of favoritism introduced into our School System will be its destruction. Men who cannot rise above the temptations offered in its favor, are not competent to

hold the important trusts required of them in this department.

The fact mentioned in the above paragraph is a little curious. The illegal "Regulation" respecting the Licensing of Teachers without Examination, was issued in August last, and has not since been publicly "annulled;" and, if it was intended to be operative should surely have appeared in this "Manual of the Laws and Regulations relating to the Public Schools, as in force November 1870." What then has become of the said Regulation? Has it been quietly withdrawn by the Council, and not to be acted upon? or is it to be simply kept back and put to sleep until it can be conveniently awakened and quietly made use of? That, we venture to offer an opinion, is not the way in which such matters should be dealt with; and we believe the public will agree with us in this particular. In nothing is a straitforward manly course so much required as in our Educational affairs. Any divergence must have the effect of weakening and ultimately destroying public confidence. Let it then be stated plainly whether the said Regulation is "in force" or not, so that Teachers and others may know in what position they stand in respect to licences to teach, and claims on the public Treasury.

The title-page of the "Manual of the Laws and Regulations relating to the Public Schools; as in force November 1870," informs the public that Charles Annand is "(Printer to the Education office)," but the "Journal of Education for the Province of Nova Scotia," is printed by the Blackadar Brothers. How is this? Who is the Printer to the Education Office?

WORSE THAN WOODEN NUMEGS.—A new development of rascality has recently been made in New York. The *Chronicle* gives the following epitome of the villainous affair:

We hope no one in Nova Scotia was caught by the very tempting bait of the scoundrels in New York who scattered "confidential" circular letters over the States and Provinces, offering to supply counterfeit greenbacks at low rates. The system by which the swindlers got the money of their dupes, and sent in return boxes of sawdust, or nothing, has often been exposed in our columns. Recently a greenhorn from the country who had been swindled as he deserved to be, complained to the police authorities in New York, had two of the scoundrels—who had operated under a score of names—arrested and sent to prison and their establishment broken up. In the course of their infamous business they accumulated hundreds of letters from people in all parts of the country, who wished to make money by passing counterfeit notes. At the breaking up of the establishment these letters fell into the hands of the reporters, and are now being published in the New York papers, with the names and addresses of the writers. The exposure is likely to cause a speedy and satisfactory decrease in the population of many rural towns. The number of nominally respectable men whose true characters are being exposed is surprising. Wealthy farmers sent for counterfeit money to pay their workmen; men engaged in business thought they could safely mingle counterfeit with genuine money; sons of wealthy fathers were ambitious of astonishing everybody by displaying greater wealth than their parents, and sought the aid of the counterfeiters; express agents thought their positions would enable them to safely receive and dispose of the "queer;" even government officials figure among those who are now being proved, by their own handwriting, to be dishonest men. They richly deserve the exposure.

DEATH OF MR. HERBERT C. MESSENGER.—The Jacksonville (Florida) "Union" of November 29th, says: Mr. H. C. Messenger, who left this city on the "Starlight," for Moultonville, on Thursday last, died suddenly on the steamer on Friday morning. Shortly after leaving Jacksonville he complained of having taken cold and of being troubled with diarrhea, and before reaching Palatka was taken quite sick. At that point the services of Dr. Hawes were obtained, who prescribed for him, occasioning him much relief, but after leaving Palatka a change for the worse occurred—he becoming delirious at 2 o'clock Friday morning, remaining in that condition until 7 o'clock the same morning, when he died. His remains were interred at Moultonville, funeral services being conducted by the Rev. Mr. Montgomery of that place. Mr. Messenger was a native of Falmouth, N. S., and had been in Florida but a short time. His age was about 25 years. His personal effects were returned to Messrs. Jeffreys & Bros., of this city, who will retain them until called for by his relatives or friends.

Mr. Messenger, was well known in different sections of the Province. Although a native of Falmouth, he was for several years a resident at Wolfville, having studied at Acadia College of which he was a graduate in the class of 1868. He was subsequently a student-at-law at Windsor, and had not completed his studies when he deemed it advisable for the restoration of his declining health to visit the Southern States. With life all before him, his preparations for professional work almost completed, with good abilities, great perseverance and high am-