

the Baptist Denomination in Scotland. True, the improvement of our buildings is a secondary thing, but the fact that it is accomplished by a hitherto unexampled Christian liberality and courage is no light matter; neither is the fact that, in most instances, the improvement could never have taken place, if it had not been for the "united action of the churches."

Whatever our present defects or future necessities, we may surely address ourselves to the removal of the one, and the supply of the other, with some degree of confidence—confidence in our principles, confidence in each other, and, above all, confidence in our Saviour's promise to grant wisdom and grace. It is by His good hand upon us that we are realising more and more, the essential unity of our churches, and are seeing every year some manifest increase of the "UNITED ACTION OF OUR CHURCHES."

The Christian Messenger.

Halifax, N. S., January 3rd, 1877.

THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1877.

Christ is the great centre of all history. From his coming into the world we reckon the passing of our years. Anno Domini, at once defines the starting point of the period from which we commence, and leads us back to the infancy of Jesus, when he "became flesh and dwelt among us." Then again in calculating the dates previous to his advent, we also refer to his birth into the world at Bethlehem, and, as we have clearer data for going back from that event than we have from any starting point as the first year of the world's creation, we say "Before Christ," in preference to "Anno Mundi," the year of world.

Well, here we are with the New Year of our Lord, just opening upon us, and laying out to our vision or anticipation an unbounded prospect of future good. The point of time between the Old and the New is perhaps—except to the young—more imaginary than real—indeed, it is no sooner come than gone—as it travels on from East to West all through the 24 hours of January the 1st. And yet to each individual the change from the last Day of the Old, to the first day of the New is a most significant step forward, and becomes the turning over of a new leaf, or the opening of a new volume of life's history. What shall be written therein? is a question to be determined only by the acts of each day of the year before us. The changes from the Old to the New Year may not be very apparent—each day and week seeming very much like its predecessor, but when comparing each day with the corresponding day of former years, we have some consciousness of the difference in our condition, and vivid remembrances of progress towards that in which there is to be no computation by years, but when the ages of eternity will roll on without any unit of measurement, as those we now have by the earth's motion on its axis, or in its orbit around the sun.

Reader, if you have not in the past years entered upon the course to secure the best honors and the greatest good, enter at once on that way, bearing in mind that it is only by patient continuance in well doing that we may obtain glory, honor, immortality and eternal life.

We may now tender the usual greeting, "A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU." This has already been given to the millions of Christendom and blessings have been sought on friends, and doubtless on many former foes, adapted to their new experience and feelings. Well would it be if the feuds of the past year could be banished from the heart and from the memory, and the New Year witness the inauguration of "Peace on earth" amongst the nations, and goodwill in all the families of both nations and men. Christ would then be the ruling power in every heart, as well as the centre of all history and king of the nations.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE WEEK.

- JAN. 1. Union of Great Britain and Ireland.....1801
Discovery of the first planet, named Ceres, by Piazzi, in Sicily.....1801
2. Death of Lavater, the great Physiognomist.....1801
3. Attempt to arrest the five members, by Charles I.....1642
Death of Dr. Daniel Wilson, Bishop of Calcutta.....1858
4. Death of Roger Archam, Queen Elizabeth's Tutor and Latin Secretary.....1568

- 5. Death of John Howie, author of "The Scots Worthies".....1793
6. Death of "Jones of Nayland".....1800
7. Death of Archbishop Fenelon.....1715
Death of Allan Ramsay, Scottish Poet.....1758

This new feature of the Messenger, from one having abundant resources, we hope to continue through the year. A well selected brief weekly chronology will probably awaken interest in many minds to, learn more of the persons or events referred to and thus will give a stimulus to inquiry, and a degree of information to some, whilst it will refresh the memories of others, and do good to all.

1877.

WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

The Watchman replies, "It is cloudy, dark, pregnant with storms." The prognostications are of a sad and gloomy character. It would not be so if all men were obedient to truth, and loyal to righteousness. But they are not. Party is more powerful than principle. The politician does not ask what is right? The question always is, What are the requirements of the party? And he will support an incompetent, useless, or unprincipled man, and vote for a measure condemned by all the honest, if the interests of the party are to be thereby subserved. Principle, honour, right are not listened to: they are of no account, unless they wear the livery of the clique.—And in some cases this is carried farther, even to the stirring up of strife, the employment of violence, the outrage of persecution. In England there are landlords who expel tenants from their farms and labourers from their cottages because they are dissenters. In Popish countries legislators deny to Protestants the equal rights which they claim as citizens and subjects, and strain every nerve to make society submissive to the Church in all things. In Spain, the "man of sin" revels in infamous abominations, and glories in trampling on religious freedom. In the Province of Quebec our fellow-subjects are beguiled and cheated without stint by Ultramontane policy, while the masses are chained down in hopeless ignorance, and at the same time taught to think of themselves as the favoured of heaven, the very elect of God. That Province is under priestly control. Men vote as the priests direct, and unrighteous laws are enacted under the same influence.

To all this must be added the prospect of war. Russia and Turkey appear to be on the eve of a tremendous conflict, which may perhaps involve all the nations of Europe in its horrors. The last reports from Constantinople are very unfavourable. Turkey, which has oppressed the Christian populations under her sway most systematically and cruelly, promises amendment, but refuses to give the guarantees which the other powers demand. The fact is, they cannot trust her. Her people are furious for battle, but determinately obstinate in the refusal of justice and freedom to Christians. They would exterminate them, man, woman and child—but emancipate them, and give them equal rights—never! War with such creatures will be no common calamity. It will be a development of the murderous propensity on the largest possible scale. Blood will flow in horribly copious streams. Agonies indescribable will be inflicted, and desolation will spread the pall of ruin over countries now smiling in fertility and abundance. The fear is that the present government will entangle Great Britain in the strife, and that British blood will be shed and British treasure expended to uphold the Turkish monstrosity. Should it come to this, it is to be earnestly hoped that Englishmen will rise up in their might and hurl from power the men who would bring such disgrace on the British name.

If justice cannot be effectually meted out to Turkey without war, be it so, but let Russia be the executioner and Britain's only care be to mitigate ferocity and tame the furies.

Whatever views may be taken, and on whatever side any of our readers may choose to place themselves, this is certainly a crisis in human affairs in which divine interposition is especially needed. The people of God are called on to "cry mightily" to him for help and guidance. Never was there a time when the exhortation of the Apostle Paul was more appropriate, that prayers should be offered: "for kings, and for all that are in authority." The meetings for prayer at the beginning of the year, under the auspices of the Evangelical Alliance, occur most opportunely. Let Christians realise the ex-

trinity of the case, and "pray without ceasing." Other thoughts are crowding in, but their utterance must be postponed till next week.

WEEK OF PRAYER, 1877.

We have already given (Oct. 25) the Circular of the Evangelical Alliance, inviting Christians to again unite in continuous prayer through the first week of the year, with the list of topics and subjects, suggested as suitable for exhortation and intercession on the successive days. We need not therefore repeat its insertion, but would simply call the attention of our readers to the matter, and encourage them by a remembrance of the blessings received in past years, evidently in answer to prayer offered on those occasions, and of the continued mercy of the Most High, to again assemble together in hearty sympathy and earnest supplication, calling upon God to pour us out a blessing.

We may just epitomize the subjects:

SUNDAY, January 7th.—SERMONS:—Christian fellowship. 1 John i. 7.

MONDAY, January 8th.—Thanksgiving and Confession,—in the review of the past year.

TUESDAY, January 9th.—Prayer:—For the Holy Spirit.

WEDNESDAY, January 10th.—Prayer for Families.

THURSDAY, January 11th.—Prayer for nations:—for rulers, benevolent institutions; for a pure literature, the spread of sound education and the maintenance of peace.

FRIDAY, January 12th.—Prayer for Christian Missions to the Jews and Gentiles.

SATURDAY, January 13th.—Prayer:—For the observance of the Christian Sabbath, temperance &c.

SUNDAY, January 14th.—SERMONS:—One Lord, one faith, one baptism, (Ephes. iv. 5, 6.)

The following arrangements have been made for the city of Halifax:—

SUNDAY, Jan. 7.—Meeting at 4 1/2 o'clock, conducted by the Young Men's Christian Association.

MORNING MEETINGS will be held in Argyle Hall, beginning on MONDAY, at 9 1/2 o'clock, and closing on Saturday. Evening meetings will be held as follows—beginning at 7 1/2 o'clock:

MONDAY, Jan. 8.—Brunswick Street (Methodist) Church.

TUESDAY, Jan. 9.—Fort Massey Church and North Baptist Church.

WEDNESDAY, Jan. 10.—Grafton Street (Methodist) Church, and St. John's (Presbyterian) Church.

THURSDAY, Jan. 11.—Granville Street Church, Popular Grove Church, and Kaye Street Church.

FRIDAY, Jan. 12.—St. Andrew's Church, Free Baptist Church, and Charles Street Church.

SATURDAY, Jan. 13.—St. Matthew's Church, at 3 1/2 o'clock, p. m.

SUNDAY, Jan. 14.—Meeting conducted by the Young Men's Christian Association, at 4 1/2 o'clock, p. m.

COLLECTIONS will be made at these Meetings for the funds of the Alliance.

"REPUBLICANISM ON TRIAL."

We, with our settled form of constitutional government under the power and protection of Great Britain—but very imperfectly appreciate the difficulties surrounding the Presidential election in the neighboring Republic. Whilst the British constitution, or what is as near to it as circumstances will permit, is moulding new countries, and modifying or taking the place of the effete constitutions of some of the despotic monarchies of Europe, and proving how well it is adapted to conserve peace, promote liberty, and secure stability, the American people themselves are regarding their present condition of things to be "Republicanism on Trial," notwithstanding that the republic has lived for a hundred years. An excellent article by Rev. Dr. Lincoln, appeared in the Watchman a week or two since, under the above title, which is full of instruction, and well worth perusal. Here it is:—

The system of government by the people is now on trial in three important nations. In Mexico it appears to be a disastrous failure. The nation is in its chronic condition of civil war, with three claimants for the Presidency. Lerdo, the Constitutional President, has been defeated by Gen. Diaz, an ambitious soldier, and is in danger of death, as his ablest supporter, Gen. Escobedo, the first soldier in the Republic, has been already shot by the remorseless Diaz. Iglesias, the Chief Justice (who revolted against Lerdo, on the plea of frauds in the elections which destroyed its legality, and transferred the office by law to the Chief Justice), holds authority in a single department, but can do little against the army which will rally to the support of the military chieftain. For a brief period, therefore, Diaz will hold a usurped rule, until displaced by a popular uprising or a new military revolt. The

priests are the responsible authors of the present outbreak. They have fomented discontent for many years against Juarez and Lerdo, because these able statesmen ruled for the good of the nation rather than the interests of the church, and now the national party is subverted, and the church party triumphs. Both Diaz and Iglesias are Ultramontanes in sympathy and aim.

In France, also, Republican government is in peril, for the Assembly is arrayed against the President and the Senate, and refuses co-operation unless its demands receive attention. Here, too, the root of the difficulty is a religious one. Marshal McMahon, the President has a wife whose sympathies are as Ultramontane as those of the late Empress, and who influences her husband as Eugenie swayed Louis Napoleon. M. Dufaure, the ruling spirit of the Cabinet, is also Ultramontane, though a nominal Republican; and the Senate, which had a decisive Republican majority when originally constituted, has been so warped by the Catholic prejudices of many of its members, that it no longer harmonizes with the Republican majority in the Assembly. The Cabinet and the Senate favor special grants for worship and education, under the control of the priesthood, and the Assembly opposes, and insists on the organization of a new Cabinet. Marshal McMahon resisted for a time, but has at length compromised, and M. Dufaure retires from office, giving place to M. Simon, as President of the Cabinet. It is evident that troubles are brewing in France, and the priest will spare no efforts to undermine the Republic.

Our own nation is also passing through a crisis, perhaps the most perilous in its history one that will test to the utmost the patience and good sense of the people, and their reverence for law. The Presidential contest is not yet decided. After long waiting for the action of Boards of Canvassers in the doubtful States, and for the meeting of the Electoral College, the result is still in doubt, and the public anxiety is unabated. To add to the perplexity, the Chairman of the Democratic Committee has issued a proclamation, declaring that Mr. Tilden is elected, and that the two Houses of Congress must give effect to the will of the people. The document is ill-timed and revolutionary, and has naturally called forth a reply from the Republican Committee, denying the facts of the Address, denouncing its spirit, and asserting that Mr. Hayes is elected by a clear majority of the electoral votes and will certainly be inaugurated. The positiveness of both documents is an index of the peril which environs us, and compels the attention of fair-minded men to the grave doubts investing the whole question.

Mr. Tilden is certainly not the legal President elect, if the returns of the Electoral College are the test of a legal election. By the returns of the College, Mr. Hayes receives one hundred and eighty-five votes, and Mr. Tilden one hundred and eighty-four. Nor can this record be changed by the action of the Governor of Oregon in giving a certificate to Mr. Cronin, a Democratic elector. For if the Governor of Oregon acted legally, in claiming that votes for an ineligible candidate are void, and that Mr. Cronin, the minority candidate is elected, then the Governors of New Jersey and Missouri acted illegally in deciding that votes for ineligible candidates are not void, and in refusing certificates to the minority candidates. In either alternative Mr. Tilden still lacks one vote for a legal election. If he receives two votes from Republican States, because Republican electors in Vermont and Oregon are ineligible, he loses two votes in Democratic States; because Democratic electors in Missouri and New Jersey were ineligible. If he holds to Oregon he must give up New Jersey and Missouri. If he keeps New Jersey and Missouri he must surrender Oregon, and in either case the one vote needed for election is still wanting. No reformer will dare assert that the Governor of Oregon has acted legally, and allowed the action of New Jersey and Missouri to pass unchallenged. If Mr. Tilden should accept an election, won by such a legal fraud, he would doom himself to infamy, and to the scorn of the world.

Nor can the Republican Committee claim that the election of Mr. Hayes is free from honest doubt. He has a majority of a single vote in the Electoral College, on the face of the returns; but that majority rests on the decision of the Canvassing Board in Louisiana, which ruled out several thousand Democratic votes, and declared the Hayes electors chosen, in face of an apparent majority against them. The Board of Canvassers were legally right in their decision, for it was their official duty to reject votes where fraud or intimidation prevailed, and they would have been false to duty, in case of neglect. The Republican Committee may, therefore, justify their action on legal grounds, and they may hold it for a moral certainty that, in a fair election, Louisiana would have given a Republican majority, and Alabama and Mississippi as well. They may, therefore, accept the election of Mr. Hayes as a legal fact, and a moral right, but they cannot get rid of uncomfortable doubts. They cannot be sure that the Louisiana returning board did not act in a partisan spirit, and reject votes that unbiased judges would have accepted.

It seems, therefore, a plain duty for both parties to agree upon some plan by which the public anxiety may be relieved. Unless the Senate and House unite on a plan for counting the votes, or for referring the decision to an impartial Court, it is evident that dissatisfaction will continue even after a new President is inaugurated. The American people will not submit to any imitation of the Mexican policy. There can be no rival Presidents in this country. Both parties, therefore, ought to agree upon a settlement of the matter, which shall commend itself to candid minds; and both ought to have patriotism enough to sacrifice their own preferences to the common good.

The present juncture seems to call for a higher order of statesmanship than usual, and men are looking for a man to come forward equal to the time. One of the old confederates of Georgia has spoken out with a degree of appropriateness which shows him to be a far-seeing politician. He says:

If the people of this country are not capable of settling the disputed Presidential question without violence, they are not fit to have a President, and ought to be governed by a hereditary monarch. He said he had confidence in the wisdom of the people, and felt sure that they would not sustain any movement likely to jeopardize the public tranquillity. If the representatives of the people here in Washington could not settle amicably the present difficulty, they ought to go home and give their constituents a chance to put wiser men in their places. He could see no contingency growing out of the present situation that would justify either party in precipitating an armed conflict.

RE-ANNEXATION OF THE UNITED STATES TO GREAT BRITAIN

The New York Tribune says:—The intense disgust of certain Democrats in Louisiana at the failure of "reform," and the consequent destruction of their only surviving hope for free institutions, has found expression in the following petition, which has received several signatures and is not unlikely to be presented to Congress:—

To the Honourable Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America at Washington assembled:

The undersigned citizens of the United States of America, having in view the present and prospective dangers ensuing from our form of government, beg respectfully to petition your honorable bodies that Commissioners be appointed with full authority to arrange the terms of a treaty of reconciliation with Great Britain, settling all causes of estrangement which have unhappily existed for the past century between the two countries, to the end that the people of a common origin may enjoy the natural fraternity to which they are entitled, and the civil and religious liberty which our ancestors have won in leading the progressive civilization of the Caucasian race for the past two thousand years.

The Chicago Tribune says there is a serious side to the proposal for the re-annexation of the United States to Great Britain. It is astonishing the slight changes in our form of Government such an annexation would make, if it were seriously contemplated. The principal change would be in the abolition of the election of a President. Wherever the Government might be located, it would appoint the President, selecting some prominent citizen of this country or some one in Great Britain, like the Duke of Argyle, or the Marquis of Salisbury, or one of the Queen's sons, if we were monarchical enough to stand it, and the appointed would serve as Viceroy or Vice-Emperor, or simply President, perhaps. The only other appointments devolving upon the Government would be those of Governors of the States. There would be no election of judges and magistrates. Every office of a legislative description, from Congress to school boards, would be elective. Everything having legislative functions would be elected, and everything having administrative, executive, or judicial functions would be appointed. The President himself would not hold office for any specified term, or even for good behaviour. Whenever the House of Representatives should come into collision with his policy, as manifested in the action of his Cabinet, a vote of want of confidence would result in a change of the Cabinet, or a recall of the President.

DEAN STANLEY a week or two since delivered a lecture before the students and friends of New College, St. Johns Wood, London. His subject was "The early Christians." After a few remarks upon some of the characteristic features of the first Christian Society, the Dean proceeded to point out the significance of the principal names by which the early Christians were known. First, there was the name "Brethren," an appellation which, the Dean remarked, is not without significant but kindly emphasis, had now almost ceased to be used "except in sermons." "Saints" was another term in the early Christian nomenclature; and this

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