

There is a silver lining to every cloud, a bright side to the darkest life, if it be only sought for, and a cheerful acquiescence in the allotments of God and nature. Therefore be cheerful.—Christian Intelligencer.

Bible Work.

The Board of the American Baptist Publication Society, at its recent meeting, unanimously adopted the following resolutions:

Resolved, 1. That the Board of the American Baptist Publication Society will, from this date, take up and push with vigor all departments of Bible work upon the Home-field—including the circulation of the Common Version of the Scriptures; and the publication and circulation of new translations, in so far as money given specially for that purpose will enable the Society to do.

Resolved, 2. That the Board proceed at once to change its By-Laws as to provide for a special and Permanent Committee on Bible Work.

The following gentlemen were appointed as the

COMMITTEE ON BIBLE WORK.

- Mr. William Bucknell. Mr. George K. Crozer. Mr. Thomas J. Hoskinson. Mr. Charles H. Banes. Mr. J. Howard Gendell. Henry G. Peston, D. D. William Cathcart, D. D. A. Judson Rowland, D. D. James M. Pendleton, D. D. Poindexter S. Henson, D. D.

The Board of the Society, in this action, have opened a wide door for all who may wish to do Bible-work through this channel, and they hope that the number may be very great.

The work, however, that for years has been conducted so quietly, will now be prosecuted more vigorously, and we hope efficiently, and yet with the kindest possible spirit toward other organizations.

B. GRIFFITH, Sec.

For the Christian Messenger.

The John de Wycliffe Bi-Millennial.

On the evening of the second day of this month a crowded audience filled the hall of the Academy of Music, New York, convened under the auspices of the American Bible Society, for the purpose of celebrating the Bi-Millennial Anniversary of the translation of the Bible from the vulgate Latin into the English of that day. The completion of the translation is ascribed to the year 1380.

Wycliffe was not his name, it was the name of the village in which he was born. His name was John, and he was known as John of Wycliffe. So he answered at the College roll-call; when the Johns were called, one answered, London; he was John of London; another, Canterbury, and he was John of Canterbury; our hero answered Wycliffe, and he was John of Wycliffe. The two names were afterwards joined, and John Wycliffe was the result.

He was educated at Oxford, and became a professor in that University. That he was beloved by his classes, may be safely assumed; for he taught them to think aright especially about God and things heavenly. But his fellow-clergy disliked him, and excited prejudice against him. They did not want the people to think, lest they themselves should fall into the background, and cease to be revered. The issue was that John found it expedient to retire to his rectory at Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, where they still show the chair in which he was accustomed to sit and exhort his parishioners, or catechise their children. There he preached, and wrote books, and practised what he taught, till God took him, Dec. 31, 1384.

He was a learned man and a diligent author. It was said that two hundred volumes of his books were publicly burned in Bohemia. Burning books was orthodox work, then, as reading them is now. Wycliffe would himself have been burnt, but princes protected him, and so his enemies were compelled to wait till he had been forty years in his grave, and then they dug up his bones and burned them.

The Duke of Lancaster, and other noblemen of high rank befriended Wycliffe, and even stood by his side when he was cited to the ecclesiastical courts, so that his enemies feared to press against him their charges of heresy.

Wycliffe was a "Reformer before the Reformation." He denied transubstantiation, and other Romish novelties, and held in the main those views of gospel truth which were associated in the sixteenth century

with the names of Tyndal, Luther, Calvin, and other "burning and shining lights" of that age. Had he lived till then, he would have doubtless shaken off these remnants of popish dogma which had been embedded in his mind from early childhood, and could not be got rid of, because he "knew not the depths of Satan." Notwithstanding all his disadvantages, he was a great man, and an eminently practical theologian.

But the monks detested him, because they hated the truth, and did not practise holiness. On one occasion he was very ill, and they hoped he would die. A number of them went to see him, apparently to pay him a friendly visit; but he understood their meaning, and when they drew near his bed, he sat up, and looking at them steadfastly, exclaimed with a loud voice, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the evil deeds of the friars!" Whereat, they slunk away, abashed and confounded.

The Council of Constance, which met in 1415, issued a decree, commanding that the bones of Wycliffe should be disinterred and burnt. Various delays occurred, and the decree was not carried into effect till the year 1428. Thomas Fuller the historian thus tells the tale:—"Richard Fleming, bishop of Lincoln, diocesan of Lutterworth, sent his officers (vultures with a quick sight scent at a dead carcass!) to ungrave him accordingly. To Lutterworth they came—Sumner, Commissary, Official, Chancellor, Proctors, Doctors, and the servants (so that the remnant of the body, would not hold out a bone among so many hands), took what was left out of the grave, and burnt them to ashes, and cast them into the Swift, a neighboring brook, running hard by. Thus the brook hath conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over." Vol. 5, p. 693. Ed. 1842.

It is a significant fact, that the name of Wycliffe is not now found among the places enumerated in the census of Yorkshire. The histories tell us that it was about six miles from Richmond, in that county. But there is no "Wycliffe" in the Richmond district. There is, however, a small parish at apparently the same distance, named St. Martin, containing eleven houses and fifty-three inhabitants. It is a fair conjecture that Fleming, bishop of Lincoln, who superintended the outrage on Wycliffe's grave, persuaded the people that the name of the great heretic should be taken away, and the parish re-dedicated to St. Martin, in compliment to the reigning Pope, Martin V. whose name is now borne by the Parish. They thought that in this way Wycliffe would be blotted out of human memory, and his name never heard of. But there is a book, in which it is written that "the memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot" (Proverbs x. 7.) Who cares to know any thing of Fleming, the ungraving bishop, who thought to immortalize himself by executing the decrees of the Council which burnt John Huss and Jerome of Prague? His name has no honour connected with it. All that is known of him is that he exhumed Wycliffe's bones, and committed them to the flames, dreaming that he had thereby driven the reformer out of men's minds. But, as Butler says, Wycliffe's doctrine is "dispersed all the world over"—a very different world, by the way, from what it was when Fuller wrote (A. D., 1649).

J. M. C.

The Christian Messenger.

Halifax, N. S., December 29, 1880.

GLAD TIDINGS.

How foreign to the Gospel is the gloominess frequently supposed to be its prominent characteristic. Even under the Jewish dispensation, the worship of God was deemed an exercise of the most joyous and exultant character. The Psalmist exclaims, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." The very invitation gave a thrill of satisfaction and ecstasy. How often has the same experience arisen from the same cause. How easy to give such joy. Christians should take a lesson from this, and be less sparing in asking their friends and acquaintances to come with them to the House of the Lord. The promises of God are largely given in connection with a remembrance of His name and His house. As we value our residences, so the Lord regards the places

where he specially dwells. He has said, "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." The glad tidings of which we have of late heard so much were announced on the coming of the child Jesus—the son of the Highest—the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." If we lose sight of the Divinity in the humanity of the infant Jesus, we lose the great source of gladness. The fact of his assuming a form in which he might "dwell amongst us," it was, that caused the exultant notes of the Angelic throng.

A new period of existence is counted an occasion of gladness and joy. Whilst we are at all times passing into the unknown, and progressing with the same rapidity towards the great ocean—eternity, yet we divide our time into days, weeks, months and years for the convenience of reckoning them up. The week is the great religious division of time which reminds us first of the great work of creation and then of the completion of the wonderful work of redemption. The first day of the week is, the day of our evaluation. Then, it is that we may call to mind the completion of the work begun at Bethlehem. The resurrection of Christ is the great source of the Christian's joy. The Lord's Day is set apart for the celebration of that great event.

And yet we do not lose sight of the commencement of a new cycle of life, and so we come to make a joyous day of the first of the New Year.

As it is all uncertain what will be the character of the year we strive to cheer each other by hastening, on that glad day, to give some expression of our good wishes, and to let it be known by our friends that we are in hearty sympathy with them, and so we wish them a HAPPY NEW YEAR.

The beginning of the year has for ages been more or less closely connected with the birth of Christ. The English began their year on Christmas Day, the 25th of December, until the time of William the Conqueror. As however he was crowned on January 1st, he made that the occasion of a change, and from that date it was ordered that the year begin on the 1st day of January. Now, nearly all Christian nations commence their year on that day. We nevertheless still regard the date as Anno Domini—the year of our Lord; and make it the starting point for another course around our great central Sun. If we took the natural and exact day for this it would surely be the shortest day of the year, Dec. 21st.

We take the opportunity of tendering to our thousands of readers, young and old, in every land where the MESSENGER makes its weekly visits, and we heartily wish to tender them, each and all, on Saturday morning next

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

One of the principal points of opposition to the Pacific Railway movement has been that it would be of a very inferior quality in its construction. It is now stated that the standard for the construction of the Canadian Pacific is to be the Union Pacific, as completed in 1873, when the United States subsidy was paid to the Company. It is also affirmed that "the Government have decided to ask Parliament to pass a bill authorizing them to give a drawback of 17 1/2 per cent on all imported iron manufactured into material for the construction of the road bed of the railway, so that no manufacturers will be placed under any disadvantage by that section of the contract permitting material for the road bed to be imported free of duty. There is, therefore, no reason why all the fish plates, spikes, rails, nuts, bolts, and other necessary material shall not be manufactured in Nova Scotia.

REV. S. T. RAND, Micmac Missionary, is seriously and dangerously ill. He was attacked suddenly on Lord's Day evening, the 20th inst., on his way to revisit Cumberland, the scene of his early ministry. He had been preaching there during the summer. He had been called by special request, to spend the Lord's Day referred to, at Lower Stewiacke. He preached there twice, and had been driven in the slight storm, about 14 miles. On returning to his lodgings after meeting, he was attacked with sharp pains in his loins. Dr. Page, of Truro, was telegraphed for on Wednesday, and has visited him several times, and thinks Mr. R.'s excellent constitution may enable him to survive the attack.

Mr. R. has hitherto had excellent

health. He is in his 71st year. During the past season, we are informed, he has been constantly at work, preaching sometimes three times on the Lord's day, and several times during the week, both to the Indians and white people, and travelling extensively in New Brunswick, in Cumberland Co., and he visited Charlottetown at the close of the season.

In a note from him he says: "I have every kindness and attention shown me at the house of Whitney Harris, Esq., Lower Stewiacke, where any of my friends can write me if they choose. Dr. Page is showing me, too, great attention, and kindness, and best of all, the Lord is with me; "all is well," and "all is peace." "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "I will bless the Lord at ALL TIMES. His praise shall be CONTINUALLY in my mouth." I am not now suffering much pain; but the difficulty is not yet removed."

Lower Stewiacke, Dec. 27.

New Serial.

We shall commence the Year with a beautifully written

NEW SERIAL,

which will be read with deep interest by old and young.

New Subscribers, look out for the New Serial. Send the orders at once. We shall print a few extra copies of the first numbers.

Mr. Bergh's earnest efforts in New York for protecting the dumb animals does not appear to run in the line of a mawkish sentimentalism with regard to the treatment of criminals. There are persons who, because John Howard made his name famous by his efforts on behalf of prisoners seem to think that people guilty of crime should have the prisons made as comfortable as possible, and those who are incarcerated in jails and penitentiaries will be better reformed by having their chains as light as possible, and everything done to lessen their labor and diminish their punishment. It would appear that Mr. Bergh is not one of these.

At a recent meeting in New York of "the Gilbert Library and Prisoner's Aid Society" some of the persons who were expected to speak being absent, Mr. B. was called upon.

Mr. Bergh came forward reluctantly, saying that if he spoke it must be to oppose all that had been previously said, and that the meeting must take the consequences. He believed that this maudlin nonsense about criminals should stop. Kind-hearted, honest poor men, and their families, are starving, while vile miscreants are pampered in luxury. He would not merely reform penal institutions, but abolish all of them except the higher grades, and revive the whipping post for minor offences. Criminals now commit minor offences purposely to get comfortable lodgings at our public hotels, called jails and penitentiaries. The only way to help a man reform who has been in prison is to send him to a place where he is not known, for there is no chance for him where he is known; and any reformation based on the supposition that there is, is false and injurious. This was the substance of Mr. Bergh's speech, which was pungent and witty, and the audience greeted his hits with laughter, and applauded him to the echo. The meeting was completely demoralized, and the officers of the Society were heartily disgusted.

The N. Y. Examiner from which we copy the above, says further there can be no doubt that there is great need of more stringent laws, more rigid enforcement of penalties, and greater common sense in the work of reforming offenders. It is an open question whether the agencies now in operation for this latter end do not result in greater harm than good to the criminals themselves, and to the community at large.

It is an outrage on our social arrangements that criminals here should be allowed to spend their days in idleness and thus be further demoralized by their prison treatment. Many we are told leave our prisons for a little while apparently with the clear intention of soon returning, and so avoiding the responsibilities of taking care of themselves.

The brief Parliamentary recess will be occupied by many of the leading members on both sides in addressing their constituencies in reference to the great question of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. Mr. Blake is announced to speak in Montreal and other gentlemen at various other places during the week.

Mr. Mackenzie is in very feeble health, and unable to give full attendance in Parliament.

The following facts are stated in the last issue of the Presbyterian Witness:

"OUR AGED MINISTERS.—There are six men upon our Fund for Aged Ministers. One of these is comparatively young and preaches occasionally, but five of them are unable to do anything for themselves. It is our duty as a church to see them properly cared for. We have agreed to give them \$200 a year each—a small enough sum certainly; yet all that some of them have to depend upon. We pay them quarterly. The third quarter will be up in January. Now of the \$300, which we have to pay them we have not three hundred cents. We are in debt; we had to borrow money with which to pay the last quarter. Will it be to our credit as a church if we cannot give \$300, in January towards supporting our aged ministers? It will not do to be idle; the money must be got. Is it decent that Christians, yes, Presbyterian Christians who will not listen to a man unless he has spent eight years in college, should be rattling their dollars, and feasting and rejoicing at New Year's, and yet give nothing towards supporting aged fathers who have toiled for years in promoting the spiritual and material welfare of people? A few things which could easily be done would put plenty of money into the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund."

We have made this quotation not so much to inform our readers of said facts as to lead our brethren—the ministers and members of the Baptist Church to consider what should be done by ourselves on behalf of a similar fund for Infirm Ministers.

The Convention Scheme provides that 2 1/2 per cent. of the Funds raised by that method shall be appropriated to the Infirm Ministers' Aid Fund. Let there be more vigorous effort applied in the churches to enlarge the amount of the contributions to the Convention Scheme, and all the Institutions will be proportionately benefitted. There is great need of this enlargement. There needs but a timely commencement in each church and continued effort, and it would be comparatively easy to raise the proposed—One Dollar per member. It was a long way from that last year. The comfort is that such sum would not be for one Fund alone, but each and all would be prevented from deficiency and disaster.

Some of our readers are sending the Messenger as a New Year's gift to friends at a distance. What could they do better! The present lasts all the year and is new every week.

Our St. John contemporary thinks that "if in this day Paul were writing concerning ministerial qualifications, in addition to 'not given to much wine,' 'not greedy of filthy lucre,' he would argue further, 'not a gambler, not given to speculation, not given to horse-racing, not given to driving the young women, not a trader, not a politician,' 'not entangling himself with the affairs of this life; in any way.'"

We prefer the Apostle Paul's words as they are, they cover the whole ground. We do not think our brother's emendation of the inspired word an improvement, "in any way."

INSHTATHEAMBA.—A pleasant announcement made by the Editors of St. Nicholas is that they have secured for their next number a story of Indian life by Inshtatheamba (Bright-eyes), the daughter of an Omaha chief, who has been traveling through the States during the last two years under the protection of two of her kinsmen, trying to rouse the conscience of the whites to the rights of her race. Miss La Flesche (for that is her English name) makes now we believe, her first essay as an author, but she cannot but succeed if she gives as dramatic pictures of the daily domestic life of her people as she has hitherto done in her addresses. She has broad culture and keen perceptive faculty, and she has given herself up to the cause of her people with a simplicity and passionate singleness of heart that must rouse sympathy in every man and woman whose own instincts are true and pure.—N. Y. Tribune.

"MOST PERFECT OF JUVENILE MAGAZINES."—Is what the Detroit Free Press calls ST. NICHOLAS. The "wonderful Christmas number," just issued, the first edition of which is 105,000, is a grandly illustrated Holiday book of one hundred pages, containing besides its capital Christmas and fairy stories, and original pictures by the best American artists, the first chapters of two splendid serials—one, a story of the adventures, in the American tropics of a party engaged in the capture of wild animals for a menagerie, and a humorous serial by Rossiter Johnson.