

TERMS AND NOTICES.

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To January 1900!

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Religious Intelligencer.

REV. JOSEPH McLEOD, D. D., EDITOR.

WEDNESDAY, Nov. 23rd. 1898.

Correct belief is important, but correct character is even more important.

In December the New York Independent will be fifty years old. One of its first editors, Dr. Storrs, though not now an editor, is still living—a pastor in Brooklyn. Henry Ward Beecher was connected with the paper in its early years. It has come to the end of its half century of life in fine condition, and there is no reason to doubt that it will go on to complete a century in an equally good way. We hope so.

Forty or fifty years ago there was much prayer that doors might be opened for the Church of Christ to enter upon larger work in the dark parts of the earth. The doors have been opened. The Church may now, by its missionaries, go everywhere. There are, also, hundreds of consecrated men and women ready to go anywhere when the Church is ready to send them. What is the lack? Evidently larger contributions to the work of the world's evangelization.

Twenty millions of dollars is the amount which the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States propose to ask their people to raise as a thank-offering to mark the opening of the twentieth century. It is proposed to use the money for the completion and endowment of educational and charitable institutions under the auspices of their Church. It is a large sum to attempt to raise, and yet the leaders who know well the ability of their people have, doubtless, given the project due consideration. We hope the great undertaking may succeed.

An order of Jewish deaconesses has, it is stated, been founded in Jerusalem. It will consist of Jewish women and girls who desire to devote themselves either for a time or altogether to the care of the sick and the young. The sphere of work will be in the first instance Palestine, but the activity of the order is intended to embrace all Jewish communities in the world. The 'sisters' undertake to observe faithfully the rules of Judaism and to help the needy and unfortunate of every nation and creed. They have chosen as their device the star of David with six rays and the word Zion in Hebrew characters. This is said to be the first institution of the kind known to Judaism.

Judging from what is seen in the papers, Montreal is a hot-bed of lotteries. A United States paper says, and with very good reason, it is the headquarters of the lottery business of North America. Occasional raids are made upon the gambling places by the Montreal police; but for the most part they go on with very little interference, and do not need to be very careful about secrecy. When, as happens once in a while, a place is broken up and the proprietors fined, the concern soon opens up again in new quarters, and, perhaps, in a new form. One of the many lottery schemes it is told has been taking in \$100,000 a month, and giving out, at the monthly drawing, prizes to the amount of about \$48,000. A concern which has a profit

of over \$50,000 a month is robbing foolish people at a rapid rate. As showing how some officials in Montreal regard gambling, it is mentioned that in a recent case of seizure of the wheels and other implements of a lottery, they were handed back to the gamblers by the police magistrate, on the ground "that a drawing was about to come off before the charge against the gamblers could be tried, and that without the wheels it would be impossible for them to keep faith with their customers. That magistrate evidently believes that gambling is not a very bad thing. The real cause of all this loose feeling about lotteries and other forms of gambling in Quebec is that, in that Province the Roman Catholic church has for many years resorted to lotteries, and on a large scale, to raise money for church purposes. The people who are brought up in this way easily regard lotteries as right, and have no compunctions about conducting and patronizing them.

A court in Bavaria has just been dealing with a strange case of religious fraud. Some years ago, the story of the affair says, one Agnes Wohlfahrt, a hysterical girl, but evidently a cunning one, declared that she received constant communications from a friend named Crescence Kotterisch, who had died three years before. Crescence complained in these communications, of the punishments she was undergoing in purgatory. Agnes told Crescence's parents that it they would give her money she would supplicate the Virgin to remit these punishments. On their acceding to this suggestion, Agnes soon announced that Crescence had ascended from purgatory to heaven, and now wished to marry a young man whose acquaintance she had made in purgatory. But money must first be given to Agnes to pray for his release to heaven. The credulous parents gave it. Soon came a request for ten thousand marks to defray the expenses of the celestial marriage, including wedding suits for all the twelve Apostles. This, too, was paid, and there came a receipt for it, signed by Crescence and written on what was said to be 'Paradise paper.' Then every year for the next three years there came demands for money for baby clothes on behalf of the steadily increasing family of the heavenly couple. At last, when some twenty thousand marks had been paid to Agnes, the Kotterisch family grew suspicious. A prosecution was commenced. Agnes was arrested, but died in prison before trial. Her father and mother have just been convicted as accessories to her fraud, and sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

What can be thought of a church which so teaches its people that they are the ready victims of such absurd things as these? The play upon the superstitious credulity of their people in the Province of Quebec, by claiming healing virtue for the alleged bones &c. of saints is part of the same disgusting feature of the methods of the Roman church.

Thanksgiving.

Thursday of this week is the "official" Thanksgiving Day in Canada and the United States. It will be more or less religiously observed. There can be no objection to the proclamation of such a day; indeed, there are many reasons why a thanksgiving day should be set apart by authority. It is, at least, an acknowledgement by those in authority, and so by the whole people, of God and of the country's indebtedness to Him for "every good gift." Whether there is more real thanksgiving because of a day set for the purpose may be questioned; but the formal acknowledgement of dependence on God for all things is a good and seemingly thing, and, doubtless, has, in a general way, good effect.

Thanksgiving belongs to every day. It should be, and is, constant in true Christian life. That which is for only one day in the year, is thanksgiving only in name and form, not in fact and heart.

As a country we have reason enough to be thankful. Crops have been abundant. No devastating disease or plague has been amongst us. Peace has prevailed. A great victory has been won by the moral forces of the country in the Prohibition Plebiscite. Christian liberty is firmly established in our midst. The Church of God is steadily and, let us hope, increasingly active. The rate of professing Christians to the population is larger than ever before. Our country, and the whole world, is becoming better each year. The kingdom of Christ is spreading.

There is, as every thoughtful person must see, abundant and always increasing cause for thanksgiving to the Father of all mercies for His great goodness to the sons of men.

Songs of praise are good. Hallelujah exclamations proper when they come

from grateful hearts. Public services of thanks are most seemly. Family gatherings are a fitting form of thanksgiving celebration. But the making thank offerings needs to be more practiced. We emphasize the "giving" part of the word and the act. We have all from God. Would we acknowledge Him? Make an offering to His cause—to the local church to any branch of Christian work, to the poor, the sick, the distressed. There are branches of Christian work struggling and only half effective for lack of better support. Lend a hand. There are poor people, old people having a struggle to get the bare necessities, there are left-alone people, there are discouraged and despairing people. Minister to these. In this way make an offering to the Lord. "Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these ye have done it unto me."

Go to church and join in the public praise, if you can. Make the house ring with songs of thanksgiving. Be glad to overflow that as a family you are together once more. Talk as much as you care to about the benefits you have received. But be sure, also, to do something—something for God's cause, for some needy person. Then the "Bless the Lord, O my soul!" will mean something.

Conference Action.

V.

A GENERAL SECRETARY.

The creation of the office of General Secretary by the Conference was quite a new departure. It has long been felt by some of the brethren that some such office was needed. Occasionally, in private conversation, they talked of it. But it was probably not clear to any one just how its establishment and support could be brought about. Perhaps the chief difficulties confronting those who thought of it were the securing a man to fill the office, and the providing for the expenses of the office. Neither before nor at Conference, was there as far as we know, any attempt at preparing the way for such an office, nor did anybody go to Conference with a plan. But when the condition and needs of the field were being considered it was suggested that such an office might do valuable service. To some the suggestion was the more significant because made by a brother who had no knowledge that any others had ever thought of it. So soon as mentioned the idea was regarded with favour by the Conference. If any member doubted the wisdom of the proposal he did not say so; and the creation of this office was by the unanimous voice of the Conference. Since the session of Conference we have heard many expressions of opinion about it, and we have yet to hear the first word of disapproval, or even of question. Instead, again and again we have heard most hearty approval of it, coupled sometimes with expressions of surprise that it had not been done long ago.

The duties assigned to the office are not unimportant, nor easily performed. Let us look at them a little in detail:

(1) "To visit the various sections of the denomination." It is not meant that the General Secretary shall, in order, visit all the churches in the denomination. He would, probably, like to do that, if it were possible; and, perhaps, few, if any, churches or pastors would object to his visiting them. He will, doubtless, visit as many churches as possible during the year. His duty, however, is especially to churches and places described in the resolutions creating the office. And to these he should devote himself.

(2) "To establish church interests in new and hitherto unoccupied territory." It is believed that there are communities in the Province in which Free Baptist churches might be established with advantage to the communities. There is no desire whatever to go to places where the religious interests of the people are already fully provided for. It is not in the mind of the Conference, nor of any of its officers or members, to attempt to establish churches where not really needed for the nurture and spread of true religious life, nor in any way to do what would be divisive of Christian strength and influence in any community. The only desire is to discover such places as might properly be occupied by us for their religious teaching and care, either in part or wholly, and there establish and carry on worship and Christian work. If there are such places, and we do not look after them, we are blameworthy; if there are no such places we will have discharged our duty in the quest for them. All we want to do is our duty as a branch of the Church of God, entrusted with a responsibility for the care of souls,—just that duty, but that fully and faithfully.

It is not, we think, expected that the Secretary will alone search out the places and establish such new interests

as are contemplated as possible necessity and duty, but that he will gather information and do other things preliminary to the establishment of such interests. He is, of course, expected to do all he can in this direction, whether he works alone or with others, but without the co-operation of those who have knowledge of the needy places and interest in them, this part of his work will be exceedingly difficult.

(3) "To resuscitate and strengthen such interests as have already been established, but have been more or less neglected." This is, in our judgment, a most important part of denominational work—the care of its weak churches. Churches are established. For a time they go on well, and give promise of strength and efficiency. From lack of care, or, perhaps, because of differences between members, or from any of a score or more of possible causes, weakness takes hold of them. Judicious attention, in the early stages of difficulty or need would, probably, have averted the decay that has ensued in some cases. While it is, admittedly, not easy for a Free Baptist church, rightly planted, to die, it has to be acknowledged that there has not always been enough care given to those that seemed "ready to perish." That some have not perished is more a miracle of grace than because of proper oversight and nurture and discipline. It is well that the Conference proposes to look more carefully after its weak churches. Having counselled all the churches to care for their non-resident members, the Conference was simply consistent when it set about providing for the better looking after its weak and sometimes unheard-from churches. Some do not report regularly to their respective District Meetings; some have not reported for two or three or more years; a few may be in the throes of dissolution. All these it is the duty of the Secretary to look after, with a view to ascertaining their actual condition and needs, and providing help wherever possible.

(4) "To encourage better methods of organization and business work" &c. It is gratifying to know that in organized activities and business methods our churches, as a whole, have made marked progress within a few years. It is within the recollection of the older brethren, and, indeed, of some who are not yet counting themselves among the old, that system in religious work was not regarded with favour in many, perhaps the majority, of the churches. A great change has taken place, and improvements in this respect are being constantly made. The Conference expects the General Secretary to help forward this good thing in every way possible. Steps have already been taken towards encouraging the churches to adopt more systematic methods of supporting the several branches of general work which the Conference has in charge, viz. Home Missions, Foreign Missions, the Fund for Sick and Disabled Ministers, and the Ministerial Students Fund.

(5) "To investigate and gather information and report fully to the Home Mission Executive on all matters connected with the condition and needs and progress of the denomination in the sections visited."

This gives the Secretary a wide field, and duties that must sometimes be difficult and delicate. It is, however, a work, which needs to be done. No Conference, or other body, can rightly consider and minister to the interests entrusted to it, unless it has before it the fullest information obtainable. And this information is more likely to be had when it is somebody's business to get it.

The General Secretary is not a missionary in the ordinary acceptance, and yet he is appointed to do missionary work of a much needed kind. The number and variety of his duties are such as to make it difficult, if not quite impossible for him to go from place to place, holding in each a series of meetings for the awakening of spiritual life. But if he well and faithfully does the things assigned to him he will be doing real missionary work, which, it is hoped, will make far better spiritual life and increased efficiency of Christian service.

Much of the Secretary's work will not appear to the casual observer, nor will the fruits of it be immediately apparent. But as the work on the neglected parts of a farm, which, at first and even for a considerable time, appear to be wasted time, energy, and money, in due time produces satisfactory results, so it is hoped that the future may make it clear that the work now being attempted by the Conference for the better cultivation of its field may be seen to have yielded good fruit. We commend it to the prayers of all our people.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE.—South Dakota voted on the question of Woman Suffrage in the recent state election, and it was defeated.

Notes On Current Events.

The death of Harold Frederic, while under treatment by Christian Scientists, and the revelations at the inquest, have aroused much feeling in London against the C. S. people, and there has been some strong denunciation of their peculiar, not to say absurd, theories.

The popular branch of the New Zealand Legislature has voted for a bill to provide for a pension of \$1.75 a week to every poor person in the colony, over 65 years of age, who has a weekly income of less than \$3.25. The bill has not become law. But it shows a drift of public feeling, and that it is strong. An agitation in the same direction gained considerable headway in England a few years ago.

Last week, at the meeting of the United States National W. C. T. Union, held in St. Paul, the question of the Woman's Temple in Chicago was finally disposed of. By a vote of 285 to 71, it was resolved to abandon the temple project. A large amount of money has been spent in it, but it has been found too large an undertaking, and while for many it was hard to give it up, to pay for it appeared a hopeless task.

Another decree from Rome is said to make things a little easier than formerly for Catholic Masons. Hitherto priests have not been allowed to officiate at the funerals of Catholics connected with the Masonic order. The new decree permits priests to attend such funerals, and the interment may be in consecrated ground, if the deceased has not been openly hostile to the church and has at some time expressed a willingness to be reconciled to the church.

General Miles, in his report just presented, on the condition and operations of the United States Army during the past year, makes some important recommendations, among them an increase of the standing army of the country. He thinks there should be one soldier for every thousand of the population. He, also, recommends an auxiliary force of native soldiers in Porto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines—two soldiers to every thousand of the population.

As one means of paying off the immense war debt of the country, the Spanish Government has issued a "mourning" stamp. It is to be used on all the inland mail of Spain and such colonies as remain to her after she gets through with the United States. It is printed in sombre black, and must be affixed to all mail matter in addition to the regular postage rate. There are, of course, other special tax stamps to raise money for the extraordinary demands upon the government. But the mourning stamp is expected to appeal strongly to the sympathies of the people.

The recent killing of several negroes in South Carolina, Mississippi and Illinois has aroused the coloured population of the United States to inaugurate a movement to prevent the continuance of the outrages perpetrated upon their people in the South. An immense meeting of negroes was held in Indianapolis last week to consider the matter, and it was resolved to memorialize the President to call the attention of Congress to the matter and ask legislation to prevent the increasing evil. It is no wonder they seek protection.

Rev. Fr. Zurich, of Buffalo, New York, wrote a book on "The Monks and Their Decline." It has got him into trouble. A late order from Rome has placed the book under the ban of the church. It is intimated, also, that the author is in danger of excommunication if he does not retract. The part of his book offensive to the Roman authorities is that it says something about the drinking habits of the Jesuits and other "orders." The author takes strong ground, too, against the liquor manufacturing carried on by certain "orders" of the church. Perhaps he will retract. They often do, under the powerful pressure of the church "machine."

A new republic came into existence the first of this month—the United States of Central America. Nicaragua, Salvador and Honduras became states of the new republic. It has an area of about 210,000 square miles, with a sea coast on both the Atlantic and Pacific, and a population of 2,000,000. The President is to be elected every four years by the votes of the people, and cannot serve two terms in succession.

It is reported from Spain that the people in some parts of the country are so dissatisfied that they talk of secession. In the Province of Catalonia there is said to be a movement

in favour of annexation to France. A strong leader would do a good deal with a movement of this kind. The Carlists are awaiting their opportunity to profit by the quite general disaffection.

Complaints of wrong treatment of the Filipinos by the United States officers in the Philippine islands are made. The Filipino Junta, as it is called, at Hong Kong, has sent a formal appeal to President McKinley. They evidently feel that they should have had recognition as allies of the United States; but, instead, they have been quite ignored, and, as they say, "deprived of the fruits of victory." General Merritt commander of the United States forces in the Philippines, says they found it impossible to recognize the insurgents, did not need their co-operation, and did not intend to have it. He had, he said, told leading Filipinos that the United States had no promises to make, but assured them that they would be treated fairly.

The question of exemptions of church properties from taxation is being agitated in Montreal. The Mayor, in a recent address, seems to have expressed views that excited the fears of the Roman Catholic Archbishop, who addressed to him a letter evidently designed to caution him against participation in any movement that might require the Roman Catholic church to pay taxes on its large and valuable holdings. There is no sign of disposition to tax properties, owned by churches and used for religious purposes. But there is a feeling that large properties, held by religious societies, not in actual use for religious purposes, should be taxed. They are rented for various secular purposes, or are held on speculation. The Roman Catholic church has much property, of this kind, and, perhaps, other religious bodies have some too. It ought to be taxed. But it is doubtful if it ever will be in Montreal or any other part of Quebec, where the church rule is so absolute.

Many of the most thoughtful people in the United States are opposed to what is sometimes called the "imperial" policy—which is a nice name for the greed of new territory which is just now showing itself in so large a way. 'Harpers' Weekly,' which voices the views of a large and good class, says of the Philippines, that a year ago "no politician in the country would have dreamed of accepting them, and the international responsibilities that wait on sovereignty over them, as a gift. Now everything is changed. The dreams of empire are disturbing heated brains." The President, it believes, would take Cuba, also, if the promise of the declaration of war had not been repeated in the peace protocol. It may be found later that there is a way even of interpreting the promise to suit a plan of taking possession of Cuba.

Following Lord Salisbury's speech, referred to in our last issue, comes Mr. Chamberlain's delivered at the National Liberal-Unionists conference in Manchester, last week. He was not so careful of French feelings as was his Premier. He said it was "the hope of every friend of peace that the French withdrawal from Fashoda is indicative of their acceptance of the principle of British control of the whole valley of the Nile, regarding which there cannot be any discussion whatever."

He told of the unfriendly acts of France towards Great Britain in various parts of the world during the last dozen or fifteen years, and added: "If better relations are to be established it will be necessary for French politicians to abandon tactics whose object has been to hamper and embarrass British policy even in quarters where the French have no interests to protect."

The last reference was, as he explained, particularly to Newfoundland, where the course of the French has seriously interfered with the development of the colony. There can be no doubt that his frank utterance on this point was no more than a fair statement of the case. And it may be understood to mean, and we hope does mean, that Great Britain intends to do long delayed justice to Newfoundland by ending the absurd and irritating arrangement which gives France certain shore privileges which have been used to the great detriment of the colony.

He also said of the Fashoda incident: "If it serves to disabuse foreign statesmen of the erroneous conception that the British will yield anything to pressure, it will be a blessing in disguise."

He, of course, did not fail—no statesman on either side the Atlantic overlooks it now a days—to speak of the cordial feeling between Great Britain and the United States, and