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"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward Men."

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THE BIBLE'S COMPLAINT.

Am I the book of God! then why,
O, man, so seldom is thine eye
Upon my pages cast?
In me behold the only guide
To which thy steps thou canst confide,
And yet be safe at last.

Am I the record God has given
Of him who left the court of heaven,
Thy pardon to procure?
And canst thou taste one moment's bliss
Apart from such a hope as this?
Or feel one hour secure?

Am I the Spirit's voice that tells
Of all his grace and love who dwells
Between the cherubim?
And wilt thou slight my warning still?
And strive thy cup of guilt to fill,
Till it shall reach the brim?

O, turn, at length, from danger's path,
And kiss the Son, lest in his wrath
The Father rise and swear,
That since, in mercy oft addressed,
Thou still hast scorned his promised rest,
Thou shalt not enter there!

Know, that in yonder realms above,
Where fondest sympathy and love
For erring mortals reign,
Ten thousand glorious spirits burn
To celebrate thy first return
In loud, ecstatic strain.

And hark! from that abyss of woe,
Where tears of grief and anguish flow,
Amidst devouring fire,
What sounds of hopeless wail proclaim
The terrors of Jehovah's name,
The fierceness of his ire!

O, sinner! hear that doleful cry;
And learn from sin and self to fly,
Ere justice lifts her rod!
List while thou may'st to mercy's call,
For 'tis a fearful thing to fall
Into the hands of God!

Now, now is the accepted day,
And, show-like, it fleets away
On wings of awful speed!
Take up the cross and thou art strong,
Come life, come death! Reject it long,
And thou art lost indeed!

IRELAND'S MISSION FIELD.

By John Edgar, D.D.

Professor of Divinity, and Honorary Secretary of Missions
for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

(Continued.)

VII.—THE OPENED FIELD OF PROVIDENCE.

Ireland is a field of intense interest now, on account of the wonderful preparation for missionary work lately made in it by the mysterious providence of God. In 1841, there was in Ireland a population of 8,175,124, and, according to the usual rate of increase, it should have been, in 1851, about 9,000,000; perhaps it had reached this in 1846. But the late census makes the population 6,515,794. Ireland has likely lost 2,000,000 of her population; and about 270,000 of the houses of her poor have been swept away. Three years since I saw the black ruins of very many; grass and weeds grow now where once they were.

According to the Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction, in 1834, Ireland contained 1,517,228 Protestants, and 6,427,712 Roman Catholics. Here were fearful odds against Protestantism; here a fearful host at the nod of Rome; here a region of darkness and despotism fearfully large. But famine, emigration, and other causes, have effected an incalculable change. As to numbers, the vast proportion of 2,000,000, dead or gone, were Romanists; and hence the proportion of Protestants and Romanists in Ireland has so thoroughly changed, that some authorities state, that Romanists do not exceed Protestants by more than 500,000, while by others the statement made is this:

Such is the decrease of Romanists by disease, emigration, and conversions, that, laying out of account 500,000 shut up in workhouses, the Roman Catholic and Protestant population of Ireland are nearly equal.

However inaccurate both these statements may be, and whatever be the exact relation of numbers, one thing is certain, that Romish Ireland has become a much more manageable field than formerly; and the means and agencies in the hands of Protestants are, with the Divine blessing, quite adequate to her regeneration. Other considerations, also, show that the Spirit of the Lord is lifting up a standard against her great enemy. Political agitation, monster meetings, exciting speeches, roused the Romish mind, and taught it to think; temperance gave it sober leisure; hope deferred on Repeal made it sick; and when the sweeping famine came, many causes combined to shake it from the foundation of its ancient trust. The priest, in his usual pretensions to miraculous power, sprinkled holy water on the potato stalks, yet there settled down upon them, in thicker gloom, the blackness of death. Government gave £10,000,000 to feed the dying; but, whenever the priest aided in its distribution, he showed injustice and cruelty. Hundreds of thousands, in charity, were sent from all parts, and all denominations, and committed to the charge of Quakers, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, but scarcely anything to the Romish priest; and what little he did receive he too often gave to those who could repay him in fees, or made it subservient to his own selfish ends. In the meantime, death was doing a wholesale work; multitudes were gone to their long home, and no priest had been near their bed. Here was a corpse on the roadside; another there thrust into the bog; and, near at hand, a whole family, dead in their hut, over whom "the hunger" had crept with a cold and deadly torpor; but all of them had gone unanointed, unshrived; the wife was too weak to rise from the side of her dying husband to go for the priest; or, when the little child did totter forth to bring him to the home of the dying, he confessed that there was no money to pay for last rites, and he was driven, with curses, away. Thousands were dead, and no holy clay had been put on their coffins; thousands were dead, and no ceremonies, deemed essential to salvation, had been performed over their cold remains; but their widows and orphans lived, and they could not believe that their husbands and fathers must, for the covetousness of selfish priests, be eternally lost. No, no; natural affection rose high over all the teachings of priestcraft; and those who had tried the man of the whip and altar's curse, and found him, in the hour of trial, heartless and harsh; and who, in the hour of sickness and sorrow, were visited, and fed, and comforted, by those whom he called agents of hell, could not but see and feel the contrast; could not but feel, in their inmost hearts, that Protestantism cannot be bad when its fruits are so generous and good.

Another agency in the preparation of a portion of the present Irish missionary field is worthy of regard. The Rev. Alexander Dallas, with some Christian friends, having despatched eight trusty messengers to different parts of Ireland, to obtain information, and hold Christian conversation with the people, afterwards directed, through the post, to an immense multitude of respectable Roman Catholics, 90,000 copies of three very suitable religious tracts, which there is reason to believe told powerfully on many minds, and were the means of awakening a spirit of inquiry, which has been productive of extensive good.

VIII.—THE LABORERS IN THE HARVEST FIELD.

Ireland is a field of delightful missionary

interest now, because so many missionary agencies occupy it, with great zeal, and large success. One of these, which may be viewed as pioneer to others, has been long worked successfully by Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, and others, and has for its object the religious education of the native Irish, through the medium of their own language.

A single extract from the last Report of the Irish Society will convey satisfactory information as to the sphere occupied, and the good done, by this species of missionary agency. "The committee report 667 schools, 29,119 scholars, 38 inspectors, 60 clerical superintendents, 20 missionaries, 3 lay agents, 166 Scripture readers, several new places of worship, to meet the demands for church accommodation of vast numbers of converts from Romanism; and all this effected and maintained against violent intimidation, with threatened loss of property and life, and endured with martyr's courage and faith."

The Mission Society for the Islands and Coast of Ireland, the Achill Mission, the Dingle and Ventry Mission, have so long enjoyed public confidence, and been upheld by public generosity, that they need only be mentioned as patriarchal institutions, which have lived to see, in the fruit of their own labours, and in the increasing prosperity of many young Societies around them, the result of Heaven's rich blessing on many an anxious day of toil, and many a fervent prayer. The Irish Evangelical Society, supported by Congregationalists, has twenty ministerial agents and thirty Scripture readers, whose labours have been greatly blessed, and who have provoked to love and good works many more of other creeds and names.

The itinerant system of Methodism qualifies it for such a field as Ireland; and in Ireland, since the days of Wesley, Methodists have laboured with their accustomed zeal, and with much success. The Primitive Wesleyans have twenty missions in Ireland, comprising not less than 400 mission stations or congregations, which are so widely scattered, that their missionaries have not travelled less than 42,000 miles during the past year, and have paid 48,000 family visits for reading Scripture and prayer. The other chief Methodist body have eighteen missionary stations, and twenty-five missionaries in Ireland; and in their last report they say, that such an amount of success has been realised as to afford cheering hopes for the future.

No missionary society has, of late years, engaged more of public attention than the Society for Irish Church Missions. It employs 13 ordained missionaries, 1 lay superintendent, 3 lay agents, 83 readers, 41 teachers; making in all 141 agents employed, besides 274 teachers, who instruct 3520 Romanists in reading the Irish Scriptures. These missionaries officiate in 21 congregations, having an average attendance of 3892; all of these being either settled converts from Romanism, or inquiring Romanists sufficiently emboldened to defy the vengeance of the priests. In the appeal which the Bishop of Tuam has made for the building of eight new churches, and the enlargement of two others, on account of the success of these missions, he says, that in the district there are 13 congregations of converts and inquiring Roman Catholics, and 24 schools, in which 2500 children are taught the Scriptures.

A single fact gives every man the means of judging of the Society's success. In the district of West Galway there were, ten years since, not more than 500 Protestants, there are now between five and six thousand. Or, look to the district of Doon, on the borders of Limerick and Tipperary. What Doon was, may be judged from the fact that the sale of a cow, not long ago, was effected there by a very strong force of police and military, supported by artillery, who were opposed by 60,

000 men. From hill and dale, from mountain and bog, these thousands came at the command of the priest. The priest's power was lately tried in the same district. "Every man, from the Shannon to the Galtees, will come at my call," said the priest, "to shout and groan the Bishop of Cashel." The bishop came, but neither priest nor groaning mob was there. And why? The power of the priest is gone. In 1848, after three years' labour of Irish readers, eight persons in the parish of Doon renounced Romanism; and in another year, ten more. Then came on a period of terrible persecution, but the truth of God triumphed; and now, in that district, there live not less than 800 converts from Romanism, while at least 200 more have carried reformed hearts to lands beyond the sea; or the land beyond the grave; thirty-two are either acting as teachers and readers, or preparing to teach others that truth which has made themselves enlightened and free.

The Society for Irish Church Missions is carrying forward a bold and successful system of aggression on Romanism, in some of the large towns of Ireland, by maintaining with Romanists friendly controversy on the leading tenets of their system, and, in a loving, religious spirit, overturning their errors, and establishing scriptural truth. Such is the interest awakened among Romanists by this system, that sometimes a thousand of them are present at a single meeting in Dublin; and such is the success, that 150 converts from Romanism have, in a single district of our metropolis, joined the communion of the Established church. It has been repeatedly published, on high authority, that, in the diocese of Tuam alone, there are 10,000 converts from Popery; and the Rev. Wm. Marable, in his pamphlet on Irish Church Missions, states that 30,000 converts have, within the last two years, been, by various Societies, brought out of Romanism.

[To be concluded.]

The Three Sovereigns.

The following anecdote was often told by the late emperor Alexander, and is amongst the traditions of the Russian Court:

In 1814, during the period that the allies were masters of Paris, the Czar, who resided in the hotel of M. de Talleyrand, was in the daily habit of taking a walk, (in strict incognito,) every morning, in the garden of the Tuilleries, and thence to the Palais Royale. He one day met two other sovereigns, and the three were returning arm-in-arm to breakfast in the Rue St. Florentin, when, on their way thither, they encountered a provincial, evidently freshly imported to Paris, and who had lost his way.

"Gentlemen," said he, "can you tell me which is the Tuilleries?"

"Yes," replied Alexander; "follow us; we are going that way, and will show you."

Thanks on the part of the countryman led them soon into conversation. A few minutes sufficed to arrive at the palace; and as here their routes lay in opposite directions, they bade each other reciprocally adieu.

"Parbleu!" cried the provincial, "I should be glad to know the names of persons so amiable and complaisant as you are."

"My name?" said the first—"Oh, certainly; you have, perhaps, heard of me; I am the emperor Alexander."

"A capital joke," exclaimed the Gascon—"An emperor! And you?" addressing the second individual,—"Who may you be?"

"I?" replied he, "why, probably, I am not wholly unknown to you, at least by name; I am the king of Prussia!"

"Better and better," said the man. "And you, what are you, then?" looking at the third person.

"I am the emperor of Austria!"