

Religious Intelligence.

Presbyterian.

The Rev. Casper E. Gregory, of Onondaga, N. Y., has received a unanimous call to become the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Bridgeton, New Jersey.

Presbyterian Minister Wanted at Memphis, Tenn., where there are four Presbyterian churches, only one of which is used for worship, and that is controlled by Government.

The First Presbyterian Church, Denver, Colorado Territory, was recently dedicated. This is the first Protestant church edifice in the territory.

Startling Fact.—Says the Christian Intelligencer:—One hundred and sixty churches of our denomination were reported to the last General Synod as having given nothing to the Board of Domestic Missions during the year.

Reformed Dutch Items.—Rev. Isaac M. See has accepted a unanimous call from the Mount Pleasant Church, (D. C.) 30th street in N. Y.

United.—Rev. John T. Pressly, of Allegheny, in a recent visit to Washington City, feeling deeply the necessity of doing something for the purpose of preserving from dissolution the Associate Reformed churches of the South.

Methodist.—The statistics of Methodism for two years past have shown a diminishing membership. This has resulted in part from a troubled border making the statistics imperfect, and in part from the great number of church members who have volunteered in the defense of the country.

Lutheran.—Dr. I. S. Schmucker, Professor of Didactic Theology in Gettysburg Theological Seminary, has sent in his resignation to the directors, stating that his chief reasons for this step, are the increasing infirmities of age, and a desire to devote the remaining years of life more particularly to literary labors for the cause of God and religion.

Norwegian Lutherans.—There are three churches among the Norwegians in Chicago. The first increased in membership 100 and more in 1862, and 164 communicants have been added in 1863, making a total of 525 present members.

The Sweden and the War.—What pastor N. Pelic, of Red Wing, says of the Swedish Lutheran Church, in Minnesota, is equally true of all the Swedish Churches over the West.

Recent Deaths of Ministers.—Within the past few weeks, no less than four Lutheran ministers have been called to their reward. The Rev. D. Adam, of Indiana, died in December, and the Rev. B. Appleby, of Washington, D. C., on the 26th of January.

Lutheran has the following:—Progress Canada West.—The progress of the work of the Church in this province, is evident only from the growth of most of the other congregations, and the organization of new ones, but from the violence of the opposition which the cause of truth and righteousness encounters from various quarters.

Pravians & United Brethren in Christ. These two denominations are very generally confounded. The former are also called United Brethren, whose organ is The Moravian, published in Bethlehem, Pa.

Baptist.—Alexander Campbell, from declining strength, retires from the Harbinger and from Bethany College. The Harbinger will henceforth be conducted by W. K. Pendleton.

by his friends there, and it is feared that the Second Church will for the present suspend public worship.

Episcopal Churches Supplanting Baptist.—On Sunday before last the services of St. Matthias Church (Memorial of Rev. Dr. Turner) were transferred to the Baptist Church in West Twenty-eighth street, near Broadway, New York.

Revivals.—A correspondent in Bridgeport, Conn., of the Evangelist, gives a most stirring account of a general awakening in that city, under the labors of Rev. Edward Payson Hammond.

In Hamilton Village, Michigan, it is stated, every adult, save one, has become a praying person. A correspondent of the Christian Intelligencer writes from Rafarin, Henderson Co., Ill., Feb. 17:—“An extraordinary and most cheering work of grace is in progress here.

Union Presbyterian Church, St. Louis.—God is visiting some of the St. Louis churches with the gracious influences of his Spirit. Since the 1st of January last, the United Presbyterian church (O. S.) has been enjoying special religious services, conducted principally by its excellent pastor, the Rev. J. J. Porter.

It is especially gratifying to the friends of truth, that this church should receive so rich a blessing. It is the only Old School Presbyterian church in St. Louis in which both pastor and people have earnestly opposed the cruel and wicked assaults of traitors upon our Government, and have been faithful witnesses for the truth against the unfaithful teachings of sympathizers with rebellion.

Granville, Maryland.—The religious interest in the University has been greatly on the increase the past week. Conversations are frequent. The work is still going on in the Young Ladies Institute, where a large number have been brought to the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ.

Miscellaneous.—Unitarian Statistics.—In the list of societies there are the names of 256. “The Journal,” for January, 1863, gives the number of societies as 261; consequently we have lost 5 names or societies, during the year passed; 69 societies of the 256 have no settled pastors.

The Pittsburg Advocate enters upon the discussion of the alleged decline of Methodism in the cities, and charges upon the New York papers of the denomination, the purpose of employing the fears excited by the decline, which they assert is taking place, to urge their plans of lay-delegation, &c., on the Church.

What deceptions and daring blasphemy!—Roman Catholic Chaplains are being appointed in some English counties, with salaries. Previously, any Roman Catholic in prison could see a priest if he desired it; now, the law passed last session, authorizes the magistrates at quarter sessions, if they see fit, to appoint paid Roman priests, not as chaplains, but as priests “appointed to visit the Roman Catholic prisoners.”

Congregational.—The erection of a church on Asylum Hill, Hartford, is talked of, and \$50,000 have been subscribed to secure the removal of East Windsor Seminary (already well endowed) to that city.

ANY BOY can teach a man, but it takes a man to teach a boy any thing. We should not so much pray for exemption from trials and protection from dangers, as for grace to enable us steadily to do our duty and to glorify our God in the midst of them all.—Dr. T. Scott.

THE FINAL DECISION IN THE CASE OF “ESSAYS AND REVIEWS.”

The prosecution against Dr. Williams and Mr. Wilson is at an end. Those famous clergymen, suspended from the office of the ministry and the emoluments of their livings for one year, by judgment of the Court of Arches, have been restored to their honors, functions, and emoluments, and will return amid the applause of the freethinkers of England, to preach essayism to their congregations.

Let us clearly apprehend what this decision amounts to. We take, to begin with, the question of inspiration. What is the effect of this judgment upon the doctrine of the Church of England with respect to the Bible? We reply, that the Lords of the Privy Council have decided that the church of England does not attach supreme and exclusive authority to Scripture; and we maintain that, in thus deciding, their lordships proclaim that the Church of England has abandoned the fundamental principle of the Protestant, and one fundamental principle of the Catholic faith.

Let us not stand up for any theory of inspiration; we do not say that the Catholic faith requires us to believe that every word of Scripture is literally inspired, or that no merely human element is to be found in the Bible. But we regard it as open to no dispute that the Church in all ages, has pronounced Scripture, in a distinctive and exclusive sense, the revelation of God's will, and has, therefore, ascribed to the precepts and instructions of Scripture a strictly Divine authority.

Whether it has been held to be the sole element in Scripture; or whether it has been held to be but a vein of finest gold embedded in Scripture; we affirm only that this Divine element has been held by the Church Catholic to exist in the Bible; to be distinctive; to be present in no other book; and to lend to Scripture an authority in matters of faith which no other book, heathen or Christian, can possess.

This doctrine no minister of the Church of England is now required to hold. The Church legally maintains that Scripture is “an expression of devout reason, and therefore to be read with freedom;” that it is “the written voice of the congregation;” that it is inspired as the Church is inspired; that every man is promised illumination from the Spirit that dwells in the sacred writers; that “the Bible was inspired by the Holy Spirit, that has ever dwelt and still dwells in the Church, which dwelt also in the sacred writers of Holy Scripture, and which will aid and illuminate the minds of those who read Holy Scripture, trusting to receive the guidance and assistance of that Spirit.”

Beyond this the clergy of the Church of England are not required to go. They must believe that the Spirit which now illuminates Christians, illuminated the writers of the Bible; but if their people ask them how creeds and churches can be built upon Scripture, when neither can be founded upon the present illumination of Christians; if their people ask them why the expression of devout reason now-a-days cannot be shaped into articles and imposed upon the faithful; if their people insist that, as the voice of the congregation in the Apostolic age was more spiritual than that of the congregation under the Jewish kings, so the voice of the congregation eighteen centuries after the Apostolic age ought to be more spiritual still, and therefore worthy of still higher reverence; if, in one word, they are asked to show cause why Scripture is authoritative, they will have no reply.

This is the grand discussion which has been going on for several hundred years. Here is the ridge where “wind and water shears,” and the streams descend, on this side or on that, to mysticism, to scepticism, or to Christianity. Grant that there is no element in Scripture which distinguishes it from the ordinary communications of God's Spirit, and the religious impressions of any good man of our acquaintance will have as much authority for us as the religious impressions of St. Paul. Go a little farther, say that devout reason in all times and places is the highest inspiration possible, and you arrive at Goethe's compliment to the Gospel—to wit, that it is a pleasant brook in which one may bathe and refresh himself as he walks on under the sky of nature, but that it is only one of many brooks which enliven the way. To this length the Lords of the Privy Council do not proceed, although we have no doubt that the “Essays and Reviews,” if not in letter, then in spirit, responded to the idea of Goethe; but their Lordships unquestionably lay it down that the Church of England does not assert Scripture to be inspired in any sense which would not apply to Bishop Heber's melodious appeal to Christians to send the Gospel to the heathen or to Addison's hymn on

the firmament. The clergy of the Church of England are required to believe that the Bible is, on the whole, a good book; but the Church of England does not affirm that it is, in any distinctive and authoritative sense, God's Book.

After this, it is unnecessary to dwell upon the deliverance of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council respecting particular theological tenets. Suffice it to say that their Lordships absolve ministers of the Church of England from obligation to believe in vicarious atonement and in the eternal punishment of the lost. The first of these has always been recognized as one of the fundamental doctrines of Catholic orthodoxy.

How are we to sum up the result of all this, looked at from the national and historical standpoint? No feeling could be further from our minds than that of exultation over the Church of England in this the day of her humiliation and calamity. But the truth must be spoken, and the plain truth seems to us to be that this judgment unchurches the English Establishment. It does so in two ways: In the first place, it deprives her members of all guarantee that her ministers will preach the Gospel, and we hold that the preaching of the pure and full Gospel of God is an indispensable mark of a true Church.

In the second place, it totally annihilates her discipline, or rather, it proclaims to the world that her discipline is not even a name. The continuance in the ministry of men who have published the opinions of Dr. Williams and Mr. Wilson might be safely pronounced an impossibility in any Christian Church possessed of a system of discipline. But the mere continuance of the men in the church is not all we have in this instance. The church has declared by every organ at her command that she regards those men as heretics. The Bishops have denounced them; Convocation has denounced them; the whole body of the clergy has testified against them; and yet they are revisited by the slightest ecclesiastical censure! The Church of England, her ministers and her members, have less power to manage their own affairs than the smallest knot of sectaries in the kingdom. How any Church can submit to a bondage like this, how Christian men can fail to see that so complete a surrender of that spiritual power which is Christ's into the hand of Cesar is a heinous and terrible sin, we are unable to conceive.

Evangelical Nonconformists in general, and the Presbyterian Church in particular, ought to address to Evangelical ministers and members of the Church of England an earnest appeal and invitation to leave a Church which surely, they themselves being witnesses, can no longer pretend to find her religion in the Bible or to call Christ her king.—Weekly Review.

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