

AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN
AND
GENESEE EVANGELIST.
Religious and Family Newspaper,
IN THE INTEREST OF THE
Constitutional Presbyterian Church.
PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY.
AT THE PRESBYTERIAN HOUSE,
127 Chestnut Street, (2d story,) Philadelphia.
Rev. John W. Mears, Editor and Publisher.

American Presbyterian.

New Series, Vol. IV, No. 1.

Genesee Evangelist, No. 1076.

PHILADELPHIA, THURSDAY, JANUARY 3, 1867.

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American Presbyterian.
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NEW YEAR'S GREETING.

To all our readers who, with us, have entered upon another year, we offer our best wishes. May life, health and prosperity be granted to them and theirs. May the goodness of God manifestly accompany them. May their souls have health and peace. May the gracious Spirit dwell with abundance of gifts in their hearts, enabling them to make and keep holy resolutions, to engage with fresh zeal in the conflict with sin and corruption in the heart, and to devote themselves with new energy and solemn consecration and humble dependence to the Master's work. In place of worldliness and selfishness and passion and pride, may grateful love and obedience to a crucified and risen Saviour reign more and more in their hearts and ours. May they learn the power of his religion to give every day comfort and peace. May they obtain a good hope through grace, and hear the Holy Spirit bearing witness in their hearts that they are the children of God.

In other parts of the paper we have endeavored to review the year that is gone. It has great lessons for those of us entering upon another year. The removal of good men, like Brainerd and Kennard and Baldwin and Crozier, is a warning of what may befall in the year before us, and a call to the vigorous and the prosperous to fill up, according to their measure, the void left by their death. The multiplication of means of communication between continents and remote regions of the earth, and the drawing together of the nations, present new facilities for the spread of the Gospel. The weakening of powers opposed to the truth, the humbling of the Papacy and its friends, and the clear gain for justice and freedom in the world, encourage Christ's servants to feel that their labor is not in vain in the Lord. The wide-spread and faithful revival of the early part of the year, which still lingers among us with its blessed influences, assures us that the living God is still with his Church as of old. Contrary appearances there are; clouds of war over the nations, infidelity ministering at the altars of religion, and defended by the secular power in nominally Christian countries, great deficiency in the ranks of the ministry at home and in the foreign field, church organizations dividing or contending to divide from the workings of heaven of popery in their ranks. Such clouds upon the face of the landscape do not terrify the Christian. They lead him to look beyond where the sun is still shining. They sober his thought, and contain him to measure the work before him. Above all, they lead him to simpler dependence upon the divine arm, and he turns to human resources to hear the inspired words "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." Let us live and work not only for God, but for God, and whether or no we achieve we would or should, that humble dependence will make us content, and ensure us a happy NEW YEAR.

FIRST MONDAY OF THE YEAR.

The appointment of the General Assembly of the day will be observed as a special season of prayer for the conversion of the world. In accordance with this, a union meeting will be held in the Calvary Church, Monday morning at 11 o'clock. Our several congregations are invited to attend.

THE WEEK OF PRAYER.

A meeting of the Evangelical clergy of the city, called by the Young Men's Christian Association of the city, was held in the rooms of the Association on Thursday afternoon last, for the purpose of arranging for the week of prayer. The meeting was called to order by the Rev. Dr. Breed. Rev. Dr. March was appointed Chairman, and the Rev. John Moore, Secretary. It was voted to be expedient to observe the week of prayer, commencing with January 3, 1867; that the meetings be held in different churches, at 4 o'clock P. M.; that the subjects recommended by the Evangelical Alliance, London, be adopted, with few verbal alterations. It was further voted that the Central Presbyterian Church be the place for holding the first meeting, on Monday; on Tuesday, Spring Garden Methodist Church; on Wednesday, Clinton Street Presbyterian Church; on Thursday, Spruce Street Baptist Church; on Friday, Rev. Dr. Wylie's; and on Saturday, Rev. Dr. Newton's. It was likewise voted that the Devotional Committee of the Young Men's Christian Association be requested to call upon the pastors of these respective churches, and make such ar-

rangements as may be thought necessary. The following are the subjects for consideration:

Sunday, Jan. 6.—Sermons on the Presence of Christ with his Universal Church. Monday, Jan. 7.—Thanksgiving and Confession of Sin.

Tuesday, Jan. 8.—Prayer for Nations; for "kings, and all in authority;" for the increase of righteousness, the prevalence of peace and the holy observance of the Sabbath.

Wednesday, Jan. 9.—Prayer for the success of missions among the Jews and Gentiles, and for a Divine blessing to accompany the efforts to evangelize the unconverted of all lands and classes.

Thursday, Jan. 10.—Prayer for all who have suffered from the recent wars; for our brethren emancipated from slavery, and for our fellow-Christians persecuted for the Gospel's sake.

Friday, Jan. 11.—Prayer for Christian families, for schools, colleges and universities.

Saturday, Jan. 12.—Prayer for the Catholic Church, for all ministers of the Gospel, and for the increase of holiness, fidelity and Christian charity among its members.

Sunday, Jan. 13.—Sermons on the unity of the Church and the duty of believers to manifest it by mutual recognition and active co-operation.

PROPOSED CONGREGATIONALIST INVESTIGATIONS IN NEW JERSEY.

We find in a recent number of the *Congregationalist* an account of the interest excited among the Congregational ministers in the vicinity of Newark, N. J., by the apparently unexpected discovery that quite a number of the Presbyterian churches of that region were not so originally, "In making researches," so it is stated, "it has come to light that many of the churches in New Jersey, now Presbyterian, were originally, and for a long time, strictly Congregational. How they were lost from our fellowship is not easily ascertained, and, perhaps, never will be. Some of them show no official record of the change, but seem to have been quietly led astray by the ever-watchful influence of Presbyterianism." It is therefore proposed that the author of the essay in which these facts are set forth should "continue his investigations," and present them in several articles to the *Congregational Quarterly*, for preservation.

We regard this project, although begun with a transparently sectarian design, as eminently praiseworthy, and, although we have no doubt that impartial investigation will lead to results which will disappoint the investigators, yet, so long as they are willing to pursue it, they shall not want our encouragement. It is very evident that the Congregational ministers of Newark and vicinity imagine that they are entering upon a new and unexplored field; that they are in happy oblivion of what has been brought to light by Presbyterians; that they have already stated what flashes upon them like a new revelation, and that they are in hopeful expectation of fishing up new materials to impeach "the ever-watchful influence of Presbyterianism."

It seems almost a pity to dispel their illusions; but as it must come to that at last, there is very little charity in leaving them to plod their way in ignorance. We have, therefore, only to say, that they must go to Presbyterian records and histories, mainly, to gather up the facts, and they will find them impartially recorded by those who have gleaned the field in a truly antiquarian, and quite non-sectarian, spirit. They should not, for instance, overlook the disclosures made in Stearns's History of Newark, Macdonald's of Jamaica, Hoyt's of Orange, Schenck's of Princeton, Hall's of Trenton, etc.; Webster's, Hodge's and Gillett's Histories, the Minutes of the Old Synods, Whitehead's New Jersey, etc.; and they should patiently wait for Hatfield's forthcoming history of Elizabeth town, which will relieve them of no little taskwork in the matter of investigation. As new-comers in the field, they may be excused for a certain degree of ignorance; but till that ignorance is dispelled, it would be no more than modest to beware of procuring sectarian charges against "the ever-watchful spirit of Presbyterianism."

If there ever was an honest and legitimate transformation of Congregational to Presbyterian churches, we apprehend that it is to be found in connection with the labors of such men as the great Jonathan Dickinson, Webb, Barr, and others of that stamp. In 1705-6, the Presbyterian Church in this country first took an organic form. In 1708, the churches of Connecticut became, through the adoption of the Saybrook Platform, to say the least, semi-Presbyterian. Even yet the church at

Newark, and doubtless several others, stood unchanged upon the Congregational platform. But their ministers, originally Congregational also, were not blind to the defects of the system. Experience taught them, what some of our Congregational brethren of Newark and vicinity have yet to learn, that there is a better way. Sixteen years before there was a Presbytery in this country, the younger Pierson, who for fourteen years had been the pastor of the Newark church, urged it to adopt a modified Presbyterianism; and when it refused, he withdrew to Connecticut, to become, ere long, the first pastor of Yale College. We shall regard it as the result of very original investigations, if our Newark friends shall discover that Mr. Pierson's conversion was due to "the ever-watchful influence of Presbyterianism."

The fact is, the influences which determined the ecclesiastical transformation of the Congregational churches of East Jersey, were older than the existence of a Presbytery in this country; and if Makemie had never come forward, as he did with his proposals, there can be little doubt that the organization of a Presbytery, and the transformation of Congregational to Presbyterian churches, would not have been long delayed. Connecticut had no Makemie, and yet two years after his project had been carried into execution, its churches had adopted a system which President Dwight regarded as only inferior to Presbyterianism itself. To borrow an expression, significant if not exactly accurate, Presbyterianism "was in the air." The pastors and more intelligent members of the churches felt that organization of some kind, was essential to the efficiency and prosperity of the churches. They were no bigots to forms. They were singularly free from sectarian prejudices. They felt that united plans and harmonious action were imperatively demanded by the emergencies of the times and the circumstances of their ever-expanding mission field. From the first, they had retained the sympathies alike of the Scotch and Irish, of the London and of the Continental churches. Presbyterianism was not then the bugbear to Congregational ministers, especially to those of Fairfield county, that it is to many now. They did not denounce it as ecclesiastical tyranny. They did not devote their attention at conferences and associations to exciting prejudices against it, or explore history to discover the materials for its impeachment. Of course they regarded the transformation of Congregational to Presbyterian churches in a very different light from that in which it is regarded by the New Jersey Conference; and we trust that the latter, if they see fit to commemorate the centennial of Dr. Stearns's church, without consulting the pastor, will not build the tombs of the fathers by doing injustice to their memory, or leaving out of view the liberal principles with which the Conference seems to have so little sympathy.

We trust that our youthful essayists will probe the subject to the bottom. If they do not add to others' wisdom, we feel sure that they will not diminish their own. But to heighten the effect of their discoveries, we would kindly suggest that they seek out in New England history parallel transformations of Presbyterian to Congregational churches, or, more appropriately, perhaps, inquire, to borrow the language of the writer in the *Congregationalist*, "how they were lost." To assist them, if they are as unread in New England as they evidently are in New Jersey history, we will ourselves suggest an instance. In 1719, a church, composed of Scotch-Irish emigrants, was gathered at Worcester, Massachusetts. They were accompanied, it is said, by Rev. Edward Fitzgerald, of Londonderry, Ireland, who preached to them for several months. Their place of meeting, for quite a period, was at what was known as the old Garrison House, built in the infancy of the town, as a protection against Indian attacks. The number of Presbyterian communicants is said to have been at first nearly equal to that of the membership of the Congregational Church. In their inability to support Mr. Fitzgerald, they were left without a pastor, and were invited to unite with the first parish. But the conditions of union, as they thought, were not complied with, and they withdrew, securing the Rev. William Johnston as their pastor. They commenced the erection of a house of worship for themselves, but after the materials had been procured and the frame raised, a body of inhabitants assembled by night and burned down and demolished the structure. "The vicious act," says the historian of Worcester, "was sustained by the intolerant spirit of the day, and the injured foreigners were compelled to mourn

in silence over the ruins of the altar profaned by the hand of violence."

Compelled by law to contribute to the support of the minister of the first parish, (who was a brother of Rev. Aaron Burr), they sought in vain to be relieved of the burden; the town refused their request, giving, among other reasons, that, "as to the Westminster Confession of Faith, which they say they promised their allegiance to, at their baptism, it is the same which we hold, maintain, and adhere to. As to the worship, discipline and government of the Church, as set forth by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, they are not substantially differing from our own professed principles." For this reason, as well as for others, as the irregularity of their withdrawal "and upon other accounts," the town refused to release them from the burden of the tax.

"All efforts to obtain justice and protection for religious freedom," says the historian, "having proved unavailing, many of the Presbyterian planters removed. Some joined their brethren of the same denomination, who, under the pastoral charge of Rev. Mr. Abernethy, founded the town of Pelham, in Hampshire county; others united themselves with the society in Londonderry, N. H., and many emigrated to the banks of the Unadilla, in New York," where, after an interval, they were joined by their former pastor, Mr. Johnston.

How the Presbyterian church at Worcester was "lost," is obvious from this brief narrative. We will leave the New Jersey Congregational Conference to find a parallel to it among Presbyterians, and if it is discovered, at a time subsequent to the organization of a Presbytery in this country, we shall be ready to answer the inquiry whether it was due to "the ever-watchful influence of Presbyterianism."

But we must say that, to us, it seems an insult to the dignity of history, to lower its investigations to the scope of a sectarian animus of the paragraph which has given occasion for our remarks. The ignorance by which it is characterized is, indeed, a partial, but only a partial, apology for it. We trust that the *Congregational Quarterly*, which is to record the results of the proposed exploration, "for the common interest of our denomination," will do its work so thoroughly and impartially, that this apology will not long avail. If Congregationalism is to lose its truly catholic spirit, and go about to read history through sectarian spectacles, it will simply show itself utterly estranged from the Congregationalism of our fathers—the Congregationalism whose better elements have been welcomed by, and transfused through, the structure of the American Presbyterian Church.

THE PHILADELPHIA TRACT AND MISSION SOCIETY.

This society has just issued its Thirtieth Annual Report, from which we learn that its operations during the year, ending September last, covered about two-thirds of the city. The number of tracts distributed is over 610,000. The force engaged is stated as one General Superintendent, six missionaries, thirty-eight assistant superintendents, with over six hundred and eighty visitors employed during the year.

The extracts from the visitors' reports are full of interest. They appear to be doing a truly Christian work among the suffering, the sick and the dying poor, visiting prisons and dark courts and alleys, going on shipboard, and laboring in the spirit of the Master to do good. Such evidences as the following would seem ample proof that their work is not in vain. In section 177, an Irish woman, aged seventy nine, was found very ill, and without hope. The visits of tract distributors led to her hopeful conversion. The report says:—"She was converted while we were singing the hymn, 'Jesus paid it all; all the debt I owe.' She recovered speedily after her conversion, joined the Church, and is now a consistent member."

Other reports say:— "We went among the people of the neighborhood, distributing tracts and inviting them to attend the meeting. Among the rest, we found at one house five young women, who had long since renounced everything that was good. They accepted our invitation and came to the meeting, more from motives of curiosity than anything else; but they were dealt faithfully with; and from those eyes, unused to weep, tears flowed freely down, and the next night we saw two of them at the church. The gentleman at whose house we held the meeting is a very worldly man; he remained in the next room and listened to the exercises; at the close, he came out and inquired when we would come and have another meeting there. In one 'lager-beer saloon' they were so much pleased, that one man offered to treat me to beer. In another I read to a man 'Nothing but Leaves.' He paid deep at-

ention, and pronounced the last verse beautiful.

During the past month, at least one hundred seamen have been led, in connection with the tract distribution among them, to attend divine services at the different Bethels; some of these have been awakened and hopefully converted to God. Among them was Captain —, of the bark Wavet, of Pictou, Nova Scotia, who was received into the Baptist Bethel January 18th. Also the first mate of the ship S. L. Tilley, was received into the Baptist Bethel, Lord's day, January 20th. Captain —, of the brig Charles Henry, of Pictou, Nova Scotia, professed conversion. He may unite with some church in Nova Scotia. Also two seamen, belonging to the ship Mosher, have asked an interest in the prayers of God's people.

A young seaman on the receiving ship Princeton, stated to me that he had been brought to feel concerned about his soul by reading a tract that I supplied him with, called "The Life Buoy." This young man is now rejoicing in a precious Saviour. Another seaman of the bark Baltassarra, of Liverpool, was awakened by reading tracts and books that I placed in his possession, in his own language, the Danish; he is now rejoicing in a good hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. Another seaman on this same vessel, who is a Swede, was awakened by reading the tracts and books that I supplied him with in his language; he is now, also, as he states, rejoicing in his dear Redeemer. And the second mate of this vessel, whom we invited to our Bethel meetings, has been brought to feel his sinfulness; he is now, also, rejoicing in the friend of poor sinners, the blessed Saviour.

One visitor, an old gentleman, told me that it had been the first time he had been out with tracts. I asked him how he liked the work? He said, I like it very much; and said he, the people are glad, not only to get the tract, but to have me converse with them on the subject of religion, and I must repeat my visit to them soon.

The report of the Young People's Association of the North Broad Street Church, which co-operates with the Philadelphia Society, is appended. It is an interesting document. One thousand tracts monthly are distributed by this association. Some of the most remarkable instances of the power of this instrumentality for good among the neglected classes are given in the report of this association. The story of the reformation and conversion of a once besotted father, who for six months was permitted to give evidence of the change, and then was suddenly called away by an accident, is a real gem in this tract literature. We close by quoting one other case from the report of the auxiliary:—

In another of our districts a lady of seventy years was led to attend our meetings, became under deep exercise of mind, and for two or three weeks was in great distress and darkness. She could find no comfort in reading the Bible or prayer, and feared there was no Saviour for her. "Nothing impossible with God," we told her, and bid her look up to a great Saviour. We made her case one of special prayer at our meetings. Relief came, her burden was removed, light beamed upon her soul, and her first wish was for a district and tracts, that she might labor in the service of One who had done so much for her.

CHURCH ERECTION.

The very stormy Sunday on which the collection for this object was appointed to be taken, and the equally unfavorable one which followed, have simply postponed, but not defeated, this great cause. Other causes for which appointments had been made, must needs come in, and thus a further postponement in many churches results. Give it an early place, brethren. Crowd a little. Postpone something else. Remember that our young churches all over the field are calling for protection. They must be housed or they will perish.

THE MISSIONARY HERALD.

With the January number of this periodical, long a household necessity in many Christian families, and quite indispensable to such as would acquaint themselves with the progress of Christ's kingdom, comes the announcement of a purpose, on the part of the publishers, to make it self-sustaining. A circular has been issued by Charles Hutchins, the recently-appointed General Agent of the Board, from which we quote:—

"The volume for 1867 is to contain some new features of great value. Beside the usual variety of letters and intelligence, the January number contains sixteen pages of missionary maps, giving all the important fields occupied by the American Board.

"In connection with the 'Annual Survey' there is a classified list of the missions and the missionaries. In this classified list the pronunciation of geographical names is carefully indicated. This has never been attempted before. This number will thus be one of great value for future reference.

"The succeeding numbers for the year will be illustrated with valuable engravings. At the low price of one dollar per year, it is confidently expected that the already large subscription list will be at least doubled.

N. B.—Since the organization of the Board in 1810, there have been established

among the heathen 245 churches; nearly 70,000 communicants have been received; 1296 missionaries have been sent out, and over one billion pages of Christian literature have been printed and circulated."

OUR WASHINGTON LETTER.

Since the adjournment of Congress but little has transpired of a political nature, which is interesting to the public. Several committees of the House of Representatives, have held daily sessions, and will have important bills to present on the re-assembling of that body. The joint committee on Retrenchment have found many places where branches can be lopped off, and they will recommend a free use of the official pruning-knife in some departments and districts.

The friends of the President are looking forward to a division of the ranks of the Union party, on the question of allowing the political distinctions of race and color to appear in the constitutions of new States. While Senators Sumner and Wade will never recede from their position on the Nebraska bill, no serious or permanent division will take place, as graver differences than that have been compromised by the majority in Congress, who are conscious of their power, and do not intend to lose it through any fissure.

Washington, notwithstanding it is situated south of Mason and Dixon's line, where perpetual flowers are supposed to bloom, at last rejoices in a bona fide skating-park. It is located on the bank of the Potomac, embraces about seven acres, and was duly inaugurated on Saturday last. The sport of skating is highly prized here on account of the opportunities for its enjoyment being so rare. Neither Grant nor Sherman were present at the inauguration of the park, although they were invited long ago. They evidently prefer trotting parks.

The Senatorial prayer-meeting, which is held in one of the committee rooms every week during the session, is one of the most gratifying features of the times. The interests of the nation can be safely trusted to those statesmen who are "bold to take up, and firm to maintain, the consecrated cross." We may rest assured that "the republic will suffer no detriment" at their hands.

The Howard University for the education of colored men applying from any section of the United States, will commence operations in January. The trustees are Generals O. O. and Charles H. Howard, Senators Wilson and Pomeroy, Representative Cook, of Illinois, Rev. Dr. Boynton, Chaplain of the House, Dr. S. L. Loomis, and ten others. The chairs in the theological department have been filled by competent professors; the medical corps is being organized by Prof. Loomis, and the normal department will soon receive attention from able minds. It has a fund of nearly one hundred thousand dollars to start with, while a bill granting it half a million acres of public land will soon be introduced into the Senate. The Baptists contemplate establishing a theological seminary here for the same purpose.

Many strangers are in town to pay their respects to the President at his annual reception to-morrow. The new French Minister, with his numerous attaches, will pay their New Year's compliments to the head of the nation for the first time. Cabinet and Foreign Ministers are admitted at eleven o'clock; the army and navy at meridian, and the procession of the "great unwashed" moves at one o'clock.

As I now write, the great year of votes is about closing. When it has gone, we shall look back upon it as the year of the successful union of two continents by electric nerves; the year of conventions, of feminism, of Constitutional amendments, of the great Austrian war, and the starting of the ball of universal suffrage destined to overturn the States.

We now behold a world at peace. Our eyes are so accustomed to "garments rolled in blood," and our ears to "rumors of war," that we can hardly realize the beneficent vision: May the dioramas never change.

J. F. G.
Dec. 31st, 1866.

WHAT WE ARE TO EXPECT.—The Romish Church in this country has at least one candid newspaper. The organ of the Archbishop of St. Louis, *The Shepherd of the Valley*, (one of the most influential as well as most insolent Papist publications in this country,) says:—"The Church is of necessity intolerant; hereby she endures when and where she must; but she hates, and directs all her energies to its destruction; if Catholics ever gain an immense numerical majority, religious freedom in this country is at an end."