

# The Central Presbyterian.

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## Central Presbyterian.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

### Letter from Philadelphia.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 30, 1880.

#### Christmas.

Messrs. Editors.—All thoughts and hands for the last week have been turned toward Christmas. What a blessing it is that the cheerful Christmas season comes to us in the midst of the searching cold and utter desolation of winter. The very name of December sounds dreary. The month is indeed the dead time of the year, "the darksome hollow, where the depths of winter lie," as Wordsworth puts it. And yet this one great, grand thought of God's unspeakable gift so warms and inspires the souls of men that in spite of the surrounding dreariness of shivering nature, and encroaching darkness that pinches shorter every returning day, the season is a genial time by common consent throughout all Christendom. Let the cynical man think of this among the tokens that Jesus Christ was and is a reality. Would a mere myth so influence a busy world in its strife for gain, as to impel it to give over its labor and its struggle for a single day in order to remember and thank God for the nativity and incarnation. Would a myth inspire selfish men to be disinterested and give good gifts one to another? Nay, the glad tidings must be true tidings that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.

Christmas with us has been more generally recognized this year than usual. I do not know that this has been altogether voluntary. The great snow storm has had a great deal to do with it. For we have had one of the snow falls of our childhood—which has made the houses and the trees look so strange and beautiful, which has defied the great street-crawlers, and for once has not turned quickly into a slushy nuisance. The snow, drifting and scurrying every where, has seemed to say, "I am master of the situation. It is Christmas time. To your firesides, ye workers! There relax the energy of life in the festal glow of home affection, and in the thoughts of how near God doth come to man." Obedience to the mandate has been compulsory. All comfort has been indoors, and men have been glad to get into the shelter of home. And thus it has been what it should be—peculiarly a home day—a day of domestic gladness—of children's holiday—of family gatherings under the old roof-tree—of harmless, childish merriment and remembrances of home, one in which smiles are not far from tears. This I am persuaded is the proper recognition of the day, to make it preeminently a family day, a day of worship not so much in the larger meeting-house, but in the lesser sanctuary and smaller congregation of the home. So did our forefathers.

"The damsel donned her kirtle sheen,  
The hall was dressed with holly green;  
Forth to the wood did merry men go  
To gather in the mistletoe,  
Then opened wide the Baron's hall  
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all,  
Power laid his robe of rule aside  
And ceremony doffed his pride,  
All hailed with uncontrolled delight,  
And general voice, the happy night  
That to the cottage as the crown  
Brought tidings of salvation down."

#### Universal Prosperity.

Universal prosperity also has made the season an unusually cheerful one. As a Virginia laborer put it very tersely to me in my late visit, "The flour barrel is full and the pig is fat," and not an inch of ground is left for the croaker to stand upon. Even the crow caws with a weak effort this winter. His note is constitutional, but what with the great corn crop, and the farmer's hindrance in cribbing it, he is altogether in a very comfortable frame of mind. It would be difficult in human history to find so young a nation, after such a wasting war, so recuperated and so prosperous as our own. The people have all the employment they desire. The wage is good. Business in all its aspects flourishes. Money is becoming literally so plenty in the world's great

centres of population that the question of interest is dwindling out of sight, and that of safety is alone regarded. Perhaps the day will come that capital will assume the position of a mere hoard and not dream of asking usury. With all this present cheer and prospect of coming good what wonder that men have been able to unbend the tension for a little, and "hang care," and surround the blazing fireside with less anxiety than usual, and more heart to thank the God who alone can keep us "quiet from the fear of all evil." Surely this Christmas time should be a period of

#### Gratitude to God for the Year Past and Courage for the Year to Come.

Indeed to me this is one of the grandest lessons of our Saviour's lowly birth—the lesson of aspiration and cheer for the future. Why but for this did the Son of God commence his life in time in so humble a form. He might have come on the wings of the wind with the multitude of the heavenly host for his attendants. He might have come with chariots and horses of fire to earth as Elijah went from it. He might have come as a king's son and made his beginning at the top of life instead of the bottom, in a brave palace, with attendant courtiers and retinues of servants, and vast armies to respond to his beck and command. But he came by the stable door—his cradle not golden but the manger of beasts, and with no heart but Mary's to thrill at his birth. And yet now *He* is the real power of this world, with an empire greater than Caesar's, and millions obey his behests. Did ever human being have so poor a beginning. Birth-place poor—parents poor. When Jesus started his great and glorious career his mother (for Joseph was now dead) had nothing whatever to give him—nothing but one poor suit of clothes which she had woven with her own hand. (?) "without seam throughout." But that gift of a mother's love was more dear to him than the rich man's purple and fine linen. He taught in it in Jerusalem, though I dare say his uncouth peasant's garb contrasted sharply with the rich dresses of the city, the broad phylacteries of the Pharisees, and the princely robes of Herod and Pilate. But he needed none of these things to recommend him. It is not the adjuncts, it is the soul that makes the man. And in despite of Jesus' lowly beginning, his utter poverty, his homely garb, he was and is, and ever shall be the grandest, noblest figure, the most remarkable power among men. It was so enacted for our learning that He might show us every one *what we may be and do*. A life consecrated to God, the man who knows how to be about his Father's business—the man who lives high is sure to rise high as Christ did—above all the men of mere pomp and riches and earthly power.

Let us catch something of this encouragement for the year to come. Let us adopt this child whose name is called Wonderful, into our homes, if we would have them wonderfully happy and peaceful and prosperous. Let us take this child to our hearts if we would be wonderful in our personal force and power. I care not how plain the man may be if he welcomes Jesus Christ to his heart. He can make him a man of unusual influence among his fellows. There is nothing more insipid and colorless than a grain of clear water. Who would suspect so small a thing of any pretensions to power? But Faraday lays on it the hand of his chemistry and forth leaps an electric force which he estimated at 800,000 discharges of his large Leyden battery. He declared that a single grain of water on four grains of zinc would yield electricity equal in quantity to a powerful thunder storm. Let this Christ lay his hand upon us—let him imprison his will in our souls, and we will thunder and lighten with a strange power. Impotent we will become omnipotent, mortal we will become immortal, finite we will become infinite. A nobody—we will leap a somebody into the realm and kingdom and equilibrium of God. L. M. C.

#### For the Central Presbyterian.

### Rome and "Separated Brethren."

PETERSBURG, VA., Dec. 29, '80.

Messrs. Editors.—You doubtless remember how severe Dr. O'Connell was upon me some weeks ago, charging me with insulting the good people of Virginia because I said that certain forms and expressions in the Roman Catholic Manuals are idolatrous, and declaring—good charitable man that he is—that he is "wholly unable to attribute such to any lady or gentleman of Virginia." You may remember also how unfavorably to myself he drew the comparison between Bishop Keane and me, saying that "Bishop Keane's regard for the convictions of others in his address is testified to by the secular press of Virginia; Dr. Wither- spoon's pulpit is the rostrum of bigotry in Petersburg." Now I am pleased to believe that in the main Bishop Keane's allusions to Protestants in his public addresses are very courteous and charitable. Speaking to mixed audiences of Romanists and Protestants, he is, as I am told, accustomed to speak of the latter as "our

separated brethren," to declare his confidence in the honesty of their convictions, the sincerity of their desire to serve God, and the earnest though misguided efforts they are making to attain to everlasting life. It is true that once in a while by way of a little variety he undertakes to animadvert upon certain ministers in Petersburg, and then waxes just a little warm, using such mild phrases as "lies," "slanders," "calumnies," etc., but that is only when we pin him up too closely about that Canon of the Council of Trent which forbids the free use of the Scriptures, and then, being unable to answer with arguments, he resorts to that other method so customary in his Church. Besides it must be borne in mind that these Protestants of whom he speaks so lovingly are present, and he is speaking to their faces, while those ministers, of whom he speaks so severely, are absent and he is speaking behind their backs, and that makes a great difference. And then again those Protestants of whom he speaks so lovingly are the ones so charitably disposed towards the Roman Catholic Church that they think it a great shame for any one to point out its errors; whilst the ministers towards whom he uses such harsh words are the men who dare to warn the people against those doctrines of the priesthood, and the Mass, and the worship of saints, which Roman Catholic writers are so zealously disseminating amongst us.

Now I am an admirer and an advocate of true charity—that which has regard for the person of an opponent, but not for his errors. I have the utmost charity for the members of the Roman Catholic Church; I have never written or spoken a word which I thought inconsistent with it. But I have no charity for the errors of the Roman Catholic system. I believe them to be dangerous and deadly and for this reason I lift up my voice against them like a trumpet.

But what I complain of is that whilst the Roman Catholics, when speaking face to face with Protestants are so charitable and loving, they are so uncharitable and unloving in what they write when they are behind their backs. Here is "Father Muller" for instance, this so much lauded mouthpiece of the Roman Catholic Church in this country. I have already called attention to the fact that in his Catechisms—catechisms in use in the seminaries amongst us patronized by Protestant parents—the child is taught to say that "Protestants make liars of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, and of the holy apostles," and that they will "have their portion with Lucifer in hell who first rebelled against Christ, and who is the father of liars." And I respectfully submit that it is not exactly the thing for an honest man to do, to go around the State talking so lovingly of "our separated brethren, honest but misguided," and all the time be secretly stabbing their characters in the dark, by teaching in the parochial schools under his control such tenets as these of "Father Muller, No. 3.

But this is not by any means the only instance of this kind of teaching. In this book "The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass," so earnestly commended to all the faithful, and every page declared to be worth the price of the whole volume, occur two passages to which I deem it due to call the attention of those "separated brethren" who may be disposed to look with favor upon the Bishop's loving advances.

The first of these passages has reference to the order of Free Masons, many of the honored representatives of which are among those "separated brethren" towards whom the good Bishop is so gracious. The passage will be found on page 618. Speaking of certain "pious confraternities" of the middle ages from which, as he says, Freemasonry took its rise, he adds, "They have been succeeded by the so-called Free-Masons—those diabolical confraternities, whose object is to destroy all belief in God, and to assist the devil to regain dominion over mankind." I commend this language to the notice of such of our Christian men as are members of the Masonic fraternity. This is the declaration of a man living in the midst of American Freemasonry, a declaration endorsed by the highest authorities of the Romish Church in this country!

But it is not only Free-Masons, but Protestants generally, of which the author gives us the true estimate held by the church which he represents. Take the following as an example: On page 492 of the work we are quoting, the author in treating of the consequences of giving up the doctrine of the Mass, says of Protestants (and his language applies to all Protestants, since all have given up the Mass), "For this reason it is that Protestants are so completely absorbed in temporal interests, in the things that fall under their senses, that their whole life is materialism put in action. *Lucre is the sole object on which their eyes are constantly fixed.* A burning thirst to realize some profit, great or small, absorbs all their faculties—the whole energy of their being. They never pursue anything with ardor but riches and enjoyments. God, the soul, a future life—

they believe in none of them, or rather they never think about them at all. If they ever take up a moral or a religious book or go to a meeting-house, it is only by way of amusement—to pass the time away. It is a less serious operation than smoking a pipe, or drinking a cup of tea. If you speak to them about the foundations of faith, of the principles of Christianity, of the importance of salvation, the certainty of a life beyond the grave—all these truths which so powerfully impress a mind susceptible of religious feeling,—they listen with a certain pleasure, for it amuses them and piques their curiosity. In their opinion all this is 'true, fine, grand.' They deplore the blindness of men who attach themselves to the perishable goods of this world; perhaps they will even give utterance to some fine sentences on the happiness of knowing the true God, of serving Him, and of meriting by this means the reward of eternal life. They simply never think of religion at all; they like very well to talk about it; but it is as of a thing not made for them—a thing with which personally they have nothing to do. This indifference they carry so far—religious sensibility is so entirely withered or dead within them—that they care not a straw whether a doctrine is true or false, good or bad. Religion is to them simply a fashion which those may follow who have a taste for it." &c.

These are the sentiments of a man living in Baltimore! This is his estimate of the Protestants of that city and of the country in which he dwells! Was there ever such a libel upon a great Christian people! Lucre their only object! no belief in God, the soul, or a future life! Their religious exercises only a pastime, less serious than smoking a pipe! Religion, a thing of which they never think at all, and with which they have nothing to do! Religious sensibility so entirely dead that they do not care a straw whether a doctrine is true or false, good or bad! I would recommend to Bishop Keane that as he goes through the State speaking so lovingly to his "separated brethren," he would take this book of Father Muller's in his pocket, and read these passages to the Protestants who come to hear him, as the latest exposition of the charitable sentiments of the Roman Catholic Church towards those outside its folds. And I would recommend those "separated brethren," if there are, as Dr. O'Connell asserts, any who think there is "no occasion for any outcry," to compare these defamatory utterances intended only for Catholic eyes with the carefully guarded compliments, intended for Protestant ears, and be warned in time of the true animus of the Roman Catholic Church towards Protestants; for, since "religion is to them (us) simply a matter of fashion," the Roman Catholic Church, once in power, will set itself to work, as of old, to change the fashion with the Inquisition as chief mantua-maker.

T. D. WITHERSPOON.

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES.

### Southern Presbyterian.

Makemie Church, Va.—You may remember that Makemie church appeared in your columns some time since on the roll of honor. She strikes me now as being worthy of double honor. I think your readers will also agree with me when I tell them how they treated their pastor a few days ago.

A day or two before Christmas they commenced bringing in by the wagon loads of every kind of thing that was most serviceable. The whole list consisted of about forty different articles. Of course you haven't room for the whole list. But if any good people are anxious to do a similar kindness to their pastor, and do not know what to send, I will furnish them with the list free of cost; and will insure, that if they fill it as my people did, it will give entire satisfaction. The list indeed is a valuable one.

Let me say further, that only a short time since they had presented me with the most excellent buffalo robe to be found. With reference to the list, I would further say, that though it will be furnished the applicant free, to be furnished to the pastor would cost a hundred dollars.

A demonstration of this kind does the people good, and their pastor good. The gifts of themselves are very serviceable. They make the pastor feel more deeply his people's interest in him, and that he has a place in their hearts. May He, who made such honorable mention of a cup of cold water, bless them.

J. G. ANDERSON.

The new "Presbytery of Athens" embraces 16 counties in the Northeastern part of Georgia. There are about 1,500 communicants in its churches.

Rev. W. W. George, D. D., late of Lexington, Ky., has taken charge of the church at Fort Worth, Texas. Correspondents are requested to make a note of this change.

Rev. A. B. Carrington, of Roanoke Presbytery, has accepted the call of Berryville church, Winchester Presbytery, to become its pastor.

Rev. H. M. Sydenstricker has taken charge of the church at Montgomery City, Mo. His address is changed from Stanton Depot, Tenn.

Rev. C. S. Lingamfeiter's Post office address has been changed from Martinsburg, W. Va., to Darnestown, Montgomery county, Md.

The recently elected Deacons of Rev. Dr. Preston's church, Richmond, will be installed next Sabbath, January 9th.

Post Office Addresses Changed.—Rev. G. R. Waddell, from San Saba, Texas, to Fulton, Ark. Rev. G. P. Richardson, from Corsicana to Waxahachie. Rev. J. M. Cochran, from Navasota to Hearne. Rev. Simon Fraser, from Llano to San Antonio.

Millboro Depot, Va.—The Presbyterians have decided to build a church at this place. The have secured a suitable lot (the gift of Mr. J. W. Warren, the hotel proprietor) and \$1,000. The cost of the building, it is estimated will be about \$1,500. The place is improving and is a pleasant summer resort.

Mission Church, Soochow, China.—Rev. John W. Davis writes from Soochow, China, November 3d, 1880, to the N. C. Presbyterian:

Please lay before your readers the following fact: I have just succeeded in obtaining from the proper mandarin a proclamation with regard to my buying the new lot and building a Protestant church on it. This paper is properly stamped and it covers the whole case in a most full and satisfactory manner. It states the place where the land lies, giving the district, section, and street; it also gives the size of the lot and the name of the seller; that of the agent who bought the land for me and my name and nationality. It tells the people that this business has been examined into by the highest provincial authorities; that it is in all respects in accordance with international treaty; that the place has become the "possession of the Church of Jesus." It orders the people not to molest me in any way.

This is a very valuable paper. Without it I could hold the property without any trouble for the title-deeds given in June when the place was bought have all been stamped. But this proclamation confirms the title and I value it highly for that reason. The people were quiet enough before it was issued.

The work of building the church still goes on quietly and I hope to have the house ready for use by the middle of December.

P. S. A word to those who take special interest in this matter; continue to pray for me.

Columbus, Georgia.—As soon as it became known that the services of Rev. A. P. Kerr, pastor of the First Presbyterian church, could not be retained, measures were entered into at once, looking to a new pastor. At the first meeting of the session of the church Rev. W. A. Carter, pastor of the Presbyterian church at Pensacola, received a unanimous vote as stated supply. Yesterday Mr. Wilcox received a letter from Mr. Carter stating that he had notified his church that it was his intention to accept the call, and that he would make arrangements to reach Columbus with his family about the middle of January. The church at Pensacola was much opposed to his leaving and did all in their power to get him to decline the call, but under various considerations offered, they finally agreed to unite in asking the Presbytery, which meets in Montgomery in a few days for the purpose, to dissolve the relation.

We are informed that the church would have called Mr. Carter as pastor in the premises, but they chose to call him as a stated supply, as he will be in fact pastor, and it was the shortest and quickest mode of obtaining the desired end. Columbus Enquirer-Sun.

Asheboro Church, Orange Presbytery.—Rev. A. M. Watson writes: I am pleased to be able to report enough of additional members, with those reported previously, to double the membership of the Asheboro church within the last two months. On last Sabbath we received four, and baptized two heads of families, one of the most earnest, prominent men of the town, who has always been useful as a leader in church matters, but of whom we now hope for greater things even. For the above blessing we thank God and take courage, earnestly praying for some dear friends who are still without the fold.—N. C. Presbyterian.

Lafayette church, New Orleans.—We learn that our anticipations as to the meeting held in Dr. Markham's church, Sabbath week (Dec. 19th), were fully realized. The day was unfavorable, cold and wet, yet in response to the written circular sent to every household of the church (which circular was published in our issue of the 19th inst.) the audience room was well filled, and the historical and commemorative discourse of the pastor—the reading of which occupied an hour and a quarter—was heard with unbroken attention, the interest increasing from first to last. When, at the conclusion, closing the manuscript, he spoke (his usual habit), presenting in brief reference his personal relations to his work, and the ties that bound him to a people whom he had served for four and twenty years, his and their emotion attested the closeness, tenderness and strength of the bonds cemented by that long and loving union. We are gratified to learn that this valuable discourse, at the request of the Session of the Church, will be printed in pamphlet form, for preservation and distribution. The meeting of the congregation, held after the delivery of the discourse, as to its objects—the lifting an arraignment due the pastor, and arranging for the current expenses of the church—proved successful beyond expectation.—South-Western Presbyterian.

(Continued on 5th page.)