

## Free Will

William Cathcart

Taken from the book, *The Baptist Encyclopedia, 1881*

**Man is perfectly free to sin.** This statement is undeniable. When he becomes a drunkard it is to please himself; and when he is covetous to meanness, or dishonesty, when he is guilty of licentious acts, when he provokes God by his blasphemies, and when with wicked hands he slays his neighbor, he commits these crimes to gratify himself.

And the same doctrine is true with reference to all his transgressions. No man on trial in court would venture to urge, as an excuse for his criminal acts, that he was compelled to commit them, unless indeed physical force was used ; and *if* he offered such a plea every judge and jury in the world would regard this false pretense as an aggravation of his guilt. Satan can only tempt men to sin; he cannot coerce them to commit it. He possesses a great intellect, vast experience, unwearied perseverance, and hosts of agents; nevertheless, if men resist the devil he will flee from them.

Every man's consciousness tells him that he sins because of his own personal wishes, and not because of outside force. Haman planned to murder Mordecai, not for Satan's pleasure but his own. Ananias and his wife kept back part of the price, not to gratify the prince of darkness, but to satisfy their own covetous hearts.

The testimony of human consciousness proves that men sin because they themselves resolve upon it. And if we cannot believe our consciousness upon this question we cannot believe it about anything. We must reject its utterances when it tells us that we are living, or walking, or speaking, or working. To reject the evidence of our consciousness about our sins coming solely from ourselves would compel us to discard belief in all our experiences. Either then our sins are our own, or we can believe nothing, and our consciousness is but a constant instrument of deception.

From the fall of our first parents in Eden down to the last record of guilt in the Scriptures, God invariably assumes the responsibility of men for their sins; and in a great many instances he asserts it; and this responsibility rests upon their freedom to sin.

**Man has lost his liberty to serve God.** Paul says in Eph. 2:1, "You hath he quickened who were *dead* in trespasses and sins." The death of which he speaks is a moral death; it represents men without Christ as destitute of all power to turn to Jesus.

When a man is "dead drunk" he cannot reason; he cannot walk, he is stupid and helpless. So the unsaved are under the curse of sinful intoxication, and they are dead to all the claims of God, and to all the charms of a loving Saviour; and left to themselves, they would never seek or find salvation. The Saviour says, John 6:44, "No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him." There is a lack of moral ability in every human heart to come to Jesus till the drawings of grace lift the man from his helplessness and slavery and place him at the feet of Jesus.

The impenitent man might be compared to Samson when his hair was shorn; the great Israelite was robbed of his eyes, thrust into prison, bound with fetters of brass, and he did grind in the prison: and the only power *he* had was to inflict

death; for when the Philistines were feasting in the temple of Dagon, Samson seized two of the pillars and the house fell, killing himself and three thousand of his enemies.

The unregenerate man has lost his moral eyesight, he is in the prison of unbelief, he is chained by sinful habits, he is grinding this world's grist, and he has only strength to destroy his own soul and the souls of others: *The Philadelphia Confession of Faith* in Article IX says truly:

"Man in a state of innocence had freedom and power, to will and to do that which was good, and well pleasing to God... Man by his fall into a state of sin hath wholly lost all his ability of will, to any spiritual good accompanying salvation, so as a natural man, being *altogether* averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto."

***The palsied will of an unsaved man is made free to serve God by the Holy Spirit.*** When the Comforter smote the heart of persecuting Saul his opposition to Christ instantly perished, and his earnest cry was, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? An iron paralysis held the will of Paul in its resistless power, so that he was approvingly helpless to exercise any faculty of his soul for God until the Comforter made his heart the temple of Jehovah and began to "work in him both *to will* and to do of his good pleasure."

It is through this blessed working that God's people are willing in the day of his power" to render obedience or to make painful sacrifices. The will of man, so free to sin, so powerless to decide for Christ's service, is strengthened and sanctified by the Spirit in conversion, and receives his assistance ever afterwards to steadfastly steer the soul for a heavenly port.

Men are conscious that they are free to sin, and when they are brought into the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free, they are conscious that God's Spirit has given them deliverance from the bondage of unbelief, and they are conscious that their renewed hearts willingly love and serve the Saviour.



## The Persecution of Benjamin Keach

Thomas Armitage, D.D.

From the book, *History of the Baptists*, 1886

Few men amongst the Baptists ranked higher at this than Benjamin Keach. He was born in 1640, was in the first on his faith in Christ at the age of 15, and began to preach at 18; then, in 1668 at the age of 28 he became pastor of the Baptist Church in Horsleydown, London.

For the high crime of publishing a small work on fundamental Baptist principles he was indicted in 1664, and brought down before Chief Justice Hyde. This judge descended to the meanness of browbeating his prisoner.

The indictment being long, Keach asked for a copy that he might confer with counsel. This right of every Englishman was refused; and the judge, in a towering passion, demanded that he should first plead, or he would take his silence as confession, and so pronounce judgment. He pleaded "not guilty" when the judge gave him a copy and an hour's time to consider objections. This he declined as insufficient.

When he proceeded to his defense the court said, "You shall not speak anything here, except to say whether you wrote this book or not." The jury found a technical error in the indictment, but that the court forced a verdict of guilty, despite the law. The judge then sentenced him to prison for two weeks, and to stand in the pillory in the marketplace at Aylesbury, with a paper upon his head inscribed, "for writing, printing and publishing a schismatical

book, entitled "The Child's Instructor; or, A New and Easy Primmer." At the same time, he was to pay a fine of £20, to give securities for his appearance at the next assize, to recant his doctrines, and his book was to be burned before his eyes in the pillory by the hangman.

When in the pillory the crowd treated him with great respect and, instead of hooting and pelting him with eggs, as was common, listened eagerly to his exhortations. The Sheriff, in a great rage, threatened to gag him, but he exhorted the people out of the Bible. On the following Saturday he stood in the pillory at Winslow and his book was burnt.

He was often imprisoned for preaching the gospel, and had great contests with Baxter, Burkitt and Flavel on Baptist peculiarities. For many years his church was compelled to meet in private houses, but under the Declaration of Indulgence, 1672, they built their first house of worship, which was frequently enlarged until it held a thousand hearers.



## Original Sin

William Cathcart

Taken from the book, *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, 1881

Adam and Eve were created in perfect innocence. They could not be invested with infallibility, for that attribute belongs to God alone, and Jehovah could not create a deity; but they were summoned into life without a tendency to sin, and they were as holy as the angels of God.

The human race was created in Adam and Eve, just as millions of oaks were created in the first tree of that kind. Physical defects or material beauties have been transmitted down from the first two parents of our race; they could come from no other source.

When Adam sinned he forfeited his title to the tree of life in Eden, and as a consequence its leaves and fruit no longer healed his wounds, acted as an antidote against his diseases, and arrested the decay that ever since has wasted declining years. He lost Eden with the tree of life at the fall, and so did his posterity in him. The head of the family recklessly squandered his rich inheritance, and as a matter of course those who were born to him afterwards never enjoyed any part of it. The same thing was true of the divine favor which he forfeited in Eden; it was lost to him for the time being by the use of the forbidden fruit, and it was never restored unless he repented, and through divinely-appointed sacrifices turned to the Lord his God.

He left Eden with a heart vitiated by sin, and his children subsequently born came into the world with his spiritual defects and temporal disadvantages. He once bore the image of God, but sin destroyed it, and all his descendants have been marked by a guilty likeness to him.

Original sin vitiates the moral tastes of each man; it leads him to prefer the world, fleshly gratifications, and even the snares of the tempter, to the service of God. And as there is not in human nature a counteracting agency to subdue guilty tastes and restore the transgressor to Jehovah, he must continually sink deeper into sin unless sovereign grace restores him.

Original sin leads directly and surely to total depravity. We prefer *total perversion* as a better description of this sad state. Good and gentle and moral persons who have not been born again are totally perverted from God. If the heart is for Christ, the whole being is on his side; if the heart is against him, the whole man is his enemy.

When Anne Boleyn had the heart of Henry VIII, he slighted Queen Catharine, hurled aside the authority of the pope and the claims of his religion, in the defense of which he had written a book, defied all Europe in his

determination to marry her, and befriended the Bible, which he had burned, and the Protestants, whom he had slandered and persecuted, because of his regard for her. But when his heart turned to a rival of Anne, then he was wholly alienated from her.

This is the exact situation of each unsaved man: his heart and life are wholly perverted from God. What was true of ancient Israel may be justly applied to all unconverted persons, "Ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores." (Isa. 1: 5, 6)

Original sin has extended over the whole race. Dreadful and undeniable facts prove this statement, and inspiration asserts it. Paul says, "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, 'There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one.'" (Rom. 3:10-12)

When he speaks of Jews and Gentiles he intends to describe all men. The race in unbelief is in a state of total perversion from God.

Original sin paralyses the moral powers of the soul, and forbids any man, unaided by divine grace, to go to Jesus. A young French ecclesiastic, years ago, was supposed to have died, and was in his coffin when the mass for the dead was being read. He heard every word of it, knew his situation exactly, but could not move a finger, nor an eyelid, nor utter a word. Something led to an inspection of the face, when a slight flush was discovered, and the heart was found to be beating. The man was restored to his family, and by proper remedies speedily became well. But without help he would have been buried. So the entire impenitent are dead in sin.

"You hath he quickened who were *dead in* trespasses and sins." (Eph. 2:1)

And under the influence of this moral death of themselves they will never go to Jesus. "No man," says Jesus, "can come to me except the Father who hath sent me draw him."

Original sin has the first hold of a human heart, and it will never let it go till the all-powerful hand of grace destroys its dominion.

Original sin has doomed the race except where the Spirit of Christ has given a new heart and saving faith. "By the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation." (Rom. 5:18)

"He that believeth not is condemned already." (John 3:18)

This is the condition before God of all who have kept away from Jesus over the whole earth: they are in a state of total perversion from God.



## The Sabbath & The Christian

*Plains Baptist Challenger*  
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At a recent evangelistic outreach into a community, the subject of the Sabbath came up. This kind of thing is not uncommon whenever special meetings are widely advertised. A visitor to one of the meetings let those who talked

with him know that he was a “Sabbatarian” — meaning he claimed to be a Christian who believed the seventh day should be observed as the day of worship.

The debate over the Sabbath and the Christian has been going on from the second century A.D. Today there exist a number of Sabbatarian sects — most notably the Seventh-Day Adventist cult, but also Seventh-Day “Baptists” and other small groups.

Official SDA teaching on the Sabbath states: “The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty ... When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction shall be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While the observance of the false Sabbath [Sunday] ... will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath ... is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other ... receive the seal of God.” (White, E. G. *The Great Controversy*, Pg. 605.)

The following points set forth the BIBLICAL teaching concerning the Sabbath Day and its relationship to Bible-believing Baptists:

**1. The word “Sabbath” means “cessation” or “rest” (from labor).**

According to Strong’s Concordance, the Hebrew word “*shab-bâth*” means “intermission.” The Greek word, “*sabbaton*,” is a transliteration from the Hebrew.

**2. The weekly Sabbath was NEVER instituted as a day of worship.**

It was a day off from work: nothing more, nothing less.

In addition to the weekly Sabbath (Leviticus 23:3) there were certain “holy convocation” Sabbaths prescribed during the feasts of the Lord (e.g., Leviticus 23:6-7,10-11,20-21,24-25, etc.). Even these special Sabbaths were days when no work or labor could be done.

**3. The Sabbath was FIRST REVEALED to Israel at Mount Sinai.**

*“Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And MADEST KNOWN unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant” — Nehemiah 9:13-14.*

Prior to the giving of the Law, the Sabbath was not observed. Nehemiah 9:7-8 mentions the great covenant the LORD made with Abraham (500 years before the Law was given) — yet there was no mention of Sabbath observance.

*“Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous.”*

The Sabbath was not revealed to the Patriarchs.

**4. The command to keep the Sabbath day holy (set apart) is first given in Exodus 20:8-11.**

*“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD*

*made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."*

The first mention of the Sabbath as an act imposed upon man is found in Exodus 16:23. No penalty was attached to this command. It was before the Law was given.

#### **5. The Sabbath was given as a SIGN between the LORD and Israel.**

This point is vital to understanding the purpose for the law of the Sabbath.

*"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a SIGN between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a SIGN between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed" — Exodus 31:12-17.*

*"Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a SIGN between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them" — Ezekiel 20:12.*

#### **6. It is significant because the JEWS require a sign.**

*"For the JEWS require a SIGN, and the Greeks seek after wisdom" — I Corinthians 1:22.*

*"Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a SIGN from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a SIGN; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas" — Matthew 12:38-39.*

*"They said therefore unto him, What SIGN shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?" — John 6:30.*

#### **7. Violation of the Sabbath Law incurred the death penalty.**

This aspect of the Sabbath Law is not practiced by those who hold to a sacramentalist Sabbath-keeping position.

*"Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to DEATH. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day" — Exodus 35:2-3.*

*"And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses" — Numbers 15:32-36.*

#### **8. The New Testament does not include the commandment to keep the Sabbath whenever it reiterates the Law.**

For example, the “Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew 5) speaks about the sin of murder and adultery, but makes no mention of the Sabbath.

The sins proceeding from the heart of man include murder, adultery, theft, and bearing false witness, but do not mention the Sabbath (Matthew 15:19).

The works of the flesh listed in Galatians 5:19-21 and I Corinthians 6:9-10 include murder, adultery, theft, and idolatry — but not any violation of the Sabbath.

When the Lord Jesus Christ spoke with the “rich young ruler” He mentioned the last six commandments by name, but did not bring up the Sabbath law.

When Jesus was challenged by the Pharisees over Sabbath keeping, He set the record straight.

*“And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful? And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? And he said unto them, THE SABBATH WAS MADE FOR MAN, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath” — Mark 2:23-28.*

Jesus showed that the Sabbath was given to man by a wise and benevolent Creator. Man needs to rest his mind and body one day out of seven. That is a timeless Bible principle. The Sabbath rest was commanded of Israel as a sign between it and the LORD, and the scribes and Pharisees had managed to turn it into a grievous burden for all.

### **9. For the believer, Jesus Christ is the FULFILLMENT of the Sabbath Rest.**

The Sabbath was a foreshadowing of the One Who would give us rest unto our souls.

*“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the SABBATH days: Which are a SHADOW of things to come; but the body [reality] is of Christ” — Colossians 2:16-17.*

Jesus said: *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you REST. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find REST unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” — Matthew 11:28-30.*

This glorious truth is explained in Hebrews 4:3-11.

*“For we which have BELIEVED do enter into REST, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my REST: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus [Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. FOR HE THAT IS ENTERED INTO HIS REST, HE ALSO HATH CEASED FROM HIS OWN WORKS, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”*

Every saved person is COMPLETE in Christ. This is taught in Colossians 2:10. There is nothing we can do or are required to do in order to be saved, to remain saved, or to maintain our acceptance with God! The ordinances of the Law were all nailed to the cross of Christ and marked PAID IN FULL (Colossians 2:14)!



**10. Believers have LIBERTY in Christ.**

*“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days” — Colossians 2:16.*

There is no “legally prescribed day” for Baptists to keep or observe.

*“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it” — Romans 14:5-6.*

Having said that, this liberty does not extend to esteeming NO day as unto the Lord. A Christian does not have liberty to skip out on assembling with the Lord’s church.

*“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” — Hebrews 10:24-25.*

**11. New Testament churches traditionally assemble on the FIRST day of the week.**

Not all traditions are bad — if they are grounded in scripture (II Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6). There is no commandment imposed upon churches and Christians to observe the first day of the week, but the practice has scriptural support.

The first day of the week “celebrates” the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is a weekly remembrance — it was never intended to be observed once a year!

The Lord appeared to His church on the first day of the week.

*“Then the same day at evening, being the FIRST DAY of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were ASSEMBLED for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you ... And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you” — John 20:19,26.*

The church at Troas assembled on the FIRST day of the week.

*“And upon the FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, when the disciples CAME TOGETHER to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight” — Acts 20:7.*

It is important to note that, according to Acts 20:6, Paul and his company were in Troas for SEVEN days. This means they were there on a Sabbath day (Saturday). There is no record of that church gathering on Saturday. They came together on Sunday!

The only COMMAND to Baptists concerning Sunday is given in I Corinthians 16:2.

*“Upon the FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him...”*

**12. Baptists enjoy full LIBERTY through Christ when it comes to days.**

Sunday is NOT the “Christian Sabbath.” The Covenant Theology of the Protestants may have led to that misnomer, but it is not taught in the Bible.

The Sabbath is still Saturday — nobody changed that.



Some will point to the emperor Constantine, claiming that he introduced the “evil” of Sunday worship into Christendom. The fact is his famous *Lex Constantini* of March 7, 321 A.D. merely codified Sunday as an official civil observance (as an aid to the churches, who were meeting on that day). His law prohibited manual labor, legal transactions, and military exercises on Sunday. He didn’t “invent” Sunday worship.

The fact is the early churches assembled far more frequently than we do today.

*“And they, continuing DAILY with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church DAILY such as should be saved” — Acts 2:46-47.*

*“And DAILY in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” — Acts 5:42.*

*“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the DAILY ministrations” — Acts 6:1.*

*“And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number DAILY” — Acts 16:5.*

Proponents of the Sabbatarian cause often point to Paul preaching on the Sabbath Day. Indeed, Paul did (see: Acts 13:14, 42, 44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4). Why wouldn’t he? Paul went to the synagogues on the Sabbath because that’s where lost Jews would be. He was after all an evangelist! If he showed up on the first day of the week there would be no crowds.

Thank God for our Saviour Who gives us rest unto our souls. Thank the Lord for the liberty we have in Christ — the liberty to put the kingdom of God and His righteousness FIRST in our lives; the liberty to give Him the FIRST day of the week and the FIRST fruits of our increase; and the liberty to do the FIRST works.



## Alexander Mackenzie, Canada’s Second Prime Minister, Was a Baptist

William Cathcart

Taken from the book, *The Baptist Encyclopedia, 1881*

The Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, ex-Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada, was born on January 28, 1822, in Logierait, Perthshire, Scotland. In his boyhood, he attended the public schools of Moulin, Dunkeld, and Perth; but at the age of fourteen the death of his father made it necessary for him to engage in industrial pursuits. States he learned the business of an architect and builder, which he followed fourth time in the neighborhood of Irvine, on the coast of Ayrshire. During his stay there he became the subject of saving grace and united with the Baptist Church in Irvine, then under the pastoral care of the late Dr. Leechman.

In 1842 he emigrated to Canada, and settled in Sarnia, on the St. Clair River, where he commenced business as a contractor, meeting with well-merited success. This was a period of great political excitement in the Canadian colony on the subject of Responsible Government. The masses of the people, in opposition to the ruling faction, demanded that public affairs should no longer be managed under the irresponsible control of Downing Street

nominees, but that cabinet ministers should have seats in the Canadian Legislature, and be responsible to the Parliament of Canada for every executive act.

The contest was long and bitter; but at the general election in 1848, the Reformers were completely victorious popular government became firmly established. It was not possible for a man of Mr. Mackenzie's strong political convictions and sympathies to stand idly by when such a struggle was in progress.

Very shortly after his arrival in the country, he espoused the cause of the people, and was soon recognized as one of the most earnest and fearless advocates. In process of time, he became the acknowledged editor of the *Lambton Shield*, a Liberal paper, which he conducted for several years in Sarnia with distinguished ability.

He was first elected to Parliament in June, 1861, as member for the County of Lambton, of which Sarnia is the county town and at every succeeding election he has been returned for the same constituency.

From the beginning of his Parliamentary career, he has been a prominent part in the councils of the nation. He contributed very largely to the success of the scheme of British American confederation, which was accomplished in 1865. In the fall of that year, he was offered a seat in the Federal Cabinet, which he declined because he could not approve the commercial policy of the government.

In 1871, he was elected to the local Legislature of Ontario, as representative of West Middlesex, and soon after became a member of the provincial administration. But finding it inexpedient for a member of the Federal Parliament to busy himself with local legislation, he resigned both seat and office in 1872, and has since given his undivided attention to the politics of the Dominion.

Soon after this, he became the recognized leader of the Liberal party, and in 1873, he was made Prime Minister of Canada. For five years he discharged the duties of this exalted position with rare wisdom and fidelity, laying the country of his adoption under a debt of gratitude, which history will not fail to record.

In 1875-76 he visited Great Britain, where he was warmly welcomed by Queen Victoria and the leading statesmen of the Empire. In Scotland, his visit was a series of ovations, men of all ranks and parties uniting to do him honor. He received the "freedom" of several Scotch burghs and many other marks of popular appreciation. But the order of knighthood, tendered him by her Majesty in recognition of his distinguished public services, he felt himself obliged to decline.

Mr. Mackenzie is a man of superior mental culture and of great intellectual power. In private life, he manifests the most kindly disposition, without the slightest ostentation or assumption. He is (1881) a member of the Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Ontario, trustee of the Toronto Baptist College, and a warm friend to the work of the denomination in general.

