

is wasting away, its religious uses beat more and more feebly, its life is dying out, Christian ministers and deacons are distressed almost to despair, and every member of the church who cares anything about its prosperity feels uncomfortable, unhappy, discouraged. They seem to forget that God is in heaven, that He still smiles upon the earth, that the Saviour is still interceding for them. They complain that God has turned away His face from them; they implore Him to return and bless them; as if such supplication were hopeless, as if He would not hear and answer when the very breath they are thus mis-using, should be spent in praise rather than complaint—in humble thankfulness for blessings received, rather than in supplication for more.

I am not ashamed to say, that I think the Quakers are very far ahead of us in respect to their ideas of "improving the time" in religious meetings. Is there a silence in their meeting? It is sweet, welcome, reasonable. There is no warping of the ideas in that one particular direction, no torturing of the mind upon that one particular point, *filling up the time*.—They have come up to hear and think about God. Has some one spoken of Him? Well and good. Does no one feel impelled to speak? Then it is also well and good to sit and think of him. There is no superstitious dread of this silence—no worrying about dullness of the meeting—no reproaching one another with turning their backs on God's cause because they sit silent in His house. Their very presence there is an indication, which no one attempts to gainsay, that they have "come to worship Him." I think that a little clear-headed contemplation of this matter might produce good results.

For the Christian Messenger.

European Correspondence.

Rome, September, 1863.

MR. EDITOR,—

The readers of ecclesiastical history must be familiar with the term *Vatican*. This is probably the largest it not the finest palace in Europe. It is the winter palace of the Pope, and from its halls have proceeded laws, bulls, and edicts, influencing a large part of Christendom for many centuries. Its existence dates from the eighth century, but it has been rebuilt and remodelled by several Popes since its first erection. It stands over the Vatican Hill (hence its name) near the Church of St. Peter's. It is 1150 feet long by 760 broad, and several stories high, containing 4,400 apartments, halls and chambers. Here is situated a museum of antiquities worthy of a special visit. I passed through rooms and galleries, containing the most splendid sculpture and paintings, together with monuments of the early history of the city, rescued from its numerous ruins; among which I was struck with several magnificent and capacious baths, sculptured from antique and Sienna marble. I did not see the state apartments, as they were then closed, nor had I time to examine the very valuable Library of 135,000 books and manuscripts.

The *Quirinal* or Summer Palace of the Pope, is also well worth a visit. We were shown through 36 rooms, all most richly furnished, such cost and elegance as only royalty could command. The furniture was all covered with rich crimson velvet, the bed and covering of crimson silk tapestry, and everything to adapt the rooms for their several purposes, of eating, sleeping, audiences, public or private amusements, &c., was of the most chaste and suitable kind. The walls in several rooms were covered with *Gobelin tapestry*, a style of delineating scenery by needle-work, which at a distance looks like the painting of the master artists. No description can do justice to this style of art; the work is done at but one manufactory in Europe, near Paris, and is under the control of the French Government, who purchase all the pieces made, and use them for decorating their own Palaces, or dispose of them as presents to foreign Powers. It often takes ten years to produce one of the large pieces, which cost from \$30,000 to \$35,000. After seating myself, by permission, a few minutes in the state chair of his Holiness, I departed to visit the scenes in the city.

I would next speak of the churches but hardly know what to say respecting them; they are so numerous and so magnificent, that I fear I shall but inadequately convey to your readers a description of those I visited. Not only is Rome superabundantly supplied with clergy, she is also quite as redundant in churches, possessing within her limits no less than 364; but of these there are seven built on the seven hills or eminences of the city, called Basilicas, or cathedrals; these are each of importance but cannot be described in a short paper. Probably your readers have all heard of St. Peter's, and if any of them visit Rome, I doubt not will haste to see it, as it is the largest church probably in the world. It is approached by two circular colonnades, supported by 280 pillars, with an entablature, on which stand 190 marble statues of saints, each eleven feet high. The building is 607 feet long and covers eight acres of ground. Its height to the top of its dome is 446 feet; it was 176 years in being built, and cost over \$50,000,000, requiring \$30,000 annually for its repairs. Everything within and without is of the grandest style, and of the most elaborate finish; it owes much of its celebrity to the master mind of that great sculptor, painter, and

architect, *Michael Angelo*; the proportions of the architectural work are so complete, that one can hardly conceive of the size of the interior, nor the height of the vaulted roof, covered with its unrivalled frescoes. In front, stands an Egyptian obelisk, of a single piece of red granite, 85 feet high and 9 feet square at the base; brought from Egypt by the Emperor Caligula in the first century; on either side of this column spouts a fountain, whose copious discharge falls into a basin twenty feet in diameter. Next to St. Peter's is the church of *St. John Lateran*, where the Popes are crowned, and where the Pope officiates. It contains the famous chapel of *Corsina*, reckoned the finest in the world, and costing two million of dollars. As I have used the word chapel frequently in connection with cathedrals, I would explain by saying, this means a space railed off around the sides of these large edifices, of moderate size, and fitted up with altars, images, paintings, and the other paraphernalia of Catholic worship. Some large churches contain many of these chapels dedicated to particular saints, and fitted up in a grand or plain style according to circumstances; each chapel has its priests, and separate worship is going on in a number of them (within the same building) at the same time. The costly chapel spoken of was the gift of some rich Italian Prince, from whom it takes its name. Here we were shown the table from which was eaten the last supper—the pillars of Pilate's judgment hall—the curb of *Jaehab* well from *Samaritan*—and a marble table with a small hole through it, caused by the consecrated wafer falling from the priests' hands—"so they tell us," remarked our Catholic guide, "but we believe what we like." Your readers will probably do the same. But I need not describe more churches, as a volume might be written, and then fail to exhibit all the features connected with them. The unparalleled paintings, the pillars of porphyry, jasper and bronze, the carvings and gildings in the churches I visited, were all far beyond my former conception, and my powers of delineation equally fall short of their true description. The impression I gathered from my cursory visit to this city, is, that it is *decaying*. Once the chief city of the civilized world, with between two and three million of inhabitants, it has now dwindled to 180,000; there are no manufactures but of the simplest articles, and no commerce to build up the place. I saw the whole city from various heights, but observed no new buildings in progress, and no old ones being renewed. I saw no busy news-boys crying the latest news, nor any anxious groups seeking the intelligence the evening and morning papers convey. In fact, the populace I fear are mostly unable to read, and are therefore the subjects of superstition and ignorance. The government is a despotic one, and, as far as I could learn, borne by the people as a grievous yoke. 20,000 French soldiers scrouned the throne of his Holiness; his own peculiar body guard being a Swiss regiment. Not a Roman soldier did I witness, nor could I hear of one within the precincts of the city. Our interpreter, an intelligent and devout Catholic, informed us, on being questioned, that the sentiments of the people were—*Let the Priests attend to religion, and let Victor Immanuel rule over us as a sovereign*. I should like to have spoken of the worship in these numerous churches, and other matters connected therewith, but I fear I have already exhausted the patience of your readers, and must close. I have read *Paul's* letter to the Romans with different feelings than ever before; and asked myself where now in this city of churches could be found the faithful few whose piety was spoken of throughout the whole world (Rom. i. 8) in the days when Rome was the centre of idolatry?

J. W. B.

For the Christian Messenger.

Day of Special Thanksgiving and Prayer.

Dear Brother,

I perceive Thursday is the day recommended by the Convention, as a day of "special thanksgiving and prayer."

The report on the State of the Denomination mentions a considerable increase in the numbers baptized, over last year. This is cause of thankfulness, nor ought we to be backward in acknowledging the goodness of the Lord.

And is it not very desirable to attend to the second observation appended to that report, namely "denominational benevolence"?—How easy a matter, were we all upon the alert on this subject, to more than double the aggregate of contributions, and thus far more efficiently perform the duties assigned us in the providence of God. May a clear view of our responsibilities rest upon us all.

Yours truly
D. W. C. DIMOCK.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, DECEMBER 2, 1863.

New Subscribers for 1864.

Our duty to our patrons and the cause committed to us, demands that we shall endeavour to make progress. Each year should witness an advance on its predecessor. We desire to have an addition to our

present very respectable list of names to whom we send the *Christian Messenger*, and shall be glad to receive

FIVE HUNDRED

good New Subscribers, with which to commence the coming year. In almost every community where the *Messenger* is taken, we believe that there are many families who only require to have the paper introduced to them, with a word of commendation, to induce them to desire its weekly visits. They would doubtless soon learn to appreciate its value as highly as any of its present supporters.

A little exertion from each of our present patrons would, we doubt not, secure the above result. Respected Reader, will you not TRY?

We propose next week to send a few extra copies of the *Messenger* to those friends in the different parts of the Province who favor us by acting as Agents in their neighborhoods; and shall be much obliged if they would place them in the hands of such persons as they may suppose would be an acquisition to our list, accompanying them with a few words of recommendation.

We shall be glad to receive new names, and place them on our books as early as possible, but shall not charge for the weeks previous to the 1st of January, 1864.

Although we have been obliged to pay more for paper during the past year than in any previous one, yet we have, with difficulty, retained our former price, hoping to have additions to our number of subscribers that would help us to meet the increased liabilities. We shall be obliged if our friends will bear this in mind, and make prompt payments, and thus aid us all they can in securing the above object.

Day of Thanksgiving.

A Proclamation appears in the *Gazette* of Wednesday last, appointing Tuesday next, the 8th inst., as a Day of General Thanksgiving to Almighty God for his mercies—for the manifold blessings received at His hands, and especially for the abundant Harvest and the continuance of Peace during the present year.

We regret that so short notice has been given of this appointment. We believe that the various bodies of Christians would gladly comply with the wish of His Excellency the Administrator of the Government when he says, "I do earnestly exhort all Her Majesty's loving subjects in this Province to observe reverently and devoutly the said day of Thanksgiving." But we fear that many, in the remote districts, will not have seen the notice till after the said day has passed. This might have been avoided. It should have been at least a week later, or the notice a week or two earlier.

His Honor informs us that he has "directed that a suitable Form of Prayer and Thanksgiving be used by all ministers of the Church of England in this Province."

As we have no State Church here, we think it would have been just as well to have left the Church of England ministers, as well as the ministers of the other churches, to provide themselves with such forms of prayer as they might choose to adopt.

Christian Combination.

Combination is one of the characteristics of the present day. Activity is displayed in the extension of commerce and in scientific enterprises, but it is especially apparent in the various organizations for the propagation of religion at home and abroad. More particularly is this apparent in the combination formed for that purpose in England, "Conventions Synods and Conferences are continually being held for the purpose of ascertaining what is required in the systems and modes of action of the several religious denominations to render them better suited to reach the masses of the people, and, as we would charitably hope, to convey to them the blessings of religious instruction, as taught by the adherents of those churches.

From an article in a London contemporary having reference to two of those gatherings we make a brief extract. One of these was an assembly of Independents at Liverpool, the other was a Church of England conference recently held at Manchester. Of the former, the writer says:—

"A person interested in the Church question, and wanting to know what was being done and proposed in different sections of the Church, might have been gratified a few days ago in a remarkable way. He might have gone to Liverpool and looked in upon the assembly at Great George-street Chapel, and there have seen the leading Independents preaching, reading papers, and discussing how to place Congregationalism in front of the ecclesiastical movements of the day; and in the intelligent earnestness of these men might have read some signs prophetic of the future power of independence."

"Then" says the same writer, "in an hour he might have traveled to Manchester and looked in upon another ecclesiastical convocation there, with several remarkable men amongst them, discussing how to make the Church of England in reality what it is in name. The aspect of this assembly in more beligerent. The spectator might have seen Mr. Boswell Hope is a hand-to-hand encounter with a Mr. Bardsley, of local fame, and the courtly and accomplished S. Oxon, "with the light of battle in his face," having a tilt at the Ultra-Protestant helmet of Canon M'Neill. In the one case the question in dispute is, whether the communion table in the chancel enjoys the special presence of Christ more than when it is placed in any other part of the Church, and in the other, whether there was "saving truth" in the Roman Catholic Church, and whether it was necessary to uphold the Irish Establishment. These were two episodes of the Conference; but the general purpose was to see how to bring the Episcopal Church of England and Ireland into more efficient working order.

The Bishop of Manchester presided, and delivered an address, in which he rejoiced that the laity had been invited to join the Conference. Canon Stowell read a paper, in which he admitted that "the impression was not unfounded that the candidates for holy orders are inadequate to the wants of the Church," and offered various suggestions on the use that might be made of lay agency "The meeting allowed these suggestions to pass without interruption; but when the zealous Canon went on to hint that the Prayer-book must be revised in some points, to remove the scruples of some who would then enter the Church, he invoked a perfect storm of hisses and invective—Archdeacon Denison rising to order on the ground that the Canon had exceeded the time allotted for the reading of his paper."

The Archdeacon said "He would argue any length of time with a man who would uphold pewrents, but he would not sit still and hear a man abuse the prayer-book." This gave rise to a scene of great confusion, Canon M'Neill rising to say that it was a shameful misrepresentation, and in the midst of the cheers and counter-cheers the chairman closed the discussion, and called on Mr. Akroyd to read the first paper on Lay co-operation.

"Papers were also read on the 'Irish Church Clergy Discipline,' the 'Officiary,' 'Church Music,' 'Parochial Mission Women,' and other useful subjects. Great ability, great attachment to the Church, and an eager desire for the predominance of the Church, were all equally displayed."

The bodies in this province who hold fraternal connexion with Great Britain cannot help feeling interested in the results of such gatherings, and will, more or less adopt the measures approved by their brethren, to carry out their designs.

Although the Baptist churches of Nova Scotia have no formal association with those of the mother country, yet they are of course interested in whatever affects their sister churches in every part of the world. Every christian man should seek to ascertain what instrumentalities are being employed to promote the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom and after proving all things "hold fast that which is good."

There is great deficiency of union, among the Baptist churches of England. This doubtless arises from the practice of open communion among them. We trust that the lessons taught by the late experience of some of the churches will produce better fruit. Happily the churches of this province have no such cause of separation. The fraternal connexion existing in our Associations in most cases being, as we believe, highly valued and capable of effecting far more than has yet been accomplished.

Although we rejoice in principle of independency in christian churches, believing it to be the most scriptural, yet we think there should be as much as possible of fraternal recognition and cooperation in connection with it. It is gratifying to find that Quarterly Meetings of ministers are held in some of the counties of this province and that great good has arisen from them. We would commend this matter to our readers and especially to those of them who hold the ministerial office. Much may be done doubtless in the immediate vicinity of every church, but whilst this should not be neglected, the more enlarged view of christian obligation should not be overlooked. If the principles held by other bodies are dear to them and worth their strenuous efforts to propagate, surely ours are no less dear to us, and as we believe they approach nearer to the New Testament pattern, we should be encouraged to leave no means untried to bring them forth and commend them to our fellowmen, believing that whatever real progress other bodies make in the proclamation of Divine Truth, it is so much gained towards the realization of our cardinal principle,—Every christian a believer in Christ; and, Every church a community of believers.

We acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of a copy of "Sketches of Stonewall Jackson," by Charles Hallock;—One of the greatest and best of American Generals—second only to Washington.