

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

UNITED STATES CORRESPONDENCE.

This year thus far has been marked by the presence of the Spirit in many of our churches. Before its commencement there were special tokens of an approaching spiritual blessing. Sin was deeply mourned, confessions were made, fervent prayers ascended, sinners were pressed to consider their ways, and believers earnestly longed that God would appear. The Week of Prayer was observed with an unusual interest, in many churches the services were protracted, and the members continued their supplications at the throne. The seed of Jacob sought the Lord not in vain. There have been many hopeful conversions, and the church has received large additions to its membership, not only in New York, but in other parts of the Union.

This vicinity has shared in the blessings. There has been an increase of spirituality in the churches; the members manifest a greater willingness to sacrifice for Christ; broader views are taken of the interests of his cause, and great happiness is experienced in seeing the youth devote their lives to his service.

The Methodist church of this place has an elegant house of worship nearly finished. It has all the modern arrangements and conveniences, and is an ornament to our beautiful village. Their society is not wealthy, but is enterprising, well understands in what its interest consists, and has been ready to sacrifice to secure this result. The large debt that has been incurred now causes some little anxiety, but hopes are entertained that at the dedication it will be greatly diminished, and no doubt exists of its final removal. No denomination is advancing more in the Union, than the one that originated with the sainted Wesley, and no one is making greater sacrifices to advance the cause of the Redeemer by the means of appropriate houses of worship.

The zeal of our Methodist friends in their enterprise has had an influence on the minds of their neighbours. The Baptists are moving in the same direction. Their house, though it has the honor of age, is neat, pleasant, in excellent repair, and really seems too good to abandon. But it is not now sufficiently large, and by the annual growth of the place has been removed from the centre of population, and it is deeply felt that our future prosperity demands that a new house should soon be erected. Committees have been appointed to secure a favorable lot, and obtain such information as will aid in securing the best plan for our house. It is felt by the church to be a great undertaking, but no one shrinks from his share of the labor so far as to present any discouragement.

A great change is soon to be made it is hoped, in our system of schools. A fine Academy has long flourished here, and our Public Schools have been very efficient. But it is earnestly desired by those who still have children to educate, that the efficiency of each department may be increased. To secure this result the Trustees of the Academy recently proposed to the Trustees of the Public Schools that they would give this Institution to the School District in which it is located, with its library, museum, and all of its fixtures, if the District would adopt the graded school system, and use the building for academical purposes. If this gift is accepted on the conditions proposed, the poorest child in the district will have all the advantages of an academical education put within his reach, and can prepare himself for College in a free school. The noble offer of the Trustees of the Academy seems to be appreciated, and the valuable property will soon, no doubt, be accepted by a vote of the District.

Of the May Meetings in Boston you have received the report. They have given very general satisfaction. If their business can all be done well in three days it will be a very great gain all around. A week of meetings each year, attended by all who chose to come with their families, was a burden that our largest cities did not wish to accept. But if the present arrangement shall secure a success, and only delegates are found in attendance, then the annual burden will be changed to a privilege which many of the cities will wish to enjoy. A denomination of over a million of members will have to limit its representation to its very best men, if its great Societies are cordially invited to hold their Anniversaries in our largest places, and while the delegates are in Session they are freely entertained. The mass meeting of the denom-

ination in Chicago showed us our greatness, but compelled the feeling that a limited number of representatives must be charged with the business of the Societies at the Annual meetings, and then that it should be dispatched in the shortest time that was consistent in doing it well. It has all been done this year in three days.

The Unions that were consummated meet with very general approbation. The Freedman's Societies have at last been blended. This will promote good feeling, save expense, secure more efficiency, and educate, it is hoped, more men for the ministry than was previously done by both organizations. The South and the North ought to be one in this work. When misunderstandings are explained, estrangements forgotten, and a more general acquaintance is enjoyed, a unity will be cemented by the power of love that will greatly increase our denominational power for good. The evil is now destroyed that caused the discussion between the South and the North, and alienated brethren that should have ever been one, and its evil consequences will in time be removed, and all will unite together in the great work of God.

Many are glad that the American and Foreign Bible Society and the Publication Society, have at length united hands. Their work can all be accomplished by one organization at a saving of expense and with equal efficiency. The Bible Society can now make a more successful appeal to its friends, will meet with more sympathy and have a more cheerful response, and, it is hoped, will meet with less opposition from those who wished its existence to cease. As Societies are multiplied their officers and agents are also increased, and the churches begin to feel their taxation a burden, from which they are resolved to obtain a relief. Something has been done in blending these societies and more can be accomplished. The greatness of the work in which the church is employed demands an increase of benevolence, and that economy should be used.

J. M. H.

For the Christian Messenger.

FROM MAINE.

JUNE 18TH, 1869.

Dear Messenger,—

The American world seems to be enjoying the great Peace Jubilee held in Boston just now.—Cars and steamboats are crowded by passengers and one general topic seems to be "Let us have peace," and whilst the multitude are thus engaged, a number of Baptist brethren meet in Old Town to confer how they might extend the Kingdom of Christ, the essential element of which is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. On June 15th and 16th large congregations might be seen gathered in the Baptist Church, celebrating the 45th Anniversary of the Maine Baptist State Convention. The following officers were chosen for the ensuing year. The eloquent Rev. A. K. P. Small, of Portland, for President; Dea. J. C. White, of Vice President; Rev. J. Ricker, D. D., Augusta, for Cor. Secretary; Rev. S. L. B. Chase, Recording Secretary. After the usual appointment of Committees, a short and impressive report on Obituaries was presented, containing the names of aged ministers who have gone to rest—H. Hawes, N. Robinson, S. Fugg, and W. J. Durgin—this was followed by short addresses on some incidents in their lives.

An able sermon was preached by the Rev. A. R. Crane, of Hallowell, based on Luke x. 2, presenting the duty of the church to pray for more labourers. In the evening of Tuesday we had a crowded meeting, which was enthusiastic also—when we considered Sabbath School work, the following interesting topics were presented, and earnest addresses delivered.

1. Sunday Schools as a direct means in the conversion of souls.
2. The error of allowing Sunday Schools to take the place of other means of grace.
3. The uses and abuses of question books and other helps in Sunday School instruction.
4. Sabbath Schools Concerts.

Animating songs and music contributed much to the enjoyment of the evening. On Wednesday the time was occupied in listening to reports on Missions, Temperance, Publications, and the state of religion in the churches, when excellent addresses were delivered. The state of religion in the churches is very favourable, several churches have enjoyed Revivals, there has been about 500 added to the churches. Our churches have been busy in some places in remodelling and building new meeting-houses.—About \$6000 have been raised for the Missionary Convention, \$1200 for the Freedman's Institute, \$4,559.52 for Foreign Missions, also other be-

nevolent objects have been greatly helped. The Maine Baptist Education Society held its 38th Anniversary on Wednesday evening, when officers for the ensuing year were chosen, and an eloquent sermon was preached by the Rev. W. O. Holman, on Mark xv. 39.

The sessions of our societies were unusually interesting and profitable, a deep spiritual feeling seemed to pervade our minds. Our early morning prayer-meetings were of that kind that will be long remembered. We saw no delegate from Nova Scotia, we hope one will meet with us in Portland next year, where it will be more accessible. There is a great future before the Baptists, may they realize their work, and be possessed with the spirit of consecration to Christ.

MAINE.

For the Christian Messenger.

CONFIRMATION.

Dear Brother,—

A friend informs me that Bishop Binney, in administering the rite of confirmation lately, took occasion to remark that "the authority for confirmation is to be found in Acts viii. 12-17; that Peter and John were sent to do what Phillip, holding a subordinate position, was unable to do; and that Paul went from place to place where churches had been established, "confirming the churches."

My correspondent asks for an exposition of the passages referred to, especially for the sake of some young persons who are enquiring on the subject. I ask permission to give my reply in your columns.

The transaction recorded in Acts viii. scarcely needs explanation. Phillip had preached the gospel in Samaria with great success. Multitudes believed and were baptized—"both men and women." But they had not received the Holy Ghost, that is, in the form of those spiritual gifts which then distinguished and adorned the church; for, in the higher sense, every believer has received the Holy Ghost, being "born of the Spirit." The bestowment of these spiritual gifts was an apostolic privilege, and Peter and John were deputed by their fellow-apostles to visit Samaria. They did so, and "laid their hands on them" (the baptized), "and they received the Holy Ghost."

Such is the narrative. There is nothing about confirmation in it. It was an apostolic act, peculiar to apostolic times. Nothing of the sort can take place in the nineteenth century. There are no apostles now. The gifts of the Holy Ghost have long since ceased to be bestowed.—His gracious teachings and influences will bless the church till the end of time, and are experienced by all believers. No laying on of hands by priest or bishop, can procure them.

The other texts are equally plain. We read thus—"Confirming the souls of the disciples," Acts xiv. 22;—"confirmed them," xv. 32;—"confirming the churches," *Ibid.* v. 41.

There is another passage, in which the same Greek word is used, where the Authorized Version has a variation. The rendering is, "strengthening all the disciples," Acts xviii. 23.

There can be no doubt as to the meaning of these statements. The first converts were for the most part ignorant and weak. They needed "line upon line." The apostles saw the necessity and supplied it by frequent visits, during which they administered instruction, admonition, or comfort, "and so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily," Acts xvi. 5. Such establishment or confirmation is enjoyed still, under the ministry of all christian pastors, of every denomination.

Tyndale uses the word "strengthen" in all the above cited passages, and he is followed by Archbishop Cramer.

It is observable that the subjects of this New Testament confirmation, or establishment, or strengthening, were not young persons who had been baptized in infancy, and were then supposed to take upon themselves the profession made for them by their godfathers and godmothers.—They were the members of the churches, in the enjoyment of all church privileges. Infant baptism had not yet been invented. Godfathers and Godmothers were unknown.

Confirmation, as a distinct ceremony, may probably be traced as far back as the third century, when it first comes into notice. But at that time it immediately followed baptism, and was rather an adjunct to that ordinance than a separate institution. Anointing various parts of the body with the holy chrism constituted a part of the ceremony. It was the product of the ritualistic notions of the men whose writings are now called "Fathers," and whose writings are oftener consulted by some than the Bible itself. Afterwards it was developed into a sacrament in

the Romish sense of the term, and is one of the seven that are held and practiced by Roman Catholics. It is obvious that the episcopate is glorified by it, as none but bishops are allowed to administer confirmation.

Yours truly,

J. M. CHAMP.

June 22nd, 1869.

For the Christian Messenger.

IN MEMORIAM.

MRS. SARAH E. PARKER,

Wife of Daniel Parker, and youngest daughter of John and Sarah Perry, was born in Yarmouth, Feb. 18th, 1825, died in West Cornwallis, Feb. 26th, 1869. Her first religious awakenings were received in early life at her eldest sister's baptism. After years of searching convictions at length God was pleased to "reveal his gracious name," and her heart was filled with joy and peace in believing. Her hope was clear and bright, and in a short time was buried with her Saviour in baptism, and continued a consistent member of the Baptist Church in Yarmouth until called to join the church triumphant.

On the 9th Jan. she took a severe cold, from which she never recovered. The doctor attended her a fortnight, at the end of that time he said that she was recovering, and would soon be well. Although so weak that she could hardly walk across the room, yet her friends thought that she was getting better. She exhibited symptoms of consumption. The day before she died she appeared much better. Little did her friends think the perspiration that gathered upon her brow was the death sweat. She retired to rest at her usual hour, and probably her ransomed spirit was soon with the angels singing the praises of "Him who loved her and has washed her from her sins in his own blood." She was found in the morning lying as if in a comfortable sleep, her lips and eyes tightly closed, and her limbs in exactly the same position they must have been when she went to sleep. The Angel of death must have performed his mission gently indeed. By her death an absent husband has been deprived of a kind and faithful wife, and eight children of a mother whose every deed was kind, and who labored unceasingly for their happiness, temporally and spiritually. Many are the prayers which she has offered in their behalf.—Her friends and acquaintances have lost a true, warm-hearted friend. Her natural disposition, remarkably amiable and forgiving, was refined and strengthened by grace. In the sunny days of girlhood she was a christian, and all who knew her in riper years can add their testimony to her goodness. In every sorrow and disappointment of life she could recognize the unerring hand of her Heavenly Father, and confidently unbosom to Him all her cares. When in health she frequently spoke about dying, and always said that she thought death would be no terror to her. Undoubtedly sudden death was sudden glory. Of her perfect happiness there is not the shadow of a doubt entertained by any who knew her. The funeral occasion was improved by the Rev. E. O. Read, from 2 Corinthians v. 1.

Every sorrow is forever past,  
And all thy pains and fears;  
For Jesus with his own kind hand,  
Doth wipe away all tears.

Religious Intelligence.

A HIGH CHURCH CLERGYMAN ON TRIAL.—Considerable interest is felt among the members of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the presentment for trial by Bishop McIlvaine of the Rev. Colin Tate, of Columbus, O., for an alleged violation of his engagement to the doctrines and worship of his denomination. The question involved is whether it is lawful to make the singing of processional hymns by a surpliced choir a part of the regular order of worship. Mr. Tate has applied to the American Church Union for their advice, and they have determined to furnish him with the necessary pecuniary means for trying the question on its merits.—*N. Y. Methodist.*

RELIGIOUS RIOTS IN PERSIA.—Religious excitement appears to be greatly on the increase in the Mohammedan world. The greatest trouble the English in India at present meet with is from Mohammedan sect of the Wahabees. The same sect last year obtained complete control of Muscat, the greatest Mohammedan State in Arabia. Last week a cable despatch informed us of a desperate riot between two religious sects in the streets of Teheran, the capital of Persia.—Three hundred men were killed before the troops were called out and suppressed the riot. The name of the sects concerned in the riot is not stated; but as Persia several years ago was greatly disturbed by a sect of reformers called Babie, or followers of Bab, which sect, notwithstanding its cruel persecution by the Persian Government, is reported to have now numerous adherents in every town and village of Persia, and to number in all some three millions of adherents, it is probable that it was not foreign to the riot. The Persian Government made about five hundred arrests of persons who participated in the riots.

AN IRREVERENT YORKSHIREMAN.—The London Baptist Freeman says that there is a story current in Yorkshire to the effect that when the Congregational Union met at Halifax, the presence of so many ministers in the streets excited