

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, MARCH 24, 1869.

SPAIN; PAST AND PRESENT.

Every sound enlightened Protestant, of whatever section of the Church of Christ, must look with the deepest interest on the present state of Spain. Within less than three centuries past Spain was the most powerful and extensive empire on earth. Spain proper, a large portion of Italy, Belgium and Holland, comprised her European territories, while the whole southern, and a large part of the northern continent and Islands of America, with rich possessions in the east, made up her dominions and tributaries abroad. Her will might almost have been called law, among the civilized nations of Europe, and she openly aimed at Universal Empire—the ignis fatuus of so many of the mighty potentates of earth, and the attempt to the attainment of which has wrought their speedy ruin.

The most palmy days of Spain, however, under the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella, of Charles V. and Philip the second, were defaced by some of the worst of national crimes. The inhuman and ferocious cruelties perpetrated, under the guise of religion, by the Inquisition and the government of Spain, not only upon the Protestants in the Peninsula and the Netherlands, but also upon the Jews and Moors, served largely to depopulate those countries of their best inhabitants, and brought on their speedy and signal punishment.

A succession of weak and worthless sovereigns proved the curse of Spain up to the beginning of the present century. Thenceforward until now foreign invasion, civil discord, internecine war and bloodshed, with some abortive attempts to throw off the huge incubus of despotism and bigotry, have been the hapless lot of Spain. A mere semblance of tranquillity—it is true, has prevailed for a few years past under the despotic rule of two bigoted, dissolute and worthless women, but the bitter and inevitable consequences of past national misdeeds have marked her history, until Spain has become a bye-word among the nations.

The loss of nearly all her vast American dominions in the beginning of the present century, her shameless want of public faith, and consequent entire loss of prestige or consideration among other powers, her utter neglect of the arts of peace and internal progress, while the arts of science and civilization have been hastening on in nearly every quarter of the globe with such almost miraculous rapidity, have reduced her at last, from being the very first, to the condition of about a third-rate power of Europe. The rich fruits of one of the finest countries of Europe, devoured by corrupt and bigoted armies of priests and monks, has produced its natural result, in debasing public morals and perpetuating idleness, vice and superstition. Can it be presumption to say that the bitter calamities inflicted on Spain have been the inevitable judgments of God upon national transgressions?

But let us turn from this gloomy picture, to what we may fairly hope gives promise of a better state of things. Unable any longer to endure the heavy load of despotism, an overwhelming majority of the Spanish people have by one united and vigorous effort, thrown off their galling chains, and appear at last to be emerging from their long sleep of ignorance and servitude, to some rational appreciation of the blessings of light and freedom.

The experience of a few months, thus far, speaks well for the judgment and prudence of the leaders of the revolution. The Cortes or Representative body of the people have been convened and are now in session, deliberating upon a form of Constitution to be adopted, which shall be most in unison with the general wishes of the nation. Although there is a pretty large party in favor of a Republic, the great majority seem unanimous in adopting a limited, constitutional monarchy. If they can but make choice of a fitting man to administer the government, under well defined limitations, with an independent Legislature, having full control over the resources of the country, it is more than probable such form of government would best suit the character of the nation and their present emergency. Among the most hopeful signs of the present state of public opinion in Spain, is the apparent determination of the people to secure entire Religious Liberty and the Freedom of the Press.

THE LENTEN SEASON.

The Episcopal Churches, Anglican and Roman, in Halifax, as elsewhere, have for the past three or four weeks been holding such extra services as their respective churches prescribe for the Lenten season.

It is customary for many belonging to these communions to do up a large amount of worldly enjoyment in preparation, before Ash Wednesday. A New York paper, a few weeks since, announced: "Lent is coming. A daily paper says: 'Twenty-seven balls are announced for this week.'" In Rome and other Roman Catholic cities of Europe this is kept up with great intensity, the nearer it approaches the general season of Fasting. The Carnival at Rome extends over the whole of the previous week, in which dissipation, frivolity and fun reign supreme. This period of madness proceeds and comes to a crisis at midnight, when the scene changes as if by the hand of a necromancer, and all becomes sad, dark and doleful; and an appearance of sombreness is given to the houses, the people and the churches. Those who on the previous day were loudest in mirth are now for days presenting a very different aspect in the churches. Formerly sackcloth was worn during this season and with ashes sprinkled over the face and with the feet naked, the penitents appeared ready to accept all the severe discipline imposed upon them by their ecclesiastical superiors. Abstinence from meat, an additional number of repetitions of private prayers and daily public services constitute some of the lenten duties of the Roman Catholic Church.

The English Church has retained amongst its observances daily services during the last week of this season; and makes use of the occasion to call up its young people to Confirmation, and greater regard for church observances. There is probably during the present year, greater attention being given to the observances of this "Holy Week" in the Anglican Churches of Halifax than ever before. It is announced in the organ of that body, that in the Garrison Chapel "the Holy Communion will be celebrated every morning at 8 o'clock, except Good Friday" and on Easter Sunday, "the Holy Communion will be celebrated chorally at 8, a. m., and as usual at 11, a. m."

In the Cathedral (St. Luke's) also "On Easter Day the Holy Communion will be celebrated at 7.30 and again at 11 o'clock."

The season is regarded by a portion of the High-church party as quite a Revival, but many of the evangelical churchmen are much annoyed, and perplexed by these Ritualistic proceedings.

We refer to these matters simply by way of informing our readers what is being done by other religious bodies.

The Diocesan Church Society held its Annual meeting in Temperance Hall last week. General Sir C. H. Doyle was expected to take the chair, but on account of indisposition was unable, and Bishop Binney presided. A new feature at a religious meeting was the appearance of a military band. This proved quite an attraction, and a large audience assembled.

We find in the English Illustrated papers fine representations of the gorgeous and imposing ceremonials which took place at the enthronement of Archbishop Tait, the new Primate of the Anglican Church. In looking over the pictures and thinking of what they represented, we could but ask, if it had any real and essential connexion with Christianity, or whether it were not altogether a creation of the State—part and parcel of the world, and under the direction of its god. If Christ himself had been bodily present, he would have presented a strange contrast to all the pomps and solemn vanities of the occasion.

VISITING THE SICK.

Great complaints are often made on account of ministers and members of churches not visiting the sick. This is doubtless an important part of their duty, and one that is attended to, more or less, according to circumstances. There is an important duty however devolving on the sick which is often overlooked by them. The apostle James writes: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church &c." It is often supposed by members of churches who are sick, that ministers and all their fellowmembers know by some supernatural means as soon as any sickness befalls them; and, if a day or two is allowed to pass without any cheering or sympathizing friend calling in upon them, they, in

their solitude, conclude that they are forgotten and neglected.

Let it be remembered by the afflicted ones that they are instructed to call for such visits, or make it known that they are desirous of having them, before they can reasonably expect to receive them. It may be supposed that because the curative means mentioned, "annointing with oil &c" is superseded by medical treatment, that the principle is not applicable to cases of sickness in the present day. Explanations of this passage of Scripture may be given to shew what was intended to be taught by it, but this we leave to the theologians. What we wish to shew to our readers is that they should not make unreasonable demands upon their ministers, but themselves first act out the plain injunctions of scripture.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

The difficulties respecting the proper time and mode of our elections have at length been met, and the day for holding them has been appointed. The three counties, Yarmouth, Hants and Richmond, are to choose their Representatives for the Dominion House of Commons, on Tuesday the 13th day of April.

It is somewhat remarkable that there should be, just at the present time, simultaneous elections in three constituencies so peculiarly situated: Yarmouth at the Western extremity of the Province, Hants in the centre, and Richmond at the extreme Eastern—and that in Cape Breton.

If these counties may be regarded as a test of the feeling of those surrounding them, this contest may be considered almost equivalent to a General Election for the Dominion Parliament.

In Richmond the candidates are W. A. Henry, Esq., who formerly represented Antigonish in the Local Legislature, and Attorney General in the late government, he is of course, the Union candidate; and Isaac LeVisconté, Esq., the Repeal candidate, the former representative of Richmond. The policy of his friends is that he be elected, but that he do not attend in his place at Ottawa.

At Yarmouth the rival candidates are Messrs. Killam and Clements. The former gentleman, although in the interest of the Repeal party, yet expresses his readiness and desire to attend in his place, if elected.

In Hants, Mr. Goudge the Repeal Candidate, and opponent of Mr. Howe's reelection, announced that, if elected, he would be guided by his constituents, whether or not he would go to Ottawa.

As the time draws nearer, we must expect the opposing parties to become more and more excited and earnest, perhaps violent. Doubtless there will be all sorts of reports in circulation, intended to influence the electors. We trust that wisdom and prudence will be exercised by the well-disposed, honest men in each constituency; and that every attempt to use any dishonorable means will be frowned upon, so that the elections may be a real test of public sentiment. There will, doubtless, be much to try the souls of men, and, if possible, to mislead them. Such issues have never been before the country. Many will probably seek to escape the difficulties by stopping at home on the day of election. This we would suggest is not the course which free and independent men should adopt.—Let every man give expression to his convictions, and, conscious of his solemn duty, in the fear of God, discharge that duty to his country and to posterity. Never, perhaps, was it more necessary that every good citizen should let his voice be heard at the polls. He should take a broad and comprehensive view of what the country requires. Vote not so much for the men as individuals, but for the principles they severally represent.

The friends of those who left Halifax for New Zealand, will be pleased to read the following from the Wellington, (Australia,) Independent, of Dec. 10th, 1868:—

"We are informed by Captain Scott, the inward pilot, that the brigantine which has been for the last three or four days anchored at the Heads, has proceeded to Otago. Her name is *Emulous*, Captain Cumming, from Halifax, Nova Scotia. There are fifty-three passengers on board, and the vessel is owned by the captain and eleven others, all on board, with their wives and families, come out to settle in New Zealand. They informed the pilot, who was detained on board three days by strong N. W. gales, that when they left home they were not bound to any particular port to New Zealand, and on the voyage decided in favour of Wellington; but, after lying so long at the Heads, they altered their minds, and sailed for Otago at 9 p. m. on Thursday. They had a very fair passage of 103 days to the Heads."

In reply to remarks in our last, the Editor of the *Witness*, quotes our request for a translation of the words referring to baptism, and says:

"We think that *sprinkle* would not be a correct translation of *baptize*. We have never heard of a Presbyterian maintaining that *sprinkling* would be an adequate rendering of *baptism*: it would be as objectionable as "*dipping*" or "*immersing*." The truth is that baptism as a sacrament has more meaning in it than any one English word, and hence the necessity of transferring the word from the original."

"Baptism as a sacrament," may have "more meaning in it than any one English word." But our contemporary should have observed that we were not discussing "the sacrament," but the *mode* of baptism. We find no difficulty in understanding all the Scripture references to baptism, in the sense of an immersion, or an overwhelming. Can the same be said in favor of sprinkling or pouring? We think not.

CONGREGATIONALISM.—On Wednesday last a Congregationalist Church was organized in Salem Chapel. About 26 persons who had previously been in connection with other churches signified their wish to be united in church fellowship, and were constituted a church according to the usages of that body—the Rev. J. Elliott being their minister. The Rev. R. K. Black, of Milton, and Rev. S. R. Kean, of Canning, took part in the services. On the following evening public services were held in reference to the organization of the church. We trust this movement may be greatly blessed and much good may result.

PETERS' MUSICAL MONTHLY is a finely got up periodical, at \$3.00 per annum. The No. for March is before us. It has a handsome frontispiece and a number of songs—one of which is sacred, and other pieces of good music, besides several pages of musical reading matter. Published by J. L. Peters, 198 Broadway, N. Y.

PETERS' MONTHLY GLEE-HIVE for March is full of New Music, duets, trios, quartets and choruses.

The March No. of PETERS' PARLOR COMPANION for the Flute, Violin and Piano is also received.

DR. CRAMP'S BAPTIST HISTORY.—We see by our U. S. exchanges that the American Baptist Publication Society, is republishing Rev. Dr. Cramp's book on Baptist History. It is to appear April 1st, Price \$2.25.

We find the following high commendation of the work, added to the numerous others already given:

"It is just the book that should be read now."—*London Baptist Magazine.*

"Dr. Cramp's History shows wide and careful research, and has all the characteristics which one acquainted with his clearness of perception and the vigor and elasticity of his mind, would expect to find. Its facts and its style combine to make it an interesting book to all classes of readers. It cannot fail to be extensively circulated."—*Kendall's Books, D. D., President of Kalamazoo College.*

"The undersigned have carefully read Dr. Cramp's BAPTIST HISTORY and cordially unite in commending it as a clear, comprehensive history of the trials, toils, and successes of our Baptist forefathers. It is full of interest, and will be read with great zest and permanent profit."—*Dr. Geo. W. Anderson.—Dr. J. M. Pendleton.—H. G. Weston, D. D., President of Crozer Theological Seminary.*

We have only a few copies of the English edition left. Price \$1.50.

Notices, &c.

Received for Foreign Mission.

1869.
Feb. 22. Pine Grove Church, for a p.....\$10.00
North River Baptist Church, P. E. I. 11.69
Week of Pray. r Offering for Foreign Mission..... 2.00
Mar. 3. N. H. Dobson, for n. p..... 25.00
6. Friend in Kings Co., do 15.00
C. Tupper, Sec'y.

Aylesford, March 17th, 1869.

WESTPORT, 18th March, 1869.

Dear Editor.—Rev. Mr. Moore, who has been labouring with us for the last year one half of the time, is about leaving for Yarmouth County in consequence of which we are without a Pastor, you will please notice the same in your paper hoping it will arrest the attention of some one of the servants of the Most High, that he or they may be induced to pay us a visit, and should it be agreeable, all round, to take charge of the Church.

Yours in the best of bonds,
H. E. PAYSON.

Donation Visit.

As you very frequently give notice in the Messenger of the spontaneous offerings of churches to their Pastors, you will please allow me through the same medium to acknowledge such a visit made to me by the church in Albany, on the evening of the 24th of February, at the house of Mr. Harris Prentice, of that place, which helped materially to supply deficiencies in our wardrobe, pantry and purse, for which these brethren have my most sincere thanks.

AUGUSTUS SHIELDS,
New Albany, March 6th, 1869.

Acknowledgment.

Mr. Editor.—I wish through the columns of your paper to express my sincere thanks to the members of my church and congregation for the very liberal donations presented me of late, both at Bro. C. V.