

For the Christian Messenger.
Job and his Wife.

Mr. Editor,—

1. Job's wife was a vixen: that is an indisputable fact.
2. Job himself was in a bad frame of mind when he "cursed his day."
3. The Lord was very gracious to Job, in restoring him to health and prosperity.
4. Job's wife drops out of the history unnoticed. I cannot think that she was the mother of the beautiful daughters who constituted (with seven sons) Job's second family.

5. Many questions may be asked respecting Job, his wife, and his children, which cannot be answered, on account of the imperfection of the record. We need not trouble ourselves about them, nor waste paper, pen and ink, and valuable time, in useless inquiries.

COMMON SENSE.
Kings County, December 25, 1876.
Christmas Day (so called); but our Lord's real birth-day is unknown.

The Christian Messenger.

Hallfax, N. S., December 27th, 1876.

THE OLD YEAR.

RETROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTIVE.

Another cycle is nearly completed. Soon we shall enter upon a new division of "the fragment of eternity," we call Time. The warning hours of the old year awaken in us Reflection and Review of the past, and call forth pleasure or pain, as the case may be, in relation to the record we find of the months, weeks, and days that are gone. We say that the time has been *spent*. As a commodity given us to employ in securing future good, so we lay out the small moments and the larger hours and days and weeks, and a strict account is being kept with us, which, sooner or later, we must all meet. The debits or credits in the great transaction must be balanced, if not at the end of the year at the end of life. The opportunity is mercifully afforded us whilst life lasts of having full payment made of all the deficiency that may be found against us.

On endeavouring to call up the transactions of the past, before the year is wholly and actually gone, we may find out how a few of the moments or days or weeks have been mispent. On a closer examination we shall find that the number increases; and if we try to discover closely what is to our credit, and what portion of the time has been so employed that we may challenge inspection, and dare to ask what better disposal of it we could have made, we must be very bold or very blind to be willing to have any comparison drawn between the two sides of the account. No, the more closely we examine into the matter, the more we shall find that as we "reason," with our Heavenly Father, that our sins are as scarlet and our transgressions as a mountain, and that it is far safer to adopt our Lord's estimate and say, "When we have done all those things which are commanded we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." For every delinquency and misappropriation we discover we have nothing to put down against it by way of credit or atonement, and we are shut up to call for mercy. We owe our Lord "ten thousand talents" and find that we have "nothing wherewith to pay." It thus becomes plain that each one can only say of himself or herself,

"A debtor to mercy alone."

But when we further call to mind that "Jesus paid it all" we can proceed in the language of the pious Toplady,—

"A debtor to mercy alone,
Of covenant mercy I sing;
Nor fear with Thy righteousness on
My person and offering to bring."

Having this trust we may count the days and years as they pass on, without the fearful forebodings which come from a review of our prodigal waste of life, and we may rise to rejoice in the assurance of the same exalted writer, and say

"Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given.
More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in heaven."

With this joyful experience we may close the account of the year 1876 and be ready to welcome its successor 1877, and so with fresh courage may enter on its duties and partake of its joys and blessings.

Telegrams have been received from several places during the past week of vessels being on shore, wrecked or much damaged. In some of them the crews suffered greatly.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER AND ITS EDITOR.

It is not necessary that we should just now give our readers a homily on the mission of the religious press, its importance as a medium of communication between the churches and brethren of like faith and order, and as affording a favorable means of presenting the great facts and truths of Christianity to the world, and so developing the principles of Divine truth as contained in the Word of God.

Many of our readers are fully conscious of all this, and lose no opportunity of giving practical proof of it by introducing the *Christian Messenger*, wherever they can amongst their neighbours and friends. For this they will please accept our heartfelt thanks. This, we think the most natural and wholesome mode of extending its influence and promoting the general good.

We are not accustomed to connect our personality with the conducting of the *Christian Messenger*, nor do we ever like to do so, but perhaps in our present issue we may be pardoned for making just a passing allusion to the fact, that, if we are spared to the close of this year, we shall have completed a period of twenty-one years, during which we have had the paper under our management. Having therefore attained our majority we may for a moment look around, and think of those who were our contemporaries at the outset of our editorial career. Our venerable brother Nutting who for several years rendered us such valuable aid, has gone to his rest and his reward. Since then there have been changes of proprietorship and of managers, we believe, in every newspaper of the city, secular and religious. We have also during these years seen several attempts made to start newspapers, some secular and some religious, and have also witnessed their departure. Only two or three of the newspapers—between thirty and forty now published in Nova Scotia, had any existence at our entrance upon the duties of our office.

When we look at the number of those whom we, in particular, have been honored in serving, we may mention that there has been some advancement. At the date referred to there were reported to the three Baptist Associations of Nova Scotia and P. E. Island 125 churches with 11522 members and 52 ministers, whereas the last year's returns (1876) shew 201 churches with a membership of 22981 and 106 ministers. Perhaps we ought to notice these figures only with expressions of the greatest dissatisfaction and humiliation that so little fruit has appeared, and that there has not been greater progress made, and that it has taken so many years simply to double our membership. When we look at the imperfection of all that has been done, and the inefficiency of the instruments, we shall be led to thank God, to the riches whose grace alone all the glory belongs, and take courage in anticipation of the future. The part we have taken has been but to report the work of God, and of his ministers and people, as it has been going on week after week. It must be borne in mind, however that the doubling of the membership does not in itself shew all the fruit of the labor performed—nearly a generation has passed away during that period—so that probably 200 per cent would more nearly represent the souls brought into the obedience of faith, than the 100 per cent, shewn by the statistics. When taking this view we may well exclaim, What hath God wrought!

During these years we have had difficulties of various kinds to contend with, and perhaps have not always adopted the wisest course in meeting them. We might possibly in some instances have taken another which would have been more remunerative if we had allowed that motive to control our acts. We have however continued to bring out the paper, week after week, for the nearly eleven hundred weeks—only in one instance have we missed, and that was when we were driven out of house and office by a combination of a terrific fire and the efforts of our fellow-citizens, who acting under authority were seeking to prevent the further progress of the devouring element, which object was by that means effectually accomplished. This involved us in serious losses and increased responsibilities, which we have never as yet fully recovered. Still we have sought to pursue the same straight forward course on which we started, and hope we may affirm that there has at least been no diminution of confidence and good will of the best and most intelligent of our friends. We hope still to have their co-operation and earnest endeavours to aid us in the

spread of truth and driving away the darkness of superstition and error. One thing we may state that our list of subscribers has at no time been greater than it is at present.

In looking forward to another year we might raise a flourish of trumpets and try to make it appear that we intended to outstrip ourselves and all our contemporaries; yet we will not do so but shall try to make our promises for the future to consist of performances, and seek to do better every succeeding week. Our present issue will be found to contain varied and excellent articles adapted to various tastes and capacities.

FROM ROME. Our next issue will contain letters from Rev. W. C. VanMeter, who has for some time past been prosecuting Christian labor in the city of Rome, very near the Vatican—the Pope's residence. Our readers may have noticed that he was on a visit to the United States in the summer, giving to the American Baptist Publication Society, under whose auspices he labors, an account of his work. One of these letters is dated Oct. 16th, the other Nov. 28th.

12 VICOLO D'ALBERTI, ROME.
October 16th, 1876.
My Dear Friend,—
After travelling at least 12,000 miles, addressing not less than 150 meetings and Sunday schools, and doing the hardest Summer's work of my life, I am again at my post, surrounded by one of the noblest bands of fellow workers the Lord gives to any man in Italy. "My cup runneth over."

Upon my arrival I found all the schools, except those of Modane and the night school for women, were re-opened and daily increasing in numbers and interest. The present number of scholars on the register is 327, with an average attendance of about 240 on five days of the week.

The visiting from house to house, to the railway station, city gates, markets, etc., for Scripture and tract distribution, has commenced in real earnest.

Sunday P. M. I had a conference with all my fellow workers. They seemed to be deeply impressed with the responsibilities that re upon them. Without despondency they spoke of the almost insurmountable difficulties they daily meet: without timidity, of the combined and relentless opposition they must encounter: and without "vain boasting," of their readiness to do and to bear all that may be required of them. They expect, pray and work.

I know not how I can more effectually reach the people with the gospel, than by Scripture and tract distribution, Sunday and Evangelical day schools for children and night schools for men and women.

Though elementary secular instruction is given in these schools, they are Bible schools, or as some have said "Sunday Schools every day and night."

The hot weather is over and Rome is unusually healthy. All the pastors have returned. The Waldensians have failed to get immediate possession of the house they bought, but are earnestly pushing their preaching, Sunday and day school work. The Italian Free Church enters hopefully upon its work expects in a few months to enter its spacious building. The English Methodists are finishing a large and beautiful room for their church which they hope to open ere long. The American Methodists entered their beautiful little church last Christmas and are pushing their work with their characteristic energy and success. The English Baptists are working earnestly and hopefully. Rev. Dr. Phillips is earnestly prosecuting his work among the Jews.

Rev. Dr. Taylor, Superintendent of the Italian Mission of the Southern Baptists of America, has spent the summer visiting the various churches under his care, instructing, guiding and cheering the brethren. Though the Dr. is a little prone to "look on the dark side" his face will light up as he speaks of the devotion of many with whom he met.

Just now, Rome is full of excitement. Within the last week thousands of priests, nuns and other pilgrims from Spain arrived. When they descended from the cars some of the poor ignorant fanatics prostrated themselves upon the "holy ground" kissed it and made the sign of the cross upon it with their tongues.

Yesterday was a great day for them in St. Peter. They crowded before every altar, kneeled before the images of saints and kissed the toe of the old statue of Jupiter which they call St. Peter. Those admitted into the presence of the Pope prostrated themselves before him and kissed his foot. But while this stupid idolatry was going on, we were within 200 to 300 feet of his windows, singing "Hold the fort" and other appropriate songs and teaching the word of God to 116 men, women and children in the Bible Class and Sunday School. It seems more like romance than reality. But it is real. Called to occupy this post, at his threshold, and surrounded by such foes, I am oppressed and my soul cries "Who is sufficient for

this work?" We know if they had the power, the horrors of the Inquisition in Spain, or of St. Bartholomew's day in France, would be upon us. But this is our opportunity to give the word of life to the people. Do pray for us and help us to employ more co-workers, enlarge our work and render more effective every department of it.

Yours truly,

W. C. VANMETER.

P.S.—Friends in America can send to Rev. Dr. Griffith 1420 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, or in Rome to my Bankers (Maquay & Hooker) or to me.

Mr. VanMeter's second letter says: No. 12 VICOLO D'ALBERTI, ROME, Nov. 28, 1876.

My Dear Friend!—The second month since my return to Rome has been the happiest one I have known in Italy! The interest among the teachers and pupils has grown into enthusiasm, their unaffected sympathy, affectionate harmony, and earnest co-operation inspire me with hope and courage. The coming before the hour of opening, and the lingering after the close, tells us that our schools are the happiest places known to teachers and pupils.

The report for the past four weeks shows the steady increase of pupils and indicates the growing interest in this department of my work. The number of scholars being now 432.

The interest in the Night School for men is to me wonderful. The men are ignorant, poor, and work very hard—earning from 35 to 50 cts. per day.

But, they come five nights in the week, and spend much of the time in reading the Scriptures and talking upon them. Every Wednesday evening the time is occupied in singing and short Evangelical addresses. The order is good, and the attention inspiring. The Missionary has not been rudely treated in a single instance during the month.

Very truly yours,
W. C. VANMETER.
(We omit the tables of daily attendance, &c.—Ed. C. M.)

The Winter Port is proving a great convenience to many. The last steamer—the Sarmatian—had a very stormy passage, and the large number of her passengers would have gone on by the Intercolonial, only they had taken tickets to go to Portland, and the Grand Trunk Railway. Still we were informed that eight of her passengers took the Intercolonial Railway route, and by that means reached Montreal earlier than the Sarmatian arrived at Portland, Maine. She also discharged 150 tons of her cargo here, the larger part of which was for St. John and other places on the line of the railway.

We find that we have unintentionally omitted to mention the publication of the Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the HORTON COLLEGIATE ACADEMY, for the Calendar Year 1876. It comprises the names of 130 males and 91 females, total 221 students, registered during the year. It gives in a very brief space, a clear view of the institution, its operations, and the advantages it offers to young men and young women. The Academy is in a high state of efficiency. Any person wishing for a copy of this prospectus—giving all the particulars respecting the institution at Horton—may obtain one by applying to Principal Tufts, A. M., at Wolfville.

THE HANDY SPEAKER is a selection of Poetry and Prose, for Reading Clubs, School Examinations and Public Entertainments, by George M. Baker, published by Lee and Shepard, Boston.

Here is an immense variety of pieces, some of them very good; all of them spicy, and many of them very droll. For sale at Gossip's Bookstore.

YOUNG FOLKS READINGS, for Social and Public Entertainments. Edited by Lewis B. Munroe. Lee & Shepard, Boston.

A brief extract from the preface will shew the object sought by the publication of this volume:

"We are gratified to see on every hand indications that reading is more and more appreciated as a graceful and elegant accomplishment, and a source of enjoyment in the social circle and public assembly. It only needs that this growing taste should be properly cultivated to make the art of reading a powerful means of moral and esthetic culture without losing a whit of its value as a delightful amusement. "To read well is to think well, to feel well, and to render well; it is to possess at once intelligence, soul and taste."

We hope that the specimens we have given will act as incentives to the young to go to the original sources and cultivate a more intimate acquaintance with the gifted authors quoted."

For sale at Wm. Gossip's, Granville Street.

FRANK LESLIE'S SUNDAY MAGAZINE. Vol. 1, No. 1, January, 1877. Conducted by Charles F. Deems, D. D., pastor of the Church of the Strangers, New York. Published at Frank Leslie's Publishing House, 537 Pearl Street, New York.

This is a new monthly, at \$2.50 a year. It contains 128 pages, large octavo, and is profusely embellished with well-executed illustrations. It promises to be free from anything savoring of sectarianism and is to consist of "articles on common subjects written with a decidedly religious tone."

THE RIVULET, (see advertisement) is a fine collection of Hymns, Songs, and Recitations, just the thing for the young people in Bands of Hope and Temperance Meetings generally.

This effort on the part of Mr. Brown, should be highly appreciated by Temperance young people and their friends. Mr. B. has got up an excellent collection and published them at his own risk. He puts the book at a price that will not pay to keep them long on hand, they should be bought up at once, and used, and we venture to predict that no one will regret doing so, or think that he has invested his money unprofitably.

THE ROYAL SCHOOL SERIES OF READING BOOKS, published by T. Nelson and Sons, London and Edinburgh, comprise six books, got up in very superior style. The selections are excellent and the illustrations beautiful. We are glad to learn that the Council of Public Instruction has ordered these books on the list prescribed for use in the Public Schools. It must be a pleasure for both teacher and pupil to have such works to study. The gradations are so easy, that the pupil must advance by almost imperceptible steps from the first up to the Useful Knowledge of the sixth. A. & W. Mackinlay will accept our thanks for the specimens sent.

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

We are pleased to notice in the *Baptist Missionary Magazine* for this month, some account of the work of grace among the Telogooos under the labors of brethren belonging to the American Baptist Missionary Union. We shall be glad to learn that the work is extending northward to the places where our brethren from these provinces are laboring.

Mrs. Clough writes from Angole, Sept. 12th.

Joy and Gladness.—All those who are praying for the success of the gospel among the Telogooos will be glad to know of the good things that are being meted out to us as a mission, and will, I am sure, unite with us in giving thanks. Mr. Clough would have written you all this, but while at home could not find the time to do so. He has gone on another evangelistic tour to the west of Angole, and will be gone probably about ten days, perhaps a little longer. The manifestation of the Spirit in the Missions, so earnestly craved by God's faithful laborers, has not been withheld in this part of the great field. "Our mouth is filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then said they among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

Native preachers girded for work.—For several months past the work has been getting a deeper and deeper hold among the people, in nearly every part of the Angole field, but more especially in the northern and western portions. The gospel messengers have girded themselves afresh, and with zeal quickened and faith increased, have preached Jesus from village to village, and from hamlet to hamlet, with untiring persistence; and a rich blessing has rested upon their labors. Many hearing the word for the first time were pricked in their hearts; and others, who had hitherto heard but carelessly, began to inquire with real concern, and were finally able to acknowledge him as "did Thomas, 'My Lord and my God.'"

Ingathering.—On the first Sabbath in July, quite a number from the hamlets around Angole, and from some more distant villages, were present at our morning service, and presented themselves for baptism. After a due examination, during which it was elicited that their life for some time had been in accordance with their profession, eight were accepted, to be baptized at sunset that evening. They were baptized accordingly, and thus admitted to a share in the trials and rejoicings, the work and responsibilities, and all that pertains to the church of Christ that is among us.

Bringing their sheaves with them.—At the close of the same week, still another company began to assemble, and with them the native preachers from the different sections of the Angole field. On Saturday evening, when all were assembled in the chapel, and on and around the verandas (for all could not get in the house, the number being so great), preachers and people, Christians and those