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CORRESPONDENCE.

Letter from Italy.

PRATOLINO, Dec. 17th, 1881.

Messrs. Editors.—Travellers pass by the route of Bologna, only a short distance from Pratolino, without the least suspicion that the forest which they behold contains a royal mansion—for not a single avenue announces it. The preceding idea of him who constructed

The Palace of Pratolino

seems to have been to form an abode of mystery. A single narrow, unequal way leads to a square in the centre of the park where the house is situated, in such a manner as not to be seen until you arrive before it. This vast court is surrounded by a railing supported and united by pilasters of the rustic Tuscan order. On the left side in front of the palace, and beyond the trellis work, there is a large tract of ground covered with trees, at the extremity of which the genius of John of Bologna placed the Colossus of the Apennines, in reality a statue of Jupiter Pluvialis, of grand style, majestic head, bushy temples braving the tempest and covered with hoar frost. His hair descends like icicles upon his large shoulders, and the locks of his beard resemble stalactites. In order to add to the extraordinary effect of this Colossus a sort of crown is placed on his head formed of small jets d'eau, which fall upon his shoulders and rolling over the whole figure make it sparkle in the rays of the sun. A view of this statue justifies the claim for John of Bologna that he was a worthy rival of the great Michael Angelo.

Erected in the 16th century under the direction of one of the Medici, the Villa Real di Pratolino united all the grandeur, beauty, riches, and ingenuity which that remarkable age could furnish. Francesco, son of Cosmo de Medici, it was, who transformed this savage, rough spot on the side of Mt. Morello, into a secret asylum of beauty, consecrated it to mystery and silence, and shrouded within it that Bianco Capello, whose singular history presents a striking example of the vicissitudes and revenges of fortune. The hand of nature had prepared the elements, that of the artist had only to reduce them to symmetry. The forests which covered the ground needed only the axe in certain parts, or to be formed, in others, into avenues. The thick tufts of trees pierced by winding paths, were transformed into inextricable labyrinths. On all sides fountains sparkled up, whose waters were collected in vast basins, or fell in cascades, carrying along into every part the freshness and gentle murmur of their motion. The woods, composed of firs, laurels, and evergreens, seemed the asylum of perpetual spring. The pleasures of the chase and angling were provided for in the park stocked with wild animals, and the waters with fish of every species. The experienced gardeners transplanted thither the rarest trees and flowers, and brought to perfection the fruits of all nations. In short, this retreat called to mind the delicious abodes which the voluptuous Emperors of Rome retired to in pursuance of the counsels of Epicurus to lay down the purple and crown themselves with the roses of pleasure. In this vast enclosure, fenced in with forests as by an impenetrable curtain, the Tuscan sovereign forgot fame in the lap of pleasure. The seductive Bianco Capello was the queen of these solitudes; frequently armed with the symbols of Diana, and surrounded like her with nymphs, she traversed the woods to the sounds of horns; more frequently, however, she wandered through these paths with her lover, consecrating them with monuments, alas! more durable than their happiness.

A person must have resided in Italy, or in some torrid climate, to appreciate the delight which the shade, the murmur, and the flowing of waters can procure. To an Italian, the sweetest element in John's delineation of paradise is the "voice of many waters." The aphorism of Rousseau, which at first appears like a paradox, is founded in the strictest

truth, that cold is best preserved in hot countries. The narrow streets cheat the sun out of his ingress, and the houses defy the fervors of summer. The walls are very thick, the windows few and narrow. Every advantage is taken of a current of air when it can be procured—living waters distribute a reviving freshness by their moist evaporations, and as a last combination of all that is cool, they imitate nature in the formation of artificial grottos.

The Grottos of Pratolino

are acknowledged to be splendid specimens of their kind—perhaps the most worthy of examination in Italy. They are all of them vaulted, and rest on beautiful columns of marble. The walls and the roofs are ornamented with stalactites, madrepores, marine plants, corals, shells, and mother-of-pearl, and all these objects are mingled with paintings in mosaic. Statues of marble and bronze cast their streams into basins of marble or gilded lead—and these in turn empty into secret passages beneath the pavement, the waters which finally escape into the open gardens only to be again applied to a thousand different purposes. It is well to remember, before entering these grottos, that every sort of surprise, and all sorts of deceit are here prepared to entrap the curious. Sometimes the commodious seats which invite them to repose themselves, break with their weight and duck them in an unexpected bath—here, a ladder is placed as if leading to some curious object, but scarcely have you placed one foot on the step before a catch goes off and unmasks a fountain which rushes direct in your face—there, when you least expect it, a marine monster or some other strange figure rises, rolls its eyes on you, opens its mouth, and covers you with a flood of water. This is one place in Europe where it is superior wisdom to submit meekly to the infliction of a guide.

The Grotto of the Deluge is the first the stranger arrives at, so called from the quantity of water which flows in it, not only from the ceiling but from the walls, and even from the pavement. When you enter it you are completely at the mercy of the fountain-players, who can inundate you without the possibility of your avoiding it, for the fountains bar the passage, and can even reach you on the esplanade—the pavement of which, constructed of small round stones of various colors, and arranged so as to imitate mosaic work, is pierced by innumerable holes, through which a multitude of little fountains may spout upon you. In a colder climate this sort of amusement would prove somewhat inconvenient. It is, however, foreseen—no one is exposed to it against his will, and it may be avoided by proper precautions.

The Grotto of the Samaritan is famous for the curious and numerous mechanical inventions of Buontalenti. Several complicated movements successively take place. The cave represents a hamlet composed of huts intermingled with trees. The door of a house opens and a beautiful village girl comes forth carrying a vase, and approaches one of the fountains to draw water. Her movements are very natural, and her body possesses a kind of suppleness and grace. Arriving at the fountain, and having filled her vase with water, she places it again on her head, and turns toward the cottage; not, however, without frequently turning round her head to gaze at a shepherd seated near, who attempts to prevail on her to stay and listen to his music. On the other side a blacksmith opens his shop and is seen busily engaged with two workmen in the labors of the forge; a miller also carries sacks of grain to a mill, the mechanism of which is most complete. In the distance is heard the sound of horns and the barking of dogs, and we are entertained with the representation of a hunt—many wild animals run across the bottom of the scene pursued by hounds and hunters. In the foreground, birds, perched in the branches, pour forth their song—and swans and ducks are seen sporting in the waters. These and other mechanical inventions are certainly astonishing when we consider the period (1569) when they were executed.

The Grotto Della Stufu or of the Bath is small, but ornamented very carefully with madrepores and corals, from which an exceedingly fine rain escapes, or rather a tepid mist, which sinks into the bosom of the bath. This basin occupies the centre of the grotto—it is of red marble, and is supplied at will from two satyrs of bronze. In the construction of these grottos all the resources of art are apparently exhausted to obviate the attacks of heat. Here a new temperature is created, comparable indeed with that of the gardens of Armida, the delusions of which were probably intended to be realized here; unless indeed Tasso himself has copied the gardens of Pratolino. The grotto of Cupid, the fountain of Esculapius, the urns, the tombs, and the statues which people these woods, all attest the respect of the Medici for the monuments of art and antiquity. Here rises Mount Parnassus with the statues of Apollo and

the Muses—there Pegasus is bounding from the summit of the hill, whence also a limped stream starts. That temple of elegant architecture is consecrated to the graces! This rude grotto covered with moss, forms a shelter from the storm—to such a cave Dido and Aeneas retreated. A ray of light piercing the rocky ceiling enables us to distinguish the verses of Virgil carved on the marble.

Over this magnificent royal retreat, however, hangs the pall of a crime which terminated at once the existence of Francesco Medici and his beautiful wife.—Those who love the marvellous have collected a thousand fables on the subject, but the problem remains unsolved.—Whatever the facts may have been, it is known that the Cardinal de Medici had always been the enemy of Bianca Capello, the lovely Venetian, and that he never pardoned her brother for the mesalliance. A story is indeed told that the Grand Duchess prepared a pastry poison with which she resolved to avenge herself upon the Cardinal. The Grand Duke, however, returning hungry from the chase, unluckily found and ate a large quantity of this deadly preparation. Bianca, desperate at the idea of having poisoned her husband, resolved to share his fate, and the poison taking effect in both instances, they died in inexpressible tortures, without the cardinal permitting any one, as it is said, to afford them succor, which circumstance has made him pass as the author of this calamity. The latter is probably nearer the truth of the matter.

Thus the sun of the Medicean glory went down forever in the reddened glare of murder. Luxury had given birth to a splendid progeny of art, but like Saturn, ended by devouring her offspring. The sale-room, or the sovereign's pleasure, no longer furnished inspiration sufficient to feed the artist-genius. Francesco could display to inquisitive guests the palace of Pratolino, and boast of the sums expended on its art, but the splendid light which had illuminated Europe began now to fade in the dearth of aliment. The school of Raphael was dispersed—the death of Michael Angelo had left a void which it was impossible to fill. The arts still flourished, but it was only in appearance. No want of ready and ingenious talent, but gallantly and pleasure alone inspired the hand of the artist—and the master-age was past.

Pratolino is a monument of this period of Tuscan decadence. Ustenanted, it is now a melancholy spectacle. The vast apartments, the long galleries formerly ornamented with pictures and rich hangings, now only display the nakedness of uncovered walls. The mosaic pavements are covered with dust, and the wind sobs through the broken casements. In the garden-walks briars are growing, and sometimes the path is choked with the branches of some great pine which has been struck by lightning. The walls are crumbling away, and in the midst of the disjointed statues parasitic plants spring up and fasten their clasping fingers, covering them with a sombre verdure. The virgin vine climbing round the columns mingles its tight garlands with the arabesque ornaments which run along the friezes, and which are imitations of this natural decoration. Mosses and lichen are covering down out of sight what man appears to have been forced to respect. Everywhere art is yielding to nature, having nothing here to oppose her but her own *vis inertia*.

Such is the history of the Tuscan Palace of Pleasure, and such its termination everywhere and in all human experience. The art which lends itself to mere pleasure becomes palsied with weakness and perishes for lack of any immortal principle within it. The life that gives itself only to pleasure will probably end in a tragedy, and leave naught but a ruin—a great sad memory behind.

L. M. C.

The Sustentation Fund.

An Important Suggestion.

Messrs. Editors.—I send you Dr. Barr's letter by permission. It seems to me to contain the germ of an effort which, if generally made, will prove successful. I hope that our other papers will copy it, and am sure from past experience of their kindness, that our editorial brethren will lend their valuable aid to the carrying out of the proposed plan. It is my purpose to furnish from time to time frequent information in regard to the progress made, and the help of brethren everywhere is earnestly invoked. If a general effort be made to secure at least an average of one dollar per member from all our congregations, and those who are able will give generously, who can doubt that the full amount needed will be raised?

Faithfully yours, RICHARD McILWAINE,
Office of Home Missions, Baltimore, Dec. 23th.

Home Missions.

CHARLESTON, W. VA., Dec. 13, '81.
Brother McIlwaine.—Your visit to our churches has, as far as I can learn, awakened a good degree of interest among our people on the subject of Home Missions. The collection in our own congregation, in January, will at least be doubled. The growing wants in our own Presby-

tery gives us a deep interest in the cause. The population along the line of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad has doubled in the last five or six years, and with our present ministerial force we cannot supply one-half of the points with preaching on the Sabbath that are calling for it. We expect to have the new field between Huntington and St. Albans occupied by the first of the year. We will still have about four promising fields, where something more than the half of a minister's support could be raised. Unless we can have an appropriation from the Home Mission Fund to make out the support, we can do nothing for these fields, and they must be lost to us. Yet our wants are trifling compared with the great field of Texas and other wide portions without a living ministry. You ask for \$50,000 at the January collection. But how are you to get it? The church is abundantly able to give that sum, and willing, too, if they could be awakened to a sense of its importance. The majority of our congregations could average a dollar per member if a sufficient interest were awakened, and many individuals could give by the hundreds if they were so disposed.

What would you think of this plan? Let a space be appropriated every week in each of our religious papers to set before the readers the urgent demands of this cause, and to receive and acknowledge any voluntary contributions to Home Missions. Some would be glad to respond to such a call, and their example would influence others. Many of the readers of the *Central*, by having the subject brought frequently to their attention, would contribute through the editors who might not otherwise give. So with our other papers. Unless some special effort is made, we fear that our collection will fall short again, and our missionary fields be left to suffer.

Fraternally yours, J. C. BARR.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES.

Southern Presbyterian.

Rev. N. M. Woods, of Galveston, Texas, has accepted the call to the Second Presbyterian church at Charlotte, N. C., and will enter upon his work there at once. His post office address is now Charlotte, N. C.

Rev. T. D. Witherspoon, D. D., having declined to accept the Professorship of Church Government and History in Columbia Seminary, to which he was elected some time ago, the Board of Directors will meet on the 17th inst. to elect a professor. The Board has announced that the Seminary will be opened on the 18th September next.

Pastoral Relation Dissolved.—At a called meeting of Chesapeake Presbytery held in Leesburg, Va., on Tuesday, December 27th, the pastoral relation between Rev. Henry Branch and the Catactin church was dissolved at the request of the pastor, the congregation assenting. Mr. Branch has served this congregation with much fidelity and success for more than ten years.

The Texas Presbyterian is much gratified that Dr. Smoot, of Austin, has declined the call to Augusta, Ga. We suppose that all the Presbyterians in Texas sympathize in this feeling.

Rev. Thomas Ward White, Evangelist of North Mississippi Presbytery, has received a unanimous call to the pastorate of the church at Homer, La., for many years the charge of the late Rev. J. T. Davidson.

Rev. E. E. Bigger, who has been acting as stated supply of Alabama Street church, Memphis, Tenn., has accepted a call to the churches of Pine Grove and Walnut Hill, Clark county, Ky. A meeting of Memphis Presbytery was called to be held on the 23rd inst. for the purpose of dismissing him to West Lexington Presbytery.

Missionary Teacher to Brazil.—Miss Charlotte Kemper will accompany Mr. and Mrs. Lane, who expect to sail in a few days, on their return to the mission at Campinas, Brazil. Miss Kemper has been connected with the Augusta Female Seminary, Staunton, Va., as one of its most accomplished teachers. She has long desired to engage in the missionary work, but her great usefulness at home led her friends to doubt whether she ought to give up the work for which she was so eminently qualified and in which she was so successful. Her scholarship, her experience as a teacher, and her earnest Christian character, justify the confident expectation of the greatest usefulness in her new work.

Fredericksburg, Va.—The beautiful Christmas tree provided for the Sunday School children at the Memorial chapel of the Presbyterian church took fire from the lighting of the tapers, and was, with most of its contents destroyed. No other injury was done by the fire, and the pastor, Rev. J. P. Smith, promised the children that they should have another and a prettier tree provided for the New Year.

Capon Bridge, W. Va.—Our great Capon Valley and those adjacent are giving evidence of substantial and decided improvement. Our worthy citizen, Rev. J. W. Walkup, in addition to the improvements he has already completed, is now erecting upon the Parsonage grounds at Capon Bridge a neat and comfortable residence, and when completed will make a desirable home, and will add much to the appearance and interest of the Valley. Mr. Walkup has been very energetic in carrying forward these improvements, and shown much taste and judgment which is not only satisfactory but highly gratify-

ing to his friends and all interested in the enterprise.—*Romney Intelligencer.*

Jonestown, Miss.—Five thousand dollars have been raised for the erection of a house of worship at this place, on the Mobile and Northwestern railroad, and the contract is ready to be placed in the hands of the architect.—*Christian Observer.*

Rev. J. E. Spilman, D. D.—At an adjourned meeting of the Presbytery of Central Mississippi, held at Vicksburg during the sessions of Synod, the pastoral relation between Rev. J. E. Spilman, D. D., and the Canton church was dissolved.—*Id.*

Ashton Church is the name of a new church on Honey Island, recently organized by the Presbytery of Central Mississippi.—*Id.*

Rev. W. A. Alexander has resigned the pastoral charge of the church at Lexington, and taken charge of the Yazoo City church.—*Id.*

A memorial tablet has been placed in the First Presbyterian church in Augusta, Ga., with this inscription: "In memory of Rev. Robert Irvine, D. D., for over ten years the beloved and faithful pastor of this church. Born in County Down, Ireland, September 15th, 1814; finished his Christian ministry, in the service of this people, April 8th, 1881. 'Blessed is the man that trusted in the Lord.'"

South Carolina.—The *Monthly*, published at Clinton, S. C., says that Georgetown is the only county in the State without a Presbyterian church. If this be so the State is better provided for in this matter than any other Southern State. There should be an effort made without delay to plant a Presbyterian church in Georgetown.

Bethel Presbytery has organized three churches during the past year and ordained two young men to preach the Gospel. The pastoral relation between Rev. S. L. Wilson and the churches of Ainswell and Horeb has been dissolved by Presbytery. There are at least nine vacant churches in Bethel Presbytery. Rev. F. L. Leeper has declined the call of Presbytery to the evangelistic work.—*N. C. Presbyterian.*

Winston, in Orange Presbytery.—Rev. F. H. Johnston writes December 26th: At our communion here last Sabbath a week ago, five young persons were received into the church on profession of faith, and one on certificate. Preaching was had daily for a week previous to the meeting and was continued one week after. From twelve to fifteen persons attended the various inquiry meetings.—*Id.*

Lexington, in Concord Presbytery.—Rev. A. M. Watson writes on December 19th: God has blessed Lexington with a visit of his gracious Spirit, and we have recently added to our church seven on examination, and others to come in yet. The sister churches also have received as many.—*Id.*

Selma, Ala.—A friend writes us: "The First Church of Selma, Ala., Dr. Hooper, pastor, has resolved to raise \$1,000 the next year to send a new missionary to China, with the expectation of making this an annual contribution. The salary of a married man is 900 Mexicans or \$800 of U. S. currency. This does not interfere with the \$200 the Sabbath school has always furnished for a school in Soochow. Besides, the ladies expect to furnish \$150 as a minimum, and the 'Busy Bees,' whose smallest amount ever raised was \$250, in the future will work for foreign missions. It is probable this church will give \$1,500 in 1882 to the Baltimore treasury. One subscription was \$156, (\$3 a Sabbath); another \$100. Several gave \$50 each, and many \$25. There seemed to be a great revival in the Church, that is, all were full of love and zeal. Each member was like a stove. Worldliness does not prosper, but family religion flourishes. This result was reached by a committee of the elders and deacons presenting a subscription list to each member of the Church. A pious widow who wished to carry out her husband's wishes gave \$50. As a memorial of their former pastor, the Rev. W. J. Lowry, D. D., the Church propose to the committee to call it 'The Lowry Mission.' They agreed that this should not interfere with other objects.—*Southern Presbyterian.*

The Evangelistic Committee of the Synod of Kentucky has elected two other evangelists, the Rev. Messrs. J. E. Triplett and A. D. Tadlock, who, with the Rev. Messrs. E. O. Guarrant and W. D. Morton, will enter next week on their work as Synodical evangelists. The following was resolution was adopted:

"Resolved, That it is the sense of this committee that the evangelists elected by the Synod devote their time chiefly to evangelistic work proper, that is to say, in preaching the gospel to vacant and feeble churches and in organizing churches, if the way be clear, in destitute places; in grouping churches, and in rendering them assistance in securing the stated services of ministers, spending only so much time among the stronger churches, either with or without a pastor, as the weather during the winter or early spring, or other providential circumstances, may make necessary."—*Id.*

Northern Presbyterian.

A correspondent in Madison, Wis., says of the departure of the Rev. John E. Wright to assume the charge of the Second Presbyterian church, Chicago: "Mr. Wright has supplied the Madison Presbyterian church nearly five years, and labored faithfully. He has done all that man could do to build up our Zion. We part with him regretfully. Dr. Patton's late people could not have made a better choice."

There were thirteen additions to the West Spruce Street Presbyterian church, Philadelphia, (Rev. Dr. Breed's) on Sabbath, December 18th.

(Continued on 5th page.)

Central Presbyterian.

WEDNESDAY, January 4, 1882.

Through Life.

We slight the gifts that every season bears,
And let them fall unheeded from our grasp,
In our great eagerness to reach and clasp
The promised treasure of our coming years;

Or else we mourn some great good passed,
And, in the shadow of our grief shut in,
Refuse the lesser good we yet might win,
The offered peace and gladness of to-day.

So through the chambers of our life we pass,
And leave them one by one, and never stay;
Not knowing how much pleasantness there was
In each, until the closing of the door
Has sounded through the house, and died away,
And in our hearts we sigh, "For ever more."
Chamber's Journal.

For the Central Presbyterian.
Baptized for the Dead.

BY REV. H. H. HAWES.

"Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?"—1 Cor xv: 29, 30.

Here is a passage which has challenged great attention; and the question, "What is its interpretation?" has never had a satisfactory answer, so far as the writer of this article knows. His interpretation is here offered for what it may be worth. Note:

1. The word "baptism" does not always refer to the sacrament of baptism. By turning to Matt. xx: 20-23, Mark x: 35-39, Luke xii: 50, we find that it is used to indicate a condition of suffering. The mother of Zebedee's children came to Jesus, asking that her two sons might sit, one on His right hand, the other on His left, in His kingdom. "But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Now this looks to the future of Christ's life, from that time. He had been baptized with water, by John Baptist, as a preparation for His priestly consecration, and was not again to be baptized with water. The "cup" He was to drink at some future time. So of this baptism. This is made clear by Luke xii: 50, when looking to His coming sufferings, He cried: "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened, (pained, distressed) till it be accomplished." Here it is evident that "baptism" denotes a condition of suffering. Keeping this in mind—note—

2. The chief cause of Paul's great sufferings was his faith in and preaching of the resurrection of the dead. 2 Tim. i: 10-12, "Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and teacher of the Gentiles. For which cause I suffer these things." Also 2 Tim. ii: 8, 9, "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David, was raised from the dead, according to my gospel, wherein I suffer trouble, etc." At Jerusalem (Acts xxiii: 6) Paul declared the cause of his persecution in these words: "Of the hope and resurrection of the dead, am I called in question." Before Felix (Acts xxiv: 21) he declared that his persecutors found no evil-doing in him while he was before the council at Jerusalem, "Except it be for this one voice, that I cried, standing among them, touching the resurrection of the dead, I am called in question of you this day." See also Acts xxv: 19. He re-asserted this as the cause of his troubles, also, before Agrippa, asking this king—"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" Acts xxvi: 8 to 23. In Phil. iii: he tells us how he gave up all things and suffered all things for "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus"—and of the hope before which all his being bowed: "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." The sufferings encountered and endured by Paul and his fellows were a baptism, like that of their Lord. Note—

3. The 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians was written to show (among others) three things: (1) The resurrection of Jesus Christ. (2) That this involved the resurrection of His people, and their attainment to full salvation. (3) That this was the supreme hope to cheer Christians in times of trouble. If Christ be not risen, what follows? Our preaching is vain; faith is vain; hope is destroyed; all comfort is gone; those who are dead have utterly perished.

Some (xv: 12) were saying: "There is no resurrection of the dead." If that be true, then all the sad results, just mentioned, follow. Then all our self-denials and sufferings are but so much folly. Why endure them, if this hope and faith in the resurrection is only an imagination? "I die daily" (v. 31) in the endurance of these sufferings. I have fought with human beasts at Ephesus for this faith; but what advantageth it me, if there is no truth in this doctrine? If this faith, for which we suffer, is a deception, a lie, then away with the sufferings; let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die; (apothneskomen—rot; perish entirely. See verse 36). And if this be so, why suffer for the faith any longer? Why expose ourselves every hour (v. 30) to such perils? The question of verse 29,

"Else what shall they do," etc., is kindred to all these. Its sense is: If this doctrine is not true, what are they to do who are continually in a condition of suffering—enduring a baptism of suffering for (i. e., because of; on account of) the dead—that is, on account of this faith held and preached and suffered for, concerning the resurrection of the dead. Not only so, but (ti kai) "Why also" are they then submitting to be baptized (brought into this condition of suffering) on account of (this doctrine about) the dead? If it is not true, we are, of all men, most to be pitied (v. 19). All our hope and comfort are gone! But that the doctrine is true—that we are perfectly assured of its truth, is evident in our endurance of sufferings to which this faith calls and exposes us. We testify our faith by continually receiving this baptism on account of it. So we say: Our dead have not perished, and we shall not perish.

[We cannot agree with our correspondent.—Eds.]

*For the Central Presbyterian.

The Best Commentary.

A Plea for Sunday-School Teachers.

Whatever we may think of the Revised Version of the New Testament as a substitute for the present Authorized Version, no intelligent person will perhaps deny that it is the best, the most learned, and the cheapest commentary on the Authorized Version which the present age has produced. The new will not replace the old for years. The Authorized Version was many years in making its way into general use. Texts were taken from the Bishop's Bible for nearly a generation after King James' Version was authorized to be read in churches. It supplanted the Bishop's Bible and the Geneva Version very slowly. The difficulties in the way of the Revised Version are much greater than those in the way of the Authorized Version. When King James reigned, the English speaking people dwelt in the British Isles. While his translators worked, America was still unsettled. His version had no such formidable rival so deeply rooted in the hearts of the people and the judgment of scholars. Then there were no denominations, no sectarian barriers to hinder the course of the New Version of 1611. If it took so many years for that new version to win its way amid a small population on two small islands, without any formidable rivals, without any denominational hindrances, the people need have no fears that the Revised Version of 1881 will replace the old for years to come.

It is right that it should be so. There is one thing harder than making a revision, and that is judging of it. And it is still harder for those who do not read the original tongue to judge of a new revision. First they must become acquainted with it, which is a work of time; and then they will slowly and gradually reach a conclusion. The process is necessary and right. Those who have formed the habit of judging doctrines by the Scripture, will never consent to have a new version imposed upon them by authority. And it is the right and duty of God's people thus to exercise their judgment.

The fear that they will be robbed of King James' Version is, therefore, baseless. No one would rob them if he could. No one could rob them if he would. Editions of the old version will be printed for fifty years to come. But, at the same time, although we like the old best, and always will like it the best, we must admit that the new has been made from a Greek text which more nearly corresponds with the exact words used by evangelists and apostles than the Greek text from which the old was made. We must admit that the new represents more closely the force of the Greek words. We cannot deny that it is the best help that an English scholar has towards understanding the exact meaning of Christ and his apostles.

Why, then, should not our Sunday School teachers and scholars have this help, this able commentary on the present text? It will take but a few lines to print each lesson in the new version. To do so is no endorsement of the new version as preferable to the old, as one that should take the place of the old. If the Publication Committee, for example, should print the new version of each lesson, they would no more endorse or recommend it than they do the views of the lesson expositor. The new text would be a great help towards understanding the lesson. J. B. C.

*For the Central Presbyterian.

Local Option.

Messrs. Editors.—The subject of Local Option, for the suppression of bar-rooms and liquor saloons in Virginia, is now attracting much attention. While it does not aim to accomplish now all that many friends of temperance desire, it proposes a reform which, in its practical results, will accomplish great good, and take from our statutes the most vicious and disreputable laws, which license the traffic in ardent spirits—laws which barter the peace, morality, and lives of the citizens for revenue, and revenue which the State does not realize when the drawbacks for costs of prosecutions, prison fees, &c., are deducted. It surely needs no argument to satisfy any reflecting man that the drinking saloons, so numerous in our State, are the most fruitful sources of crime, demoralization and utter ruin to thousands. This reform has

been tried in Maryland, one or two counties in Virginia, and in some of the Western States, where it has been adopted by a vote of the people. The writer witnessed its salutary effect in one county in Kentucky, and this observation impressed him with a desire to see it adopted in Virginia.

Recently a Convention met at Charlottesville to consider this subject and adopt measures for carrying it out in this State. This was a voluntary gathering of delegates from all parts of the State, and there met about one hundred, of ministers and laymen of all denominations. A deep interest was manifested, and measures and plans adopted which seem to be practicable and promise success.

You will see the whole scheme, its plans and purposes, in the published proceeding of the Charlottesville Convention. I write chiefly to call attention to this important subject. ELDER.

*For the Central Presbyterian.

The Dead.

A Millenarian View.

Messrs. Editors.—An article in your issue of 21st ult., "Our Record Books," has engendered a good deal of thought upon the subject of the last day, when the dead shall be summoned before the "great white throne."

The first question I would ask, after reading this solemnly graphic picture of the final sentence of the souls of men, is: Who are these dead? To get at the answer let us examine this same Scripture, (Rev. xx chapter) a part of which was quoted in the said article.

The angel binds Satan, shuts him up in the bottomless pit, and sets a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled. Then this picture is presented to the spiritual eyes of the Evangelist: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them," &c. The little word *they* brings out, as it were, the fulfilment of Scriptures well known to most believers, but little understood by many. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him," 2 Tim. ii: 12. "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth," Rev. v: 10. "Do ye not know that the saints (all believers in Jesus) shall judge the world?" * * * "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" 2 Cor. vi: 2, 3.

The judgment given unto the saints in these quotations does not follow but goes before the "great white throne" picture, and must therefore count out, or relieve all saints from any participation as culprits in that scene. They are living with, and are one with Christ, wherever He is. The 5th verse says, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Can words be plainer? The "rest of the dead" must refer to all who are not with Christ, and they are the lost souls from the days of Adam to the end of the ages, who are here congregated around the "great white throne," every man to be judged according to his works.

Further: It is said of the first picture, "This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death (the second picture) hath no power." The great apostle Paul desired to be one of the characters in the first scene when he was inspired to write, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." The second picture is unfolded after the thousand years have expired, when Satan is let loose for a little season to deceive the nations and bring them together to battle against the saints.

Then it is, after the final shutting up of Satan, that the judgment is set and the books are opened. "And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books." The word "books" does not necessarily include the "book of life." "Death and hell" are judged; "death and hell" are cast into the lake of fire. Then follows: "This is the second death." Finally: If the saints, who sit with Christ on His throne, having been "called unto His kingdom and glory"—are accounted worthy to have part in the "resurrection of the just"—and on whom the second death hath no power—why will they put themselves, as many do, in that company of the "wicked dead" before the "great white throne." The two pictures are referred to in 2 Tim. iv: 1, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick (depicted in Matt. 25th) and the dead (Rev. 20th) at his appearing and his kingdom." W.

EFFECTUAL PRAYER.—At a Fulton-street (New York) prayer-meeting an instance of prevailing prayer was related. "The last time I was here," said a gentleman, "one of the requests for prayer read thus: 'Pray for my husband's salvation; I shall pray for him as long as I live.' That was my wife's petition! Her heart was set on my salvation. For twenty long years she had been praying for me, and has told me repeatedly that if she died before I became a Christian she would spend her last breath in prayer to God in my behalf. My friends, God has heard that faithful wife's prayers, and has heard the prayers you offered for me, and I am here to-day a saved man."

"Never mistake perspiration for inspiration," said an old minister in his charge to a young minister just being ordained.

Church Music.

During the session of the General Convention, in Richmond, in October, 1859, the following action was taken by the House of Bishops in regard to the subject of church music. Twenty-one years have passed since then, and many of our younger clergy, in all probability, have never heard or read this expression of opinion, but it is as timely now as when it was first uttered. See Perry's Handbook of the General Convention.

Resolved, That in the opinion of the House of Bishops, there is very much in the prevailing manner of conducting those parts of our public worship which require the aid of sacred music, to which the serious attention of the clergy and their congregations should be directed—as not only not promotive of a devout spirit, but very injurious thereto; as directly calculated to nurture a lifeless formality, by making the congregations mere passive listeners to musical sounds, confined to choirs, in the formation of which there is often little reference to fitness of personal character—as virtually depriving the congregation of their proper privilege of uniting with their voices in the worship of the church, when its words are sung, as well as when only read—as impairing the beautiful simplicity of our public worship, and thus rendering it, in the parts referred to, unadapted to the greater number of our people, and so taking therefrom one of its chief excellencies, as being *Common Prayer*, accommodated to all conditions of Christian people, as causing, moreover, a needless delay and interruption of our Morning and Evening Prayer, by the introduction of music, especially such as is merely instrumental—which unprofitably and needlessly abridges the time allotted to the preaching of the Word, and, by fatiguing the hearers, both in body and mind, interferes with their ability rightly to receive the same; and, lastly, as creating in all these particulars, an influence which, in our opinion, is decidedly counteractive of the proper work of God's Church, as His appointed instrument of cherishing and promoting His worship in spirit and in truth.

Resolved, That in the opinion of the House of Bishops, the evils referred to proceed chiefly from the following causes, namely: *First*, from an oversight of the principle that the object of the church music is not the gratification of a cultivated musical taste, but by the aid of simple and appropriate music to cultivate devout affections among all classes of worshipping people, and to enable them to commune with one another in the united and animated expression of the same.

Secondly, from the selection, by organists and choirs, of such tunes and chants as, on account of their not being sufficiently familiar to the congregation, or from their want of due simplicity, the congregation cannot be expected to unite in singing.

Thirdly, from the use of musical compositions, especially such as are called *chants*, which require too much time in the performance, and also from the introduction of voluntaries on the organ, before the chants, and between the verses of psalms and hymns, which having no value but as exhibitions of instrumental music, are wearying to the congregation.

Lastly, from the extent to which the control of this part of the worship of the church is virtually taken out of the hands of the rectors of parishes, where alone the church law has placed it, and is exercised by committee and vestries, and chiefly by organists and choirs.

Resolved, That in the opinion of the House of Bishops, there can be no material improvement of our public worship in the particulars mentioned, except as each parish minister shall perform the duty assigned him by the law of this church, which, in the words of the rubric is, that "with such assistance as he can obtain from persons skilled in music, he shall give order concerning the tunes to be sung at any time in his church, and especially shall suppress all light and unseemly music, and all indecency and irreverence in the performance."

Resolved, That it be recommended to all the pastors of our churches, that they endeavor, by all suitable measures, to promote a general participation of their people, by voice, in those parts of our worship which are sung as well as those which are not.

Resolved, That in the opinion of the House of Bishops, it is particularly incumbent on the rectors in our larger and older cities, to see that the music of their churches be so conducted, as to afford a wholesome example to those in our humbler and younger congregations, who naturally look to such sources for guidance in matters of external order and expediency.

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH.—To make a great work pass into the popular mind is not easy; but the series of chapters at the end of the Book of Isaiah, the chapters containing the great prophecy of Isaiah's restoration—have, as has Hebrew prophecy in general, but a still higher degree than any thing else in Hebrew prophecy, one quality which facilitates this passage for them; their boundless exhilaration. Much good poetry is profoundly melancholy; now, the life of the people is such that they require joy. If ever that "good time coming," for which they long, was presented with energy and magnificence, it is in these chapters; it is impossible to read them without catching its glow.—Matthew Arnold.

John Knox's Liturgy in Gaelic.

It is well known that the great reformer, John Knox, prepared a liturgy for the services of the Church of Scotland in the sixteenth century, and that it was in use more or less till the period of the Covenant. It is, perhaps, not so well known that it was also issued in a Gaelic translation. The English original was published in 1565; that is, five years after the establishment of Presbyterianism and the holding of the first General Assembly in Scotland. The Gaelic version appeared two years afterwards, in 1567. It was the work of John Carsuel, who was the Presbyterian Superintendent of the Diocese of Argyll. This book of prayers had the singular merit of being the first Gaelic book ever printed in Scotland, or even in Ireland. It served its day so well, and yet was superseded so effectually, that ten years ago, in 1872, there were only three copies known to exist. One of these was in possession of the Duke of Argyll, and it was the only perfect copy of the three. The University Library in Edinburgh and the British Museum had each an imperfect copy. Carsuel, who translated it, was a native of the parish of Kilmartin, and well versed in the literature of the Highlands.

The Liturgy was used in the churches throughout Argyllshire, where the book was followed by Calvin's Catechism and the Synod of Argyll's translation of the Psalter in the seventeenth century, and the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms with the Summary of Christian doctrine in the eighteenth.

Read the Bible Prayerfully.

Let prayer not only precede and follow your perusal of inspired truth, but let it accompany it. In a passage of singular pathos, Mr. Wesley has given us a picture of himself as he occupied himself in his most retired hours with the Book of God before him. It is the embodiment of much sacred wisdom and simplicity of spirit; so I adduce it: "Here, then, I am far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone; only God is here. In His presence I open, I read His Book; for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read; does anything appear dark or intricate—I lift up my heart to the Father of Light: 'Lord, is it not Thy Word? If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God. Thou givest liberally, and upbraidedest not. Thou hast said, If any be willing to do Thy will, he shall know. I am willing to do; let me know Thy will.' I then search after and consider parallel passages of Scripture, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. I meditate thereon with all the earnestness and attention of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God, and then the writings, whereby, being dead, they yet speak.—Good Works.

Rowland Hill's Preaching.

Two friends once entered Surry Chapel previous to going to India. One was a Christian, the other not. Mr. Hill preached from the text, "We are not ignorant of his devices," and told the following tale:

"Many years since I met a drove of pigs in one of the narrow streets of a large town, and, to my surprise, they were not driven, but quietly followed their leader. This singular fact excited my curiosity, and I pursued the swine until they all quietly entered the butcher's. I then asked the man how he succeeded in getting the poor, stupid, stubborn pigs so willingly to follow him, when he told me the secret. He had a basket of beans under his arms, and kept dropping them as he proceeded, and so secured his object. Ah, my dear hearers, the devil has got his basket of beans, and he knows how to suit his temptations to every sinner. He drops them by the way; the poor sinner is thus led captive by the devil at his will; and if grace prevent not, he will get him at last into his butchery, and there he will keep him forever. Oh, it is because we are not ignorant of his devices that we are anxious this evening to guard you against them."

The Christian friend mourned over this tale about the pigs, and feared it would excite a smile but not produce conviction in the mind of his unbelieving companion. After the service they left the chapel, and all was silence for a season.

"What a singular statement we had to-night about the pigs, and yet how striking and convincing it was!" remarked the young man. His mind was impressed—he could not forget the basket of beans, the butchery, and the final loss of the sinner's soul. He left the country, but soon after corresponded with his friend, and referred to this sermon as having produced an abiding impression on his mind.

The wages that sin bargains for with the sinner are life, pleasure, and profit; but the wages it pays him are death, torment, and destruction. To understand the falsehood and deceit of sin, we must compare its promises and payments together.

The grand old Book of God still stands; and this old earth, the more its leaves are turned over and pondered, the more it will sustain and illustrate the sacred Word.

To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. Hebrews iii: 15.