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CORRESPONDENCE.

Letter on Italy.

Messrs. Editors.—It cannot be said that art is a moral work like a sermon, nor that its primary use is that of teaching. In its final analysis art is a luxury, and has for its principal object the realization of a beautiful conception. Yet art is no exception from the general laws of life, nor is it a wandering comet, separated from the infinite orbit of truth. It is not impossible to prove the luxurious tastes and tendencies of Roman Pontiffs from the patronage they extended to art, and from the artistic treasures of the Pontifical Palace, yet, we dare say that if the Roman Church had not taken the artistic genius to her bosom and under her control; that it would have run riot and wrought great evil to modern society. In despite of Church censorship there is much to condemn. Without that censorship the genius of Italy would have followed one pathway and society another, but not without great mutual injury. The ideal cannot reign in the higher regions of fancy without giving vitality to those daily actions whose thread forms the whole web of our existence. But for the curl which the Pontiffs placed upon Italian art—the school of design for the world—the immoral tendency would undoubtedly have been more pronounced, and would have penetrated modern intelligence with its corrosive virus, deadening sensibility, weakening the distinction between right and wrong, and giving up the whole life of man to the rule of an evil imagination. It was not, therefore, with critical feelings that we visited the

Vatican Museum of Sculpture, but with gratitude that the Church had succeeded in saving so much from the wrecks of ancient civilizations and the pillage of the barbarians. The *chef-d'œuvre* of this collection is undoubtedly the statue of the Apollo. All that has ever been chiselled in order to express genius appears in the Apollo Belvedere. We could not but inwardly compare it to the bust of Napoleon, which we saw on one of the tables of the wonderful Palazzo Pitti in Florence. This bust was not a strict portrait but an apotheosis. The sculptor saw the Napoleon of imagination with genius, glory, heroism, immortality, inspiration on his brow, the world at his feet and two ages striving around about him, and crowning his temples with their laurels. The sculptors of the heroic times thus represented the *Cæsars* when they desired to elevate them to the altars of immortality. All the genius of these remarkable productions seems to be concentrated in this statue of Apollo. "That is the head of a god," exclaimed my companion, on looking at the bust. At first sight, we thought from its likeness it was the head of Byron. Perhaps it would be impossible to paint or model genius without representing the features of that Apollo-like physiognomy over which inspiration, lurid though it was, flung its sublimity.

We could not tarry about the Laocoon, the Torso, and the Antinous, to be seen in the adjoining apartments, all famous works of sculpture; but hastened to

The Musee of Paintings.

No enthusiasm can depict or exaggerate the value of these works of art. They are a treasure house, we had almost said, of more value than all Italy beside. The fifty paintings are worth a duchy. Here Raphael produced his immortal figures, born of his brain, as the Virgin's child is said to have been delivered without pain. The stanzas of Raphael seem each to have issued like Cythera from the foam of the ocean, in a pearly shell, with a smile upon the lips, the rays of the sun upon the head, and heaven in the eyes. They have been raised as by a gentle wave and left on the rude shores of reality. They have been painted by one who was conscious of and happy in his inspiration, and who dwelt in an atmosphere of untroubled tranquillity. Here also Angelo, the first sculptor of his age, painted and left the huge vaults of the

Vatican peopled with the immense figures of his imagination. On observing them they seem as if they had issued like flashes from a soul torn by tempests of trouble. They struggle, turn, suffer, are mounted on the blast of a hurricane, have for light a conflagration—express all the intensity of sorrow—are in fine the giant offspring of genius in extreme despair—of colossal genius in delirium, working with the fury of a giant, and determined, if it be in mortal power, to mark reality with the impress of infinity. Figures he has sketched which breathe a lament of Jeremiah, a stanza of Dante, a malediction of Prometheus. They carry in the flesh the burning iron of the artist's idea, and cry hopelessly, like the shipwrecked for the land, from the world that is temporal to that which is eternal.

We had the good fortune to behold the august picture of

The Transfiguration.

by Raphael, in a good light. It is unquestionably one of the finest pictures in Europe. All the copies are inferior; those by Juleo Romano are the best; that by Harlow is clever; but none convey an idea of the depth and finish of the original. The demoniac beneath, and the figures of the apostles, appealing from their own consciousness of weakness to the manifest power of their transfigured Lord on the mountain top above, has never been exceeded in power. The whole composition is wonderful in design, magnificent in expression, admirable in costume, and powerful in color.

The Madonna de Foligno is sure to arrest attention. The child holding the tablet is not to be surpassed—'tis of heaven, not earth. The Madonna's head is exquisite—but the upper division of the picture overbalances the lower. The blues appear too intense, and have been tortured in the cleaning, if not repainted. The bringing the light out of the foreground of the picture has an admirable effect. The landscape and lower division of the saints with the rainbow or thunder bolt, is so reflective and rich, as to equal Titian. Indeed, we should think that no landscape of this master surpasses this painting in force, relief, and color. It is Venetian.

St. Jerome, by Domenichino, is a glorious performance. The right of this picture, as you face it, is the best—indeed, grand; but Saint Jerome seems to kneel on nothing. The Saint delivering the sacrament is glorious, and the Deacon and sub-deacon equally so. We concluded our special examination of the museum paintings proper with that of the Incredulity of St. Thomas by Guercino. The countenance of our Lord in this picture comes more up to our idea of the Christ than any we ever saw—uniting virtue with intelligence, and awful repose with utmost feeling. It is exquisite in expression and grand in effect.

We were impatient to quit the museum, each of whose numerous paintings would endow an ordinary gallery, and we hastened to

The Sixtine Chapel.

the great work which Michael Angelo was compelled to perform for Giulio II., and the chief glory of the Renaissance. Imagine a vast plain ceiling, lighted by twelve windows, and divided from the side walls by a cornice. Time, the smoke of incense, the waxen tapers, and an explosion of gunpowder in the castle of St. Angelo, have done much to tone the work to a dusky and increase its mystery. Yet at this hour they do not appear pictures—they appear sculptures from the powerful incarnation and the bold relief of the pictures. This work has neither precedence nor sequence. To people so immense and lofty, a vault were enough to fill any but a giant soul with despair—yet we beheld the whole space filled with creations so grand and unique that they remain fixed on the mind like the first verses of the Bible, or the isolated peaks of Mt. Sinai on the plains of history. Sibyls and prophets are alternated. St. Augustine read the books of the Sibyls. In his enthusiasm he acted like Angelo—he placed them in the city of God. "Pertinent ad civitatem dei," he exclaimed. They predicted the coming of the Saviour. The prophets come from the desert, the caves of Jerusalem, and groves of Lebanon; the Sibyls from Persia, Africa, Greece, and the Tyrrhene sea; thus the aspirations of unaided reason and the consolatory hopes of the accredited messengers of truth are united together and blend as two Titanic choirs, whose combined strength support the roof from whence issue these paintings, unique from their size and the scriptural allegories and tragedies they depict.

Chaos submerged in shadows—the first light dawning over the waters, Adam sleeping profoundly—Eve newly created and awakening in the ecstasy of enchantment to the life which greets her—the first sin committed in the world, driving the first pair from Paradise, burdening the human heart with its first sorrow, and robbing it forever of peace and innocence—the deluge whirling its black waters of bitterness, illuminated by flashes of lightning, and swelled by the hurricane to the heights where the last men

climb to save themselves in the extremity of their despair—the sacrifice of Noah on the mountain top in gratitude for the perpetuity of the race—all grouped, all united—giants, sibyls, prophets, storms, hurricanes, floods—around that majestic and sublime figure of the eternal Father, who animates all these creatures by his breath, supports and governs them by his power, and irradiates their minds with the rays of His own wisdom! This is the grand combination; it were impossible to go into the particulars of these wonderful figures. Michael Angelo began the work a novice, ignorant even of the art of mixing the colors, and now that it is finished it remains the chief glory of Giulio II., and we can only marvel how the poor genius of man could ever have performed so much. We have seen artists, in mute contemplation before these frescoes, lift their arms in astonishment and shake their heads in despair as if saying, "We are incapable of copying this!"

When the vault of the Sixtine Chapel was finished Rome was sacked by the Spaniards and Germans, under command of the High Constable Bourbon. Religious fury animated the Germans. The Spaniards were drawn onward by the desire of pillage. The great riches of Rome, restored by eighty years of artistic labor, re clothed with marble, painted by Raphael and his disciples, and covered with statues, excited the cupidity of soldiers who fought not for glory, but for booty, and considered pillage the just harvest of the sword. The legions of Attila and Alaric, the Goths and Vandals never brought with them a bloodier saturnalia to the gates of Rome. The plunderers hacked down the pictures, filled sacks with ornaments, searched the churches for precious stones, celebrated their victory by drinking wine from the communion cups, beat cardinals, surmounted their soldier casques with mitres, clothed the *Curtiniores* with the robes of the Virgin, pronounced absurd sermons standing defiantly on heaps of dead and wounded, cut the ears from asses and placed them on the heads of the clergy, tortured many for the sake of ransom, and killed thousands with unheard of cruelties. Terrible night. Nunneries pillaged, pools of blood by the very altars of St. Peter, houses in flames, the while the horrors were increased by the rattle of muskets, the fall of ruins, the execrations of drunken soldiers, the supplications of terrified women, the death agony of the dying, and the silence of the dead left naked on the ensanguined stones—as if the Almighty had indeed visited sacrilegious Rome in vengeance—and these were the exterminating angels of the world!

Without the despair of Job we should not have had the balsam of the gospel, without the maledictions of Prometheus we could not have sat at the banquet of Plato, without the scepticism of the Sophists Socrates would not have revealed to us the secrets of the human conscience, without the pillage of Rome Michael Angelo would not have painted

The Universal Judgment.

It was the great tragedy just mentioned that gave the painter his inspiration. Long after having visited this painting, which covers the whole front end of the chapel, one remembers the stern justice of Jesus, the pity of Mary, the misery of the reprobated, the joy of the blessed. Beneath is the leaden Styx, on which the boat of Charon is plying freighted with immortal spirits, and on the left is the lurid light of Purgatory. Above are the dead in every stage of awakening at the blast of the angel's trump. Some are raising the marble of their sepulchres, others have scarcely acquired the power of motion or shaken the sleep from the sunken sockets of their mortal eyes, while others, agitated by a terrible uncertainty, are listening to the sentence of irrevocable judgment. To the right of Christ is a group of women already saved, and among them one is sublime—a mother who has just heard the judgment of mercy on her daughter. Angels look upon the doom of the incorrigible with melancholy in their faces. Below the angels the blessed recognize and embrace each other on the heights of the eternal city. In the centre Jesus, with arm uplifted in awful determination—the merciful Jesus in the righteous indignation of his slighted love, without heeding the prayers of his mother, pronounces the judgment of the lost. It is a spectacle never to be forgotten! But where the terrible genius of Michael Angelo shows itself in grandeur is in that Magara of the condemned, who fall awe stricken, in every contortion of misery into the flames of a bottomless hell, cursing and reviling, spitting horrors from their mouths, and struggling furiously and shudderingly at the first contact of their bodies with the molten lead of the eternal fire. It is a painting profound and awful enough to shake the nerves and furore the brain, and yet there is a touch of grim humor in it too. Down in the remote corner of hell is a strong face with enormous ears as of an ass. This is Biagio, master of ceremonies to Paul III., who complained

to the Pope of the nudity of Angelo's figures. As a punishment to Biagio he painted him as Midas in the depths of perdition! The master of ceremonies ran to complain to the Pope of the affront put upon his consequential person. "He has put me in the picture," he said weeping like a child. "I beg your holiness to take me out of that." "But where has he placed thee?" demanded the Pontiff. "In hell, your Holiness, in hell," replied Biagio tremulously. "If thou hadst been in purgatory," said the Pope, "I would have removed thee, but I have no authority whatever in hell!" And there he remains to this day!

Such is the great picture of Angelo—the most impressive we have ever beheld in any land. In it there are two grand ideas, the one plunged in obscurity, heard in the tempest of evil which has accursed our earth and the moaning of impotent creatures at the judgment bar of God, and the other, which looks to the light, repeats the harmony of the stars and keeps the sight fixed on the grace of the supreme God. We went forth from this painting, whose suggestions enveloped us with gloom and fell like a winding sheet of darkness about our brain, into the light of the glorious sun, and the luxuriance of the Roman Campagna. It is thus with great works of art. The strife of the elements, the terrible contrasts which abound in life, and divide even the invisible world, must find place in them. In the universal judgment by Angelo, this contrast appears in ultimate and fearful colors, and with a heart oppressed with sorrow, a brain heated with excitement, and by a natural contradiction of soul, we ever turn from the hell of time and eternity, to its heaven, and behold immortality conquering all the darkness and scourge of death, as the sun drives away the night, showing mortal man with her rosy fingers, like those of the Aurora of Homer, the mansions of eternity hidden among the common clouds of the future, and illuminated with the presence of God! L. M. C.

For the Central Presbyterian.

Our Opportunity.

BY REV. RICHARD M'ILWAINE, D. D.

The following extract from a letter of the Rev. Dr. Davies, Fayetteville, Ark., is suggestive. I am sure it will be read with interest and profit by many:

Dr. Davies says: This part of our State is improving rapidly. Emigrants are crowding in, and towns and villages are springing up as if by magic.

In company with Brother Houston, our evangelist, I visited Springdale, the next station on the railroad north of this place, the first of last week. It is a thriving village, and claims a population of about six hundred. It has grown up chiefly in the last year, since the completion of the railroad. Here we found about twenty Presbyterians, anxious to organize into a church, and to have regular preaching. Bro. Houston expects to visit Siloam this week, a city of the second class, which has sprung up around one of our numerous watering places, within the past two years. I do not think this place has ever been visited by one of our ministers. These examples will give you some idea of the work to be done here. I hope you will continue to urge upon the Church the importance of pushing more vigorously the Sustentation and the Evangelistic work. It is a golden opportunity for our Church all over this State just now. There should be no dallying. She should put men at commanding points, wherever they are needed, and not wait for the people to take the initiative. I hold that a similar policy ought to be pursued in our Home work, to that which is pursued in the Foreign. Look over the field and find out where we ought to have missionaries, and place them there, and sustain them until they can establish churches and create a demand among the people for the Gospel. This kind of work is needed all over the country, and the money and the labor invested in it, would yield a glorious return in an incredibly short time. Why can't our people be brought to see it, and to sustain the Home Mission cause, with their sympathies, their prayers, and their contributions, as it ought to be? Yours truly, S. W. DAVIES.

The statement of Dr. Davies in reference to North-western Arkansas, are equally applicable to many other portions of the field which lies open to our beloved Church. God has given us a glorious opportunity. Our territory is rapidly filling with an intelligent and thrifty population. Towns and cities are springing up all over the land. Openings for evangelistic work and for permanently establishing the ordinances of the gospel, are to be found on every hand. Calls for preachers and for aid in extending and establishing the Church, are coming to us every day. Our Christian people ought to awake to the great work lying at our doors. Men and means are greatly needed. We sadly feel the need of more ministers and of more money to sustain them. If our Christian people who have the means will only open their hearts and their purses, we confidently believe that the men will soon be found. The are to-day in our Church, at least fifty ministers—perhaps more—good and effective men in every respect, engaged in secular work for a support, who would cheerfully give it up and devote themselves wholly to the gospel ministry, if they could receive a bare support. At the same time, hundreds of weak churches are vacant and our institutions are large and increasing. Is not this a call upon those who have wealth to give

largely for the support of our home work? Can we expect the blessing of God while we allow his ministers to sit idle, for want of a support, and the destitute places of our Zion to go to waste? Ought not every member of our Church to arouse himself to do what he can for this great work? If these opportunities are neglected, they will soon pass away. These neglected populations are fast getting beyond our reach. Some of them will become attached to other churches. Some who might be reached by us, will be confirmed in sin and pass down to everlasting death. The moral and religious complexion of our country is being fixed. It is yet in its infancy. Its character is still in the formative state. The next few years will decide whether its type is to continue Christian, or whether infidelity and immorality are to obtain control. We believe that God intends this country to be a great factor in the Christianization of the world. If so, its population must be predominantly Christian. Every instinct of philanthropy, of patriotism and of Christianity calls upon us to do all we can to bless our own land throughout all its borders, with a pure and undefiled gospel, and to establish our beloved Church at every important centre of influence and population.

For the Central Presbyterian.

Financial—Sustentation.

The receipts during February were \$5,377.79, which is \$485.51 more than during the corresponding month of last year. Had as large a number of churches contributed as did last year, the increase would have been much larger.

A few churches have increased their collections largely, some giving as much as three or four times what they formerly did. Some which contributed in January have, during February, sent in liberal supplementary collections.

A number of individuals have also made generous donations—one as much as \$265, and others in smaller amounts. Quite a number of missionary societies and Sabbath Schools have given valuable help. The great falling off is in the number of collections and in the amounts received from some congregations. Seventy less churches contributed than during February of last year. *More than half the churches in cooperating Presbyteries are yet to be heard from.* It is hoped that these will try to send in their collections before the 31st inst., when our books, for the present fiscal year, close. If they will act promptly, and if brethren, who are able to do so, will add their liberal aid, we will yet gather a considerably increased fund for the weak Presbyteries and churches, and be able to report gratifying progress to the General Assembly. But promptness and liberality are both needed to secure this result.

RICHARD M'ILWAINE,
Secretary and Treasurer.

Baltimore, March 2d, 1882.

Earnest Workers.

HANCOCK, Md., Feb. 22d, 1882.

Messrs. Editors.—Our minister came to us from the far West, and brought the working spirit of the western people to us. Our little congregation has accomplished more than they thought was possible. This winter we have put a roof on, painted, and carpeted our church, and bought a manse. We have about twelve hundred dollars, but need six or seven hundred more. Among many churches, ours is one of the few which belongs to the Southern Church. Our territory is so limited, not being more than two miles wide, with a church on each side of us in Pennsylvania and Virginia, the one about three miles north, the other six miles south. We have been working very hard, but find we are obliged to call upon friends abroad. The little children have been working, and were able to carpet the pulpit and send money to the missions; but our minister urged the necessity of further work, and though we are young, thinks we can do much more. So I write to the little children's societies of other churches to aid us. Any small sum would be acceptable, were it the widow's mite.

Any one wishing to aid us will gladden the hearts of a little struggling band. Direct to Rev. Mr. Stevenson, Hancock, Washington county, Md.

HELEN BRIDGES,

Secretary of the Earnest Workers.

Late at Church.—Before beginning his sermon in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian church last Sunday morning the Rev. Dr. Hall administered a rebuke to those of his congregation who, in accordance with the old aphorism, deem it better to come late than not to come at all. He spoke strongly on this subject for some time, urging the members of his church to occupy their seats in time to afford an opportunity of seating strangers, who, he said, often waited half an hour before finding accommodation. He reminded the late comers that they were not to suppose the preaching was the one great thing in the service, but that they came there to worship.

Central Presbyterian.

WEDNESDAY, March 8, 1882.

A Prayer.

Weary, weary on the road, Heaven seems far away, Saviour, take my heavy load, Be Thou, my earthly stay. Thy strength is needed for my stay, Thick darkness hovers o'er me, I hear Thy voice, "I am the way," Dear Saviour, go before me.

Alone, alone, I cannot go, To follow Thee, I'll humbly try, Say midst the raging storms that blow—"Be not afraid," 'tis I. My stumbling feet would gladly climb The "Rock, taller than I," My fainting spirit, seeks to find, The promised rest on high.

No other guide I need, If I have only Thee, Thy precious promises I plead, Comforter—comfort me. R. P. A.

For Country Churches.

BY REV. H. H. HAWES. Standing near a river, not long since, I saw that it was many times broader and deeper than usual. How did this come to pass? It was the work of many little snow-flakes and rain-drops, all working together—each doing its part. No one flake of snow, not one drop of rain failed to fall because it was so small and could do so little. That freshet taught the power of little. If our country churches (and all others) would accept the teaching, there are few which would be unable to support a pastor. A man of small means thinks: "I am not able to subscribe even five dollars; for I rarely have that amount to spare." Now let that man at once subscribe ten or twenty dollars! He can pay that and more! How? Not all at once, but little at a time. Make the payments once a week, or once a month. Pay two dollars per month and you will pay twenty-four dollars by the end of the year. "But I rarely see two dollars per month. My money does not come in so often." Then work for it. Suppose you want some sugar, or coffee, or a pair of boots. You have not the money. Yet you must have the article. How do you get around this difficulty? I have seen it done many times. You hitch up your team; go to the woods; get a load of wood, and sell it. With the money so obtained you buy goods from the store. Pay your preacher in the same way. Give him the benefit of the sale of a load of wood, once or twice per month. "But I live too far from town—cannot sell wood." Granted; yet this plea does not hold when you want to make purchases. Somehow, and by selling something you manage to get in supplies when needed. If you must buy and pay for a pair of boots, you manage to do it, no matter how far from town. Now then, as you manage to get money for other things, just in that way manage to get it for your church. Work for it! Plan for it! Then you will do it. Many never pay anything just because they will not plan and work to do it. Butter, eggs, bacon, mutton, hay, grain, etc., etc., bring money for other purposes. And money gotten thus will be just as good for paying a pastor's salary. But people do not seem to realize this. It must be a special kind of money, coming in a special way, and in larger amounts, which is to be used for church support. By this idea the Devil cheats country churches out of their preachers. But suppose you want to get rid of five hundred dollars. You take the amount to church some Sabbath, lay it on the table, and ask every person present to take five dollars each. How quickly and easily the whole sum disappears. But how hard to raise five hundred dollars for your minister! Nay, it can be done in churches which now pay almost nothing. Reverse the process. Get each one who attends your church to give, instead of take away, (as above) five dollars. Just think! It will be not quite ten cents per week for each one! A great many country congregations have more than one hundred members. In very few of these, are there any persons who cannot pay far more than ten cents per week. The only thing needful is that every one will act! Every trip to town, costs a man who takes his dram, at least twenty cents for drink. He lives near town; goes once a week; pays ten dollars per year (at least) for his drams. Does he feel that? The drams? Yes. The money? No. He pays this ten dollars per year easily—never misses it. Cannot church members pay, every one, as much to King Jesus as that man pays to King Alcohol? What is the truth? This: that many a church member who declares he is not able to pay a subscription of ten dollars per year for the gospel, pays, without feeling or even knowing it, more than double that amount for his drams. This is only for illustration, yet it is true. Now if each one will only find the small change for Christ's work, as regularly and easily as the moderate drinkers find it for their drams, every trouble about sustaining the church will disappear. The man who says he cannot find small change once a week for Jesus, will manage to find it for other

purposes. Now he who can find it for other purposes, can find it for Jesus too if he will. Many need to understand that ten dollars paid in sums of ten cents per week, will be as truly acceptable to the Master, as the whole sum, paid at once, would be, and will accomplish as much. Plan and work for small sums. Pay them in to your treasurer as often as you can. Let him credit them on your subscription, and you will be astonished at your own liberality, when the year is ended. Money to sustain the gospel must be planned and worked for like any other money.

For the Central Presbyterian.

Revivals.

There was never greater need of a revival of religion in the churches than now. The cry comes from earnest souls from North and South, of the need of a revival. West Chester Presbytery in New York City, recently spent three and a half hours in fervent prayer for a revival. Dr. Hoge, of Richmond, is quoted as saying: "All is changed now; so that North, South, East, West, there is but one thing men want, money, to be made not by healthy trade or profession, but by speculations . . . and men are intensely excited about things that are to perish in the using, and have no wish to be otherwise, or to do or get the righteousness of God. If we could keep this out of the Church—but we can not. The members of the Church have caught the contagion, and it has acted and reacted on them, and with what consequences? Why the Church is more worldly than was ever known in this country."

And it is not seen in money-getting alone. It is worldliness in every form. Some souls seek wealth, some pleasure, some vice. But everywhere there is a sad neglect of spiritual duties and privileges, and of deep religious interest or principle. Secular papers take too much of God's day. Railroads run and Christians travel. Letters come and go.—Street-cars pass crowded. Prayer meetings are dull places, but public entertainments are very entertaining. Growth in grace among Christians is exceeding little. It may be said this is an age of religious activity in missions and otherwise. There are, it is true, many active, devoted, Christians, but how many among the seven million church members? True our contributions to God's cause grow apace, but not to compare with the increase in the wealth and numbers of the Church. Some of the wealthy members are devoted servants of Him, who though he were rich, yet for our sakes became poor. Yet how few are there whose aim in business, whose motive in life, is to advance the kingdom of God—to live for Christ! Sanctified and consecrated Christians could be counted on the fingers in any congregation. This reacts on the world, and the number of persons converted to Christ has for several years been on a steady decline.

The report from all churches is the same, a decrease of conversions. In the Northern Presbyterian Church the number added on profession has steadily decreased for several years. In 1877 there were 5,172 less than in 1876. In 1878 there were 10,791 less than in 1877. In 1879 there were 3,081 less than in 1878. In 1880 there were 2,358 less than in 1879. In 1881 there were 1,494 less than in 1880. And this in an increasing population. 17,724 less additions in 1881 than in 1877, and 22,896 less than in 1876.

The Methodist Church shows a great falling off also, I think. The Protestant Episcopal Church, according to Whittaker's Church Almanac, has not gained as much in 1881 as in previous years. There is a decrease of 3,000 in baptisms for one year.

A recent meeting of ministers in Chicago reported a serious failure of the churches in that city to grow with the population.

And reports from our own Church in 17 cities show but a small increase, and in 19 churches in these, the membership is less than it was five years ago. In 1876 our Church added on examination 7,693; in 1877 they numbered 6,302; in 1878, added 6,375; in 1879, added 6,351; in 1880, added 5,920; and in 1881, added only 4,839. While the decline has not been invariable or very great some years, it is less in 1881 than 1876 by 2,854.

The Baptist Church in New Jersey shows a decline in actual membership for the past year.

We need a revival in our churches to save those outside our church. Says Dr. Cuyler, "Our churches have got to do a great deal of subsiding as well as praying for showers, before conversions to Christ will become general and abundant. The votaries of this world are not likely to embrace a religion which is so presented to them as to have no power and no attraction. They don't see enough of Christ in it. When Christ is lifted up in the hearts and prayers—and lives of his people, He will draw men unto Him."

(a) God will not honor worldly Christians by sending His Holy Spirit to work through them for the salvation of sinners. (b) The moral power of Christianity to draw sinners is Christ, and usually Christ is seen in the human book—his followers' lives. It is not the doctrine of a crucified Jesus, but it is the crucified Jesus that wins souls. Sinners never yet kept away a blessing where God's Church exists. His Church may do it. But sinners are always enemies, and only enemies till saved. It is the conduct of the

Church that has caused the decline in conversions. Sinners are not too hard for the Holy Ghost; are not harder than those who rejected and slew Christ; than those of Corinth. The world is no worse now than then; hostile opposition no greater. And were the Church as pure, as believing, as consecrated to-day as it was on Pentecost, we might see as great triumphs. The Church is too full of the world to be full of the Holy Ghost. Too much clogged with worldliness to be a proper medium to convey the spiritual power of God to a lost world. The Church must be fully magnetized with Christ to draw sinners to Him.

Again, we need a revival because the candidates for the ministry are decreasing. The Protestant Episcopal Church reports 40 less candidates for orders. While our denomination has organized 450 new churches in ten years, our ministry has only increased 29 in five years. In 1877 our candidates numbered 176. In 1881 only 144. Our licentiates 83, now 72. Our ordinations in 1877 were 41, and in 1878 there were 55, but in 1881 only 28. Our licensures in 1877 were 52, but in 1881 only 29. With a growing Church, with a rapidly increasing population, and hence also increasing in number of churches, all our agencies for supplying them with gospel ministers are decreasing. The cause is the spirit of worldliness, producing fewer conversions of our intellectual youth, and less consecration on the part of those converted. The remedy is a revival of religion. For this, my brethren, let us all labor and pray day and night.

(From the Presbyterian.)

Is the Presbyterian Church Holding Her Own?

In setting forth the benefits of a liturgical service, and the power of the church that retains it, Professor Hopkins makes the following statement: "It is very largely due to this fact that of all the sects in the United States the Episcopal is growing the most rapidly at the present time. It is forming new congregations and organizing new dioceses with extraordinary rapidity. On the other hand, the Presbyterian Church is almost stationary. It requires a close calculation to show that she is even holding her own." If set forms of prayer are the best suited to the religious heart and life of the worshipper, then the church that possesses these must in one way or another draw the greatest number, and other things being equal, must have more spiritual energy and aggressive power. The wants of man's moral and spiritual nature are the same, and if a liturgy is good to-day it must have been of equal value yesterday in captivating worshippers and enlarging the number of adherents. Now is this true of the Episcopal Church? Has she stood in the van among the different denominations in the United States, nearly all of which are non-liturgical? and is she, where she is endowed with such vast resources of wealth, influence, and State endowments as in England, holding her own against the churches that have no prescribed prayers? We say no to both of these. In our own country the following is the relation which the leading denominations hold or have held to each other at different periods.

In 1775 they stood as follows:—1, Congregational; 2, Baptist; 3, Episcopal; 4, Presbyterian. In 1800—1, Baptist; 2, Congregational; 3, Methodist; 4, Presbyterian; 5, Episcopal. In 1850—1, Methodist; 2, Baptist; 3, Presbyterian; 4, Congregational; 5, Disciples; 6, Episcopal. In 1870—1, Methodist; 2, Baptist; 3, Presbyterian; 4, Disciples; 5, Congregational; 6, Lutheran; 7, Episcopal. In 1880—1, Methodist; 2, Baptist; 3, Presbyterian; 4, Disciples; 5, Lutheran; 6, Congregational; 7, Episcopal. Here, then, in a little over one hundred years the Episcopal Church has fallen from the third to the seventh place, while the Presbyterian Church has advanced from the fourth to the third place. In 1800 Dr. Baird and others estimated the roll of communicants of the leading churches as follows:—Baptists, Regular and Free-will, 103,000; Congregational, 75,000; Methodist, 64,894; Presbyterian, 40,000; and Episcopal, 16,000. In 1880, placing under each denomination the various divisions of the same, and we have the following figures, as given by Dr. Dorchester:—Methodists, 3,574,485; Baptists, 2,452,878; Presbyterians, 1,173,705; Disciples or Campbellites, 591,821; Congregational, 384,332; Episcopal and Reformed Episcopal, 347,781. The Disciples might be placed in the Baptist column, as they are immersionists. We have then 8,177,225 communicants in these leading bodies who have no set forms in public worship, to 347,781 who have a regular liturgical services; or in other words, in 1800 they stood to each other as seventeen and a half to one, and in 1880 as twenty-three and a half to one, which surely does not imply the wonderful power and success of liturgical forms.

We come to the second point of the Professor's assertion, and with this we are more deeply concerned. The Church of our fathers, and the Church that we love, "on the other hand," he says, "is almost stationary." We are glad she is not stationary, but is making some little progress—but O! so little—"almost stationary." But fearful that he had said too much in favor of a Church that has no liturgy he qualifies this statement, after mature thought and careful examination of the figures, and says, "It re-

quires a close calculation to show that she is even holding her own." He does not affirm that she is holding her own. It is a matter of doubt. Still he is willing, after a searching analysis, to give the dear old Church the benefit of the doubt, and hold that she is just about stationary. How long this will continue he does not say, but from the tenor of his article it can only be for a very short period. We too have been making a close calculation, and whilst we find much in the figures to grieve us, we did not find enough to make us write a jeremiad, or to believe that our Church was on the high road to ruin. After sitting with the Professor under the juniper tree, conning over the figures, we were inclined, after seeing the results, to sing the long-metre doxology, and we hope that he will join us. Take the first decade of our Reunited Church, and as the Episcopal Church covers the whole country we will, in order to make a fair comparison, add the Southern Presbyterian Church for the same period. In 1870 the Episcopal Church reported 207,762 communicants; the Presbyterian Church, North and South, 528,575. In 1880 the former had, with the Reformed Church (Episcopal), 347,781, and the latter 698,699, or a net gain of 170,124, which is about one-half the membership of the Episcopal body in 1880, including both wings; or if he has limited the close calculation to his own branch, the Presbyterian Church North, the net gain in the same period is 132,110. These figures do not show a very rapid process of extinction.

We admit that the Episcopal Church is growing, and that rapidly; but not solely or mainly for the reason stated. TRUE BLUE.

Must Pagan Nations Wait?

So some are saying, and in saying it they by no means intend to deny that the heathen need the gospel, nor that it is the duty of Christians to reach all nations at the earliest practicable moment. But the heathen must wait, they say, because there are just at present other interests of special urgency to which the energies of the Church should be directed. There are religious and educational enterprises close at hand which appeal strongly to the sympathies of the Christian and the patriot. This is a critical period in the religious life of our country, and does not Christian prudence require that in this crisis all our strength be concentrated upon the work at home, in order that when the crisis is past we may undertake with vigor the work of evangelizing the world? Some pastors and others have been led to reason in this way, and hence the people in certain churches have heard an utterance from the pulpit which strikes them as new and strange: "the heathen must wait."

Such an utterance is both ill-judged and wrong; ill-judged because it is not in this way that men will be led to give for the home work; wrong, because it proceeds on the utterly false assumption that the churches of this day are not able to give both for home and foreign work all and more than they are now asked to contribute. That there is need of enlargement in the gifts of Christians for the evangelization of our own land no intelligent Christian can deny. The millions given in recent years for Christian education in the United States; the more than a million dollars now given year by year for various branches of evangelistic work in our land have not fully met the requirements in the case. There is call for yet larger giving. Let the claims of this work be pressed with all vigor. It is a prime necessity for the world's welfare that our land should be thoroughly Christianized. But the assumption on the part of any one that in order to meet these needs efforts in behalf of unevangelized nations must be deferred for a time, borders on the ludicrous. Does any one imagine that the contributions for foreign missions make such a drain on the charities of our churches that there is not enough left to meet other calls? Are Christians so impoverishing themselves by giving to the work in India and China and Africa that they have no more to give, so that it is necessary to check their zeal and allow them to replenish their exhausted resources? Must the heathen wait because there will not be enough left to help them if we do what we should for our own? *

They have waited a great while. When will their time come? Must they wait until our churches have houses of stone, beautiful in architecture, with all appliances which minister to taste and comfort? Must they wait until professing disciples of him who pleased not himself shall have grown richer, and so can afford to give each one half cent a day to send abroad the blessed tidings without such a heavy strain upon their charity? Seriously, it is not absurd to suggest that the churches are now overtaking themselves for foreign missions, and that they must be relieved from pressure in behalf of China and Japan—a pressure too heavy to be borne? As yet the Church is giving for the unevangelized only the crumbs that fall from her table. A tenth part of what her members spend in needless luxuries would double the present efficiency of all foreign missionary boards. She has means enough for all necessities at home and abroad. It should be the aim of all pastors to touch the springs of benevolence in the heart, to inspire to Christ-like love and self-sacrifice. The Church of to-day needs to be told not

that she is giving too much here or there, but rather that she is not giving a tithe of what she might. Were the spirit of her Master in her she could fill all the treasuries for home and foreign work to overflowing, and be all the better for her giving. To tell her that the heathen can wait is bad policy and still worse Christianity.—Missionary Herald.

Died for Us.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us.—1 Thess. v: 9, 10.

Died for us? Who else ever did as much for you? Who else ever loved you as much? Only think, now, what it really means, because it is really true; and surely it is most horribly ungrateful when one for whom such a great thing has been done does not even think about it.

You would think it hard to be punished for some one else's fault; but this is exactly what your dear Saviour did—let himself be punished for your fault instead of you.

Suppose some cruel man were going to cut off your leg, what would you think if your brother came and said, "No; chop mine off instead?" But that would not be dying for you. And "our Lord Jesus Christ died" for you.

It was the very most he could do to show his exceeding great love to you. He was not obliged to go through with it; he might have come down from the cross at any moment. The nails could not have kept him there an instant longer than he chose; his love and pity were the real nails that nailed him fast to the cross till the very end till he could say, "It is finished," till he "died" for us.

It was not only because he loved his Father that he did it, but because he loved us; for the text goes on: "Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we might live together with him." So he loved us so much that he wanted us to live together with him; and as no sin can enter his holy and beautiful home, he knew our sins must be taken away before we could go there. And only blood could take away sin, only death could atone for it; and so he bled that we might be washed in his most precious blood; he died, "that whether we wake or sleep, we might live together with him."

"There is a word I fain would speak, Jesus died! O eyes that weep and hearts that break, Jesus died! No music from the quivering string Could such sweet sounds of rapture bring; Oh, may I always love to sing, 'Jesus died!' Jesus died!"

Frances Ridley Havergal.

Congregational Singing versus Choirs.

While we cannot coincide in all that our contributor has said in his very readable article on "Congregational singing and choirs," yet we are free to confess that several of his points against congregational singing, as it often exists, are well taken. As for us, although we have spent over twenty years in the choir gallery, and with choirs of no little repute, yet we are enthusiastically in favor of congregational singing, either with or without the aid of a trained choir, and it has become our honest belief that any substitute for it falls far short of the divine command "Let all the people praise the Lord." If the people can be helped to praise God by a choir, that is well and good, but that any choir should be allowed to monopolize the song worship of a church, is something so utterly against the true method of worshipping God with the heart and voice, that no true Christian, be he cultured musician, or only a psalm singer, can consent to it.

That the so-called congregational singing in many churches is indeed truly terrible, is alas too true, but that the so-called choir singing of a large majority of both city and country churches is even worse than terrible, is unfortunately quite as recognized a fact. It is therefore only a choice of evils, and this writer is one who can endure the "undisciplined hue and cry" of congregational singing, even at its worst, but who fails to possess his soul in patience under the average "select possee in the organ loft." And he is also old fashioned enough to believe that the first is far more acceptable to God than the latter. A really good choir, directed by a Christian leader, who is in full sympathy with the congregation, and whose only aim is to lead them in their song worship, is a blessing to any church, but where one such can be found, there are a hundred that are not as positive blessings as they might be. Our belief is that it is far easier to organize good congregational singing, than to organize a good choir, and we have yet to see the congregation that cannot, with comparatively little effort, be taught to sing the songs of Zion in a manner acceptable even to musical ears. Give us, if possible, congregation and choir, but if not the two, then let us have the congregation alone, including Sister Screechowl, Brother Bo-reas and Mr. Monoton Bulldoze, if all three can be found in one congregation—of which we have our doubts. But, better there, where they can be drowned out by other and more melodious voices, than in the choir where they are rendered more unendurable by their efforts to sing music that requires the skill of gifted singers to make effective.—Southern Musical Journal.

It is common for those that are indulgent to their own sin, to be severe against the sins of others.