

...have gone for three
...and, as veterans, expect to
...friends in Pennsylvania on a
...of thirty-five days. God bless
...give them a good time.

A. M. STEWART.

OUR WASHINGTON LETTER.

On last Sabbath, two of the most distinguished clergymen of the country preached in the Capitol; Dr. Bellows in the hall of Congress, and Rev. Dr. Storrs of Brooklyn in Rev. Dr. Gurley's and Dr. Sunderland's churches. I did not hear the first, but I understood his theme was: "The great duties of the hour." It was timely and valuable. He spoke of our obligation to the colored race, and of the necessity of wise Christian legislation for their benefit and protection. The Dr. went out of his way in speaking of the army, to defend the chaplains, and to say that their labors had been under-rated, and that the service had been of untold benefit. Addressing, as Dr. Bellow's did, many of the first men of the nation, his sermon must exert an influence on future legislation.

I heard Dr. Storrs at night in Dr. Sunderland's church. I had expected to see a pale, nervous student, but was glad to behold when he rose, a broad-chested full-faced man, with abundance of clerical muscle. His manner in the pulpit had none of that style and studied impressment I had anticipated, but was simple. His voice is clear and distinct, but not musical, and has none of the harmonious flow of one who has made oratory his study. His subject was one of the deepest interest to thoughtful and inquiring minds: "Why God hides himself behind the veil of his works, and puts forth the mightiest energies in methods impalpable to our senses." The sermon was written with great clearness, and its diction was faultless.

DOINGS IN CONGRESS.

The case of Senator Bayard has again been before the Senate, Mr. Bayard being the only Senator refusing to take the oath of fidelity to the Constitution. In a long speech, he contended that the Senate had no right to demand such an oath from a representative of a sovereign State; that the fact of his election entitled him to a seat unquestioned. This view was answered with moderation and wisdom by Mr. Collamer and Mr. Howard. The test vote has not yet been taken. I think the Senate will be compelled to require Mr. Bayard to yield to the law made for all others, or more speedily hasten to a retirement which, in the end, most certainly awaits him. His manner now has none of the hauteur and self-satisfied swell which looked out of every feature and oozed out of every pore in the first days of the rebellion. Mr. Davis' case has gone into the hands of the committee on the Judiciary.

The time of the Senate has been mainly occupied with discussions of the military bill. This is most important for the future, and I am glad that so far, legislation promises to be earnest and yet prudent. I believe clergymen will be exempted from military service in the contemplated draft.

In the lower house, the Finance bill has been under discussion. The bill as reported by the committee, has passed the lower house. It is confidently expected that this will increase the revenue more than one hundred millions. The tax on whiskey alone will give to the Treasury fifty millions. This tariff on liquors will make drinking an expensive luxury, which the poor and common soldier cannot often, nor long indulge in.

The debate on this tax brought out some most interesting facts. Judge Kelley of your city, distinguished himself in a speech of stinging keenness, and fine moral tone. Cox of Ohio, Wood of New York, Voorhes of Indiana, of course opposed a law so uncongenial to the tastes of friends and constituents at home.

But opposition they knew was fruitless, and they did not weary the house by long speeches. To do them justice, the spirit of the opposition is more manly and just than last winter. Even Fernando is immeasurably more reasonable than Vallandigham. But from all such men, may divine mercy deliver the republic.

THE REBEL ARMY.

The number of deserters from the rebel army is now unusually great. More than one hundred or this class of men come within our lines every week, among whom there are officers. They say they are tired of the war and hopeless of its future. No doubt the President's Amnesty Proclamation induces many to forsake their miserable companions, and hasten to enjoy its benefits.

On Friday last, a very musketry firing was heard on the Rapidan by our pickets, of such a character as to lead to the conclusion that it was volley after volley in a contest among the rebels themselves, probably the effort on a large scale to desert.

J. J. M.
Washington, January 23d, 1863.

THANKSGIVING is good, but thanksgiving is better.—M. Henry.

[Specially Reported.]
VOLUNTEER LABORERS WANTED IMMEDIATELY FOR THE ARMY.
AN IMPORTANT MEETING OF THE U. S. CHRISTIAN COMMISSION.

At the urgent appeals coming up from the camps and hospitals, especially in the army of the Potomac, for Christian laborers, a call was issued by the Christian Commission for a meeting of the clergy of Philadelphia, to consider the want, and as far as possible to provide for it. On Monday, January 18th, in the midst of a violent rain, a few ministers of Christ gathered at the Commission Rooms, No. 11 Bank street, and had the case presented to them. The necessarily small attendance made it advisable to adjourn till Thursday afternoon, the 21st inst.

The adjourned meeting was attended by over one hundred of the clergy of the city. The stamp of solemnity appeared to be on every feature. All felt the sacredness of the call and the cause for which they were gathered. Dr. Hodgson, of the M. E. Church, was in chair. He called up Dr. Kennard, of the Baptist Church, to lead them at the throne of grace. Fervent and impetuous prayer ascended for the divine blessing. At the request of the chairman, Mr. Stuart, President of the Commission, then stated the object of the meeting, and briefly impressed its claims upon the ministers of Christ present. He said that the Christian Commission had been laboring now for nearly two years to bless the soldier and the sailor. As far as Providence has given it the means and the men, it had been extending to them such creature comforts, in connection with the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it had been entrusted with. How far it had done this work would be seen from the annual report to be presented a week hence at the Commission's second anniversary meeting. Their work had really grown to wonderful proportions. The amount of good, wholesome, religious reading matter distributed, for instance, has astonished even the officers of the Commission, as it has been summed up in the preparation of the report. Between five and six hundred thousand copies of the Word of God have been distributed through the munificence of the American Bible Society. Two or three million copies of the religious newspapers of the leading denominations of the land have been scattered among our soldiers, besides millions of pages of tracts, and good books.

Since the 14th of May, 1861, when the Commission may be considered as having first entered upon its work, we have relied, as you are aware, mainly upon volunteer delegates, ministers of the gospel, Christian laymen, business and professional men, who have left their homes and gone down into this great work. They have distributed hospital stores, reading-matter, preached to, and talked and prayed with the men, and comforted, strengthened and blessed them, in a way that cannot be described, and none but those who have been in the work can have any idea of. They have preached the gospel not only several times on the Sabbath, but have held prayer-meetings and preaching services on every week day, and to immense crowds of earnest, solemn listeners.

In this way they have aided faithful chaplains, and supplemented government supplies, and God has blessed their self-sacrificing, though delightful labors, with the conversion of thousands of souls. We have a report, just received, from one single station alone, showing that over one thousand souls have been converted there. We have sent out fifteen hundred to sixteen hundred of these volunteer delegates, who have given service mainly for six weeks. We have over one hundred in the field to-day, ministers of every denomination, laboring from the banks of the Potomac and Fortress Monroe to New Orleans, and up the Mississippi, meeting the delegates as they come down from the western field, thus completing the circle, and grasping each others' hands, exchanging congratulations and thanksgivings over the great work which God has enabled them to do.

But for the present special call. A glorious work is now going on in many camps. The utmost solemnity characterizes the meetings for prayer and praise. They are nightly crowded with men eager for the gospel. They are gathered there by scores and hundreds, in the coldest nights of winter. I myself counted eight hundred or one of the stormiest nights of this inclement winter, waiting on the preached word, and hungering and thirsting to know more of the good news!

Now, it is to be expected that the army will soon move; soon this opportunity of doing the soldier good for time and eternity will have forever passed away. The men are impressive to religious truth. There never was such a grand opportunity. At least fifty ministers of Christ of this city are wanted to go in and reap the harvest already ripe to be gathered. Impetuous requests come to us from the men themselves and from our faithful delegates. The want must be met. We are confident that this appeal will meet a free response from the ministers of Christ in Philadelphia, who have ever been found ready for every good word work.

Letters of regret at absence from the meeting were read by the Secretary, when the Rev. C. P. Lyford, delegate of the Commission, who had just come from Camp Convalescent, was called upon for a word. He told a wonderful story of the work of grace going on in that camp, and spoke of the instant and great need of laborers to enter in and enjoy the rich work of husbanding souls into the Lord's harvest. He said that every single day for four months there had been three religious meetings in that camp; and so great had been their interest that if we cast an average of the number who had come forward for prayers every night, it would, without doubt, reach from fifty to one hundred. Not a single day since the 18th of March last, has passed without some souls having been converted in the camp. In a meeting held last Saturday night, sixty-four men rose on their feet on being called, and testified that they had found Christ in the army.

The natural appeal from facts like these was made with apparent effect upon the noble body assembled. The Commission's Secretary, the Rev. W. E. Boardman still further explained the nature of the work, and the imperative call. He stated the remarkable fact that of the seventy-five stations in the Army of the Potomac, established by the Christian Commission, as far as he could learn, there never had been known one from the time their tent had been pitched and their station set,—from the very beginning of its history, upon which God had not poured out his Spirit! He thought that there had never been such a voice of God out of heaven to the Christian church and Christian ministers as was now sounded in their ears, to enter in and occupy this ground.

The Rev. Dr. Nevins suggested that those pastors who could go, be sent on this glorious mission, with the assurance that their pulpits be supplied in their absence, for two or three Sabbaths, by those pastors who could not leave their charges. The Rev. J. Addison Henry asked what had become of the chaplains. The Secretary of the Commission replied that the regular army chaplains, so far as he knew, were at their posts, doing everything for Christ and for the souls of the men under them. But in the Army of the Potomac, for which this call had now come up, the regiments were not one-third, not more than one-half supplied. Besides, the work contemplated could not be done by the chaplains, from their official connection with the army. The term of service for which ministerial delegates would be desired was for two weeks at least, leaving, if necessary, only one Sabbath's absence from their pulpits—though three to four full weeks with two or three Sabbaths' absence would be most acceptable.

Dr. Jones spoke in terms of grateful surprise at the news of God's glorious working among the soldiers that they had heard. He was glad of the suggestion that those who remained at home should supply the vacant pulpits of the brethren who went. He would vouch for one ministerial brother as a delegate, under the arrangement proposed.

Rev. Albert Barnes spoke warmly in favor of the plan. He believed it would injure no congregation to allow their pastor to enter upon this great mission. It would enlarge the pastor's heart, fill him with new zeal, fire him with a new devotion to the cause of Christ and perishing souls. It would in every way be a benefit to both pastor and people. He himself was laboring under age and physical hindrances, but if he was a young man he would wish for no more desirable or delightful field of labor for the Master.

Rev. Messrs. McIlvaine, Bayard, and others spoke in favor of this special call of Providence upon the Christian ministers of Philadelphia; and Chaplain Glider, from the Army of the Cumberland, in forcible words, corroborating and going beyond the statements of the need of other labor besides that of the chaplaincy, to come fully up to the work of Christ in the army. He had ever welcomed the Christian Commission's laborers, as his most hearty friends and supporters in spreading the gospel. Without their books, and tracts, and papers, and the personal, untiring efforts of their delegates, how could that be accomplished which they now had reason to thank God for? But the chaplaincy had not been a failure. He had abundant testimony to its restraining and elevating influence over the men.

Enough had been said. All gladly admitted the necessity and the duty in this case—as also the privilege. Several ministers present at once gave their names, to the number of seventeen or eighteen; while several others expressed the hope and belief that in a few days they also could give the answer to go on this sacred errand.

On motion, a committee of two from each denomination represented, was appointed to confer with the ministerial brethren, and urge the subject—to report at as early a date as possible.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN INDIA.

Mr. Editor.—From the last issue of your paper we learn that in Kolapoor, India, Rev. Mr. Wilder commenced the erection of a church about the 1st of November, 1863. Kolapoor is a city of 40,000 inhabitants, and the centre of the kingdom of the same name, of 600,000 people, without a Christian church of any kind, save this which Mr. Wilder is erecting. In the city are 252 heathen temples, and moral darkness so thick "that it may be felt." Mr. Wilder went out in 1860 to resume his labors, after an absence of some five years. He left in 1855, completely broken down in health; but in his absence the mission was abandoned by the Board and the chapel sold. Mr. Wilder returned without connexion with the Board, and has thus far been sustained by those who knew him and felt sufficient interest in his mission to support it. A number of our Sabbath-schools are among the regular contributors. We can think at this moment of the following: Clinton street, Western, Buttonwood street, Arch street, Mr. Chambers, Clinton street Mission, Tabor, First Church Mission, also the Ladies' Society First Church, and a number of individuals. The Presbytery of Champlain, in New York State, to which Mr. Wilder belongs, also send regular contributions, also churches and Sabbath-schools in New Jersey and elsewhere: Mr. and Mrs. Wilder found the little church they had left five years

before, scattered by removal or death of the members; but they already have a little church established, with regular preaching at their dwelling-house in the suburbs, to an audience of 100. Six heathens have already been admitted to membership, and more are waiting for admission. They have in operation, five schools with 300 scholars, who are taught daily from the Bible and Catechism. They also learn our Sabbath-school Hymns with the same tunes used by us. Mrs. Wilder has a school of heathen girls, and a "Bible-reading woman" is employed part of the time to read to the women, and thus second Mrs. W.'s arduous work.

For this little church, Mr. Wilder proposes to build a habitation. He says that he has not half enough money to complete it, but he trusts the funds will be forthcoming. We would remind those who love this mission, to send on their subscriptions to Rev. A. E. Campbell, D.D., Bible House, New York, who attends to remitting the funds as he has orders from Mr. Wilder. Thus every dollar contributed goes direct to the mission without any expensive arrangements for collecting funds and managing the affairs, as Dr. Campbell's attention is bestowed gratuitously, entirely. Let us foster this little Presbyterian Church far away in India, in the very midst of the blackness and darkness of heathenism. Can we not give it some material assistance, and cheer good Bro. Wilder's heart by sending him money now when he needs it to rear his little church, so far separated from the church and from sympathizing friends. Let us all take stock in this "First Presbyterian Church of Kolapoor, India."

G. W. M.

PRESBYTERY OF GENEVA.

ON MINISTERIAL SUPPORT, CARD-PLAYING AND DANCING.

The Presbytery of Geneva, at its annual meeting held at Seneca Falls, N. Y., Jan. 12th, 1864, adopted the following minute and directed that it should be read on the Sabbath to all the congregations under their charge:

1. It is desirable that a regular and sufficient income should be secured in every congregation to meet its annual current expenses, so that no arrears may exist, and no obligations be left uncancelled.
2. It is among the severest of a minister's trials to find his congregation unable or unwilling to meet the installments due to him, regularly and cheerfully.
3. It is obviously just and proper that the members of the congregations should contribute in proportion to the means which the great Head of the Church has put into their hands.
4. As the most equitable, satisfactory and easy method of securing an amount sufficient to meet the current expenses of the congregations, the Presbytery would recommend the following viz:
 1. Let an assessment be placed upon the seats in the church edifice according to their locality or eligibility, in the form of an annual rent to be paid quarterly in advance.
 2. In case of seats being owned as private property, let it be in any case, the privilege of the owners to take such seats at their appraisal in preference to any other person.
 3. In all other cases, and where the owners of seats do not choose to take said seats at their appraisal, let the seats be put up at auction annually and rented to the highest bidder for the year ensuing.

As authority to do this is vested by the Statutes of the State in the Board of Trustees of the congregations, it is recommended to the said congregations that they encourage their Trustees to enter on this arrangement, or, in all cases to acquiesce therein, as both equitable and at this time specially desirable, that a general plan for meeting expenses may be adopted by all the churches.

4. Where the sum thus raised is not sufficient to meet all the expenses, it is recommended that a subscription be circulated among the more wealthy members of the congregation to meet all deficiency. The Presbytery would also affectionately and earnestly recommend to the Church, to take into immediate and serious consideration the subject of the support of the ministry. It is well known that the expenses of living, at the present time, are so greatly increased, that the salaries of many, if not most of our ministers are not sufficient to meet the necessary and pressing wants of their families. They are embarrassed and disheartened, and feel unwilling personally to complain or to appeal to the sympathy and aid of their people. And yet without relief what can they do? If, through them you are made partaker of spiritual things, is it not your duty to minister unto them in carnal things? "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel shall live of the Gospel."

You have pledged to your Pastor the prompt and regular payment of his salary, not only, but whatever else is necessary to his comfort and usefulness, while laboring with you in the Gospel. Brethren, your immediate attention is called to the subject. The Presbytery also adopted the following minute to be added to the above, and read to the churches: The Presbytery recognizing the serious evils which result from the habits of card-playing and dancing, which it is feared, are on the increase in the community, and even obtaining an exceedingly deleterious influence among the members of the churches under our care, Resolved, That we look upon these habits as having a tendency to dissipate religious impressions, palsy religious influence, and grieve the Holy Spirit, and as

leading, by no very circuitous route, to gross dishonesty and extreme licentiousness, and therefore do affectionately advise, exhort and enjoin upon the professed disciples of Christ within our bounds, to shun these things as contrary to the spirit of Christ, recognizing the duty of believers to "abstain from the appearance of evil," and throwing their influence strongly and unhesitatingly in opposition to these popular and dangerous forms of sin.

MORE KIND WORDS.

We are still receiving numerous accessions to our list, from every part of the field, including such remote regions as Missouri and Michigan, to say nothing of New York and New Jersey, and other districts nearer home. From Manayunk Church, Philadelphia, we have received twenty-five new subscriptions. With our enlarged and very cheap paper, filled with excellent matter, pastors who are disposed to make the effort, find it comparatively easy to form clubs of new names, and otherwise increase the circulation. Individual subscribers and friends should follow the example of those who have at least added "one each" to our list.

To encourage those who are laboring, or expecting to labor for this object, we publish some of the kind words received within the last few days:

A subscriber renewing his subscription writes:

"I really feel like asking your pardon for not renewing my subscription sooner, after receiving such a New Year's present as your enlarged double sheet. But you have not only improved in quantity, but even more in quality. I think every subscriber ought to feel ashamed if he does not immediately renew his subscription and send you two or three new names. Your undoubted loyalty to the Government, saying nothing about the extremely low price of your paper is a sufficient recommendation. It ought to be read by every loyal family in the land."

A pastor in New York, sending us seven new names, writes:

"Since I received your specimen copy, my time has been so fully occupied that I have had but little opportunity to canvass for the paper, but I have found the people pleased with it so far as I have shown it. Being desirous of getting a religious paper into every family of my congregation. I shall continue my endeavors to increase the list now sent."

A pastor in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, sending us some new names, writes:

"I hope to be able to send you a few more new names. The religious paper in its weekly visits affords most valuable aid to the pastor in feeding both the sheep and lambs, and every additional copy of our own Church paper circulated in the congregation furnishes an additional bond or tie, promoting both denominational and congregational strength. I trust you may be able to increase largely the circulation of the BANNER. Although the denomination be small, we should take 3,000 copies of our paper."

Another from the same branch of the Church, writes:

"I am very much pleased with the BANNER in its enlarged and improved form. It is certainly one of the best as the cheapest, religious newspapers published in this country. I have already procured five new subscribers, with the prospect of more."

A member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Illinois, who has already sent two clubs, writes:

"It is probable another club may be obtained here. Our people are well pleased with the BANNER in its new form, and more willing than ever before, to support it."

A minister in Iowa, writes:

"I cannot withhold my commendation of your 'New Series,' two numbers of which have reached me, enlarged and improved as is the edition. And its cheapness also, must recommend it to wide circulation, for which I design to contribute what influence I have in these distant parts. It chronicles so many good things about our churches and ministers, and relative matters, that I cannot do without it."

Mr. Wm. H. Clark, late of Union Seminary, was ordained and installed pastor of St. Peter's Church, Spencertown, N. Y., by the Presbytery of Columbia, Jan. 24th, 1864.

News of our Churches.

FIFTIETH ST. CHURCH AND MR. THOMAS AGNEW.—On New Year's day, the trustees of 50th St. Church, New York, met, by special invitation, at the house of Thomas Agnew, the liberal Christian merchant, to receive from him the title papers of the church edifice and property, unencumbered, as a free gift to the trustees and congregation. Mr. Agnew accompanied his gift with a few unpretending words, and a series of resolutions were passed in response by the trustees. Rev. Samuel B. Bell, D. D., late of California, has been called to the pastoral charge of this church.

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