Messenger and Visitor

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MCC. BLACK - EDITOR. H. CHIPMAN - BUSINESS MANAGER. 85 Germain Street, St. John, N. B.

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Evangelical Work in Rome and Italy.

A correspondent of the New York Examiner, writing from Rome over the pen name of "Profecto, gives some interesting information respecting the work of evangelical religious bodies there. Rome is of course, still in an important sense, the citadel of that religious faith which builds so much on its connection with the city by the Tiber. "To see the 500,000 inhabitants of this Eternal city and note the 150 Roman Catholic churches, makes the few Protestant chapels and workers appear insignificant." But Protestantism is making some progress worthy of note both in Rome and in other parts of Italy. The British and Foreign Bible Society, from a neat shop in a leading street, distributes the sacred Scriptures to the people of Italy to the number of 100,000 copies a year. The sales in Rome last year were 1352 Bibles, 6500 New Testaments, and 34,342 portions of Scripture.

Among the other Evangelical agencies at work in Rome is the Young Men's Christian Association; which, is doing a considerable work in directing the attention of young Italians to the Christian religion. Its genial, quick-witted and devoted Secretary, is a power among those with whom he mingles, and the advantages of its pleasant and well located rooms are appreciated by some of Rome's best young men, who are thus brought under evangelical influences.

Of the Evangelical bodies, the Waldensian Church, "Profecto" says, is doing the most by far for Italian evangelization. It has a fine chapel and accompanying buildings, situated on one of the principal thoroughfares of the city. They have in Italy and out of it 100 pastors, with a membership in Italy and South America of 14.598.

The Evangelical church of Italy, founded by Father Gavazzi, has now a membership in Italy of over 2000, has a building in worth \$50,000, is expending about \$30,000 yearly in its work, has well attended schools and growing congregations, and, in spite of severe persecution, "is in a fair way to be of great use in advancing evangelical religion.

The American Methodist Episcopal church is making the largest outlay in Rome of any denomina-They have the best buildings and the finest tion. The chief building, situated on a great locations thoroughfare and near the Palace of the King, cost \$100,000, and has a large chapel for the Italian church, and also one for an English-speaking church Academic and theological work is carried on here, and the apartments for teachers and students are in this building. Rev. Mr. Wright, who has lately ome to the work, is taking hold of it with energy and faith, and there is promise of a great growth in the future. The fadies' Society of the American M. E. Church have lately purchased a fine property for \$50,000 for a young woman's school which has been in successful operation for some time. It has 150 pupils, among them being representatives of the first native families of the city. There is also a boy's school with twenty-five pupils, two of whom are grandsons of Garibaldi.

The Baptists, both British and American, have also a hand in the work. "The English Baptists are carrying on their work at fifty stations with six missionaries, one woman and 13 native evangelists. They have Northern Italy-the Tuscan and Roman districts. The work in Rome is cared for by that veteran, Rev. James E. Wall, and is making substantial progress. This church in Rome has 210 members. It has five out stations. Its Sunday school scholars number over 300. The number bap tized last year was twenty-six. They are in excellent condition to make progress and are much encouraged." As to the American Baptists, "Pro-fecto" says that the veteran, Dr. Taylor, who has been so long on the field, has the work well in hand. The Southern Baptists have extended their efforts widely over the country, their

larger field being Naples, where they have taken over the work formerly carried on by the English Baptists. In cities and towns they have 24 stations, with several out-stations, and as many ministers with several out-stations, and as many ministers are serving them. Dr. Taylor has the oversight of the entire field and is an experienced general, hav-ing been engaged in this work for a generation. His devoted and accomplished daughters render him great assistance. The American Baptist Chapel in Rome is a cosy building with sittings for 200. The church is an Italian church under an Italian sector. The concretention is made up, mostly of pastor. The congregation is made up mostly of middle class people, who seem interested and intel-ligent and are great singers. At Milan and at Naples the American Baptists are doing more than at Rome. At Naples the meetings are crowded and there seems to be promise of large and immediate there results.

results. There are many difficulties in the way of evan-gelical work in Italy besides those of superstition, priestcraft and priestly opposition. These are religious indifference, debasing habits and the love of display, which makes the ornate forms and cere-monies of the Roman church seem so attractive as to captivate the senses of the people in spite of their better judgment. However, there are, we are told, great encouragments for evangelical effort in Italy. "The new life which Italy has taken on in nation-ality and in education has stirred the minds of the people and reached even the priests of Rome. There people and reached even the priests of Rome. There has been among them a great revival of priestly activity, while among the thinking and educated There has been away the thinking and control activity, while among the thinking and control activity, while among the thinking and control activity and unbelief."

The Forgiving Spirit.

In the parable which forms the text of our Bible lesson for the current week, a great lesson is impressively taught. It is a lesson too of profound importance. Observe how much our Lord makes to depend upon the possession of a forgiving spirit. And this is not the natural spirit. Some persons, it is true, are naturally much more disposed toward forgiveness than others. Some are of a sunny and benevolent disposition, while others are naturally sullen and revengeful. But generally speaking, it is the natural disposition of mankind to hold the offended accountable and to retaliate. If one who has been wronged does not harbor feelings of resentment and revenge toward the wrong-doer, it is because he has at least some glimmering of the truth that in the sight of God he is himself an offender, who, if he hopes for mercy, ought also to show it toward his fellow man. This is a truth which Jesus very emphatically teaches here and elsewhere.

Peter's question had reference to the extent of the duty of forgiveness. How often ought an offender to be forgiven ? The Rabbis had recognized the duty of forgiveness, and had named three times as indi cating the limit of duty on the part of the person injured. Peter also recognized the duty of forgiveness, and he had learned enough of his Master to make him doubt whether Jesus would approve the rabbinical teaching in this matter. But if a forgiving spirit did not cease to be a virtue at the, fourth offence, where was the limit, Peter asked himself. Perhaps seven times would mark the limit: but Peter does not feel sure, he will ask the Master about it, he wisely resolves, and when he propounds his question Jesus replies-"I say not unto thee 'Until seven times'; but 'until seventy times seven.' '' We are not to put a narrow, arithmetical construction on these words, and understand our Lord to say that the duty of forgiveness extends to four hundred and ninety times and there ends. He means rather to say to Peter that the duty of forgiveness is without limit. Always repentance demands torgiveness, and an unlimited possibility of repentance demands an unlimited readiness to forgive

We must not expect to find in this parable a per tect and minute illustration of a man's relations toward God and toward his fellow-men. There are many things which are altogether outside the scope of any one parable. The important thing is to dis cern and profit by the particular lessons it is intended to teach. There are some things which it seems clear that the parable is designed to teach. I. That the debt which any man is asked to forgive his fellow man is a very trifling thing in comparison with that debt which God treely forgives the penitent sinner. There is nothing to indicate that the parable is not of universal application. It is not some one class of men who are bankrupt toward God, but all are in this ruined condition, and no one has any hope of redemption from that condition apart from the compassion and free forgiveness of God. 2. It is therefore base ingratitude and monstrous folly for

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one whose only hope for salvation from eternal ruin is in the free forgiveness of his Creator, to refuse forgiveness to his sinful fellow-creature for a comparatively trifling offence. In the act of taking his brother by the throat he shows himself unworthy, and indeed unable, to receive forgiveness from his Lord. For, 3. it is impossible that the ungrateful and unforgiving soul shall itself truly experience the forgiveness of God. It is not merely that the Heavenly Father will not forgive the unforgiving. It is the eternal nature of things that forgiveness comes only to the penitent. God forgives the penitent, and only those who are truly penitent can receive forgiveness of God. But the heart softened by penitence toward God and a sense of his forgiving love cannot be hard, unforgiving and revengeful toward man. 4. By forgiving others then we manifest the spirit of the forgiven. And this is the return on our part that God seeks,-to receive his spirit and make it manifest in the world, to forgive en as we are forgiven. All worship apart from this is without value in the eyes of Heaven. Prayers and psalms, creeds and liturgies, all gifts, all labors, are nothing worth if not inspired by a forgiven and a forgiving spirit

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Editorial Notes.

Boston has realized a bright and benevolent by the day only, but the more seriously afflicted are permitted to remain on the vessel until cured.

-On our 2nd page appears the first instalment of a paper by Rev. R. Osgood Morse, of Guysboro, on Our Denominational Position, read before the N. S. Eastern Association at its recent meeting at Pugwash. The paper treats of an interesting and important subject in a vigorously thoughtful way, and will well repay a careful reading. The conclud-ing portion of it will appear next week.

-It will be seen by reference to our Church News page that Pastor Ingram, of Wittenburg, Colchester County, is asking for assistance to purchase a portable organ for use in the work on his large field. Those who respond to this appeal will doubtless be assisting in a good cause. We shall be pleased to forward any amounts that may be sent to this office for that purpose, but would suggest that it would perhaps be better that the contributions be sent directly to Pastor Ingram.

sent directly to Pastor Ingram. —It has been asserted—and the statement has been called in question—that Lord Roberts is a Baptist. In a communication on the subject in the Canadian Baptist, Rev. S. J. Farmer cites, as evidence supporting the statement, a quotation from a letter written by D. Barrie of the Y. M. C. A., now in South Africa, to Mr. R. J. Farrell, secretary of the Ottawa Y. M. C. A., in which letter Lord Roberts is mentioned as walking along the streets of Kroonstad on a Sunday morning with his Bible and hymn-book under his arm, followed only by his tall Indian servant, and it is added—"He worships in the Baptist chapel."

-The Watchman notes that it has been discovered that -The Watchman notes that it has been discovered that the "dead line" in the ministry, of which we have heard so much in recent years, is not altogether a modern in-vention, and quotes from a letter written by the great Jonathan Edwards, after his forced resignation at North-ampton, to his friend, Dr. Erskine, of Scotland, as fol-lows: "I am now thrown upon the wide ocean of the world and know not what will become of me and my numerous family. I have no particular door in view. Most places in New England that want a minister would not be forward to invite one with so chargeable a family nor one so advanced in years-being 46 the fifth of last October. I am fif for no other business but study. I should make a poor hand at getting a living by any secular employment.".

-Alluding to the subject of religious liberty in an article in the Homiletic Review, Dr. H. K. Car-roll of New York, remarks that in the United States the attitude of the State is the same toward all re-ligious denominations, and adds that the United States stands almost alone on that advanced ground. Dr. Carroll seems to consider that Canada and Aus-ralia are not of sufficient importance to decomtralia are not of sufficient importance to deserve mention in this connection, for it can hardly be that Dr. Carroll is not aware that there is no established church in these countries, and that in them relig-ious bodies, one and all, enjoy as full a measure of ious bodies, one and all, enjoy as full a measure liberty as is secured to them in the United States.

-Rev. Frederick L. Anderson, pastor of the second church of Rochester, N. Y., has been elected second church of Rochester, N. Y., has been elected to the chair of New Testament Interpretation in Newton Theological Seminary as successor to Prof. Rush Rhees, called to the presidency of Rochester. Mr. Anderson has been for twelve years pastor at Rochester. He is a son of Dr. Galusha Anderson of the University of Chicago, is spoken of as a man of unusual ability and scholarly attainments, and is believed to possess special fitness for the position to which he has now been called. It is understood that Mr. Anderson will enter upon his work at Newton in September. elected

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