

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.
REVIVALS.

MR. EDITOR,

I perused with much pleasure your remarks in the *Christian Messenger* of March 7th, on the subject of "Revivals of religion." Their brevity was their only fault, and your promise to "return to the subject on some future occasion," I hope, will be redeemed at no very distant day, as it is a matter of vital importance, especially at the present time when so much unfortunate error seems to have crept into the minds of many respecting the nature, progress and general tendency of Religious Revivals.

The innumerable facilities afforded to the present generation for improvement in religious knowledge, and the acquisition of scriptural conceptions of our duties and responsibilities as members of the christian church would seem to render ignorance in the matters entirely inexcusable. Yet it will scarcely be denied by any one familiar with the present condition of too many of our churches, that however widely sound religious instructions have been diffused amongst the people, comparatively few exhibit a corresponding zeal and activity in the cause of Christ. Many in connexion with our churches are living in open disregard of all religious obligations; having a name to live, while in reality there is no life in them; and hundreds of others who manage to maintain a more exalted reputation for piety and benevolence are manifestly deficient of that spirit of active christian earnestness which is absolutely essential to permanent success.

The dark night of declension inseparable from such a state of apathy on the part of religious professors affords no matter of surprise; it follows us naturally as darkness upon the setting of the sun. Instead of fothering the prosperity of the church, such members only act as impediments in its way, diminishing its vitality, crippling its energies, and diffusing throughout the whole body a spirit of cold indifference and selfish formality. Instead of winning souls to Christ by godly precept and example, they act as stumbling-blocks to hurry them to perdition; and instead of letting their light shine before the world, they stand as monuments of spiritual opacity, casting the dark shadow of despair and death upon all around them.

What wonder if the courage of the few faithful brethren begins to flag under the heavy pressure? They are grieved, dispirited and sad. The line of demarcation between the church and the world is rapidly disappearing;—the cloud of adversity grows thicker and heavier;—a storm,—a terrible storm is impending, and unless speedily averted by some interposition of divine power, will burst in showers of destruction upon them.

Something must now be done. The impending crisis is the signal for action. Effort, prompt and decided effort is imperatively called for. The brethren, or rather, a few of them meet for consultation. A "Protracted meeting" is finally agreed upon, and formally announced, as the means most likely to avert the threatened calamity. The aid of "Ministering brethren and others," is earnestly solicited. The appointed time at length arrives, and operations are commenced. From ten to twenty days and nights of incessant anxious toil are not unfrequently expended ere the church is in a state of actual preparation for the blessing they so earnestly desire. Then follows the delightful "Season of refreshing." The dark cloud has disappeared;—grief, and despair give place to rejoicing, and hope. A glorious triumph has been achieved;—every countenance is radiant with delight, and every voice joins cheerfully in the glad anthem of praise.

Were this state of things to continue, and all to go on increasing in strength and usefulness, there would indeed be cause for rejoicing; but alas, the experience of the past has taught us to rejoice with trembling. Such seasons of revival are seasons of great danger, not only on account of the reaction which is likely to follow; but also from the effects of a large amount of spurious material which in a time of general excitement is liable to be introduced into the church; and which soon becomes a fruitful source of trial and injury. Thus it often happens, that, instead of any permanent benefit resulting from the so-called "Revival," the church speedily relapses into its former state of apathy and indifference, until, on the very borders of ruin another "Special effort" is resorted to as the only apparent remedy for such a state of general declension. Now where such a state of things as this continues from year to year, a deplorable deficiency must somewhere

exist in the working machinery of the church; a deficiency, in fact, which will not cease to retard the progress of genuine religion, till something better than mere spasmodic efforts, annual protracted meetings, and periodical revivals are applied to correct it.

I would not be thought to speak disparagingly of ordinary Revivals of religion. Much good has doubtless been done through the means of them. Yet, I cannot doubt, that many who participate in them, entirely mistake their true nature and tendency. I have always had the impression that a genuine Revival consists in the elevation of a church to that standard of christian excellence, and earnest activity in the cause of Christ, which we are bound by the most solemn obligations, perpetually to maintain. And to preserve so desirable a state of things, our course is obvious. Our duty is as plain as if written in letters of gold. Instead of periodical protracted meetings, and spasmodic efforts, we require a thorough course of sound religious instruction, systematic training, and regular discipline, to be continued in our churches, from year to year. By this means we would soon become thoroughly indoctrinated in the great truths of the gospel, and fully instructed in reference to the discharge of our various duties, in our several places and relations. A state of delightful harmony would prevail throughout the church, and permanent prosperity would be the cheering result.

But I have already exceeded my limits, and will close for the present, in hopes that you, or some of your able correspondents will treat the subject more at large, as it is at present one of paramount importance.

I am, Sir,
Very truly yours,
J. C. HURD.

Chester, March, 1860.

For the Christian Messenger.

Protracted Meetings.

All admit the propriety of occasionally holding a series of meetings. Such meetings, however, are fraught with consequences which extend through the cycles of eternity. This to a certain extent is true of all religious services; but emphatically of those which are protracted from day to day. There are few hearts so callous, as not in such circumstances deeply to feel, and earnestly to desire a preparation for death, judgment and eternity. Who, at such seasons, has not often observed the moistened eye, the quivering lip and trembling frame? But alas! in a few short weeks, very many who appeared penitent are as careless as ever.

Though nothing is too hard for the Lord, yet there is reason to fear that those who have been convinced of their need of a Saviour, but have not yielded their hearts to him, will be left to choose their own way and at last to lie down in sorrow.

These considerations, seem to me, to render it imperative on all believers, when they engage in such services to be assured that they have power with God. It is, indeed, infinite condescension in Jehovah to permit us to approach his throne and order our cause before him; but it is a truth plainly revealed in the scripture. We are told, "If we ask anything according to his will he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions we desired of him."

At such meetings christians should labour directly for the conversion of those who know not God. The burden of every prayer should be, that the Holy Spirit would descend to convict sinners and enable them to believe on Christ. And in exhortation the speaker should not talk much of himself, but arguments drawn from the shortness of time; the awful eternity which awaits the impenitent; the terrors of the coming judgment; the love of the Father and the death of the Son of God, should be urged, in order if possible, to persuade the undecided then, even then, to "look and live."

I have sometimes, feared, at the close of a series of meetings during which many have been awakened, and but few brought to Christ, that if those who were under the Spirit's influence should never be the partakers of saving grace, their blood would be required at the hands of the church; being confident that if the prayer of faith had been offered for them in the name of our Mediator, God would not have failed to fulfil his own promise.

A CHURCH MEMBER.

Yarmouth, Feb. 22nd.

God's WORD.—If God's word is applied to you by the Holy Spirit, it will humble your heart, set you at war with sin, and lead you to love and follow after holiness: if the word comes with power, and produces any other effects, it is the power of Satan.

For the Christian Messenger.

What I do like to see.

"Some go to church just for a walk;
Some go there to laugh and talk;
Some go there to meet a friend;
Some go there the time to spend;
Some go there to dose and nod;
But few go there to worship God."

I fear I shall be obliged to use the "potential mood," and say what I *would like to see*, instead of what I *do like to see*. 'Tis a pity that such a state of things should exist in any town, village, or hamlet, that in describing a christian congregation, or a worshiping assembly, we have to call in the aid of imagination. But let us fancy such a state of things to exist as High Heaven would approve; how much happier would we be.

I would like to see moral courage enough manifested, to forsake a sinful custom, however fashionable—but alas! evil courses are too often continued in, because we lack the courage to strike out a new path. Wherever we see religion flourish most, there we see the nearest approach to keeping the Sabbath properly. And where the Sabbath is loved and honoured, the worship of the sanctuary is attended to in a proper spirit.

I can fancy something like a congregation—I wish I had seen them—all in their places in the house of God in due time, the countenance of each speaking of that "peace which passeth all understanding," and their bodies adorned as it becometh those who profess godliness. How lovely to see the daughters of Zion clothed in modest apparel; but how often as the door closes, are our serious thoughts put to flight, by the entrance of some two or three young ladies,—members of the church,—who sail up the aisle, past our pew, under a breeze of hoops, feathers, artificial flowers, ribbons and bugles. We are ready to sigh for the good old primitive times, when christians were known by their dress, go into any of our places of worship and you will see dress more befitting the theatre, than the house of God.

We have heard of persons going to meeting to get the fashion of a new bonnet. Verily this ought not so to be!

I like, or *would like to see* every thing removed from the worship of God that tends to disturb our minds. We are creatures of circumstances. I don't believe in doing penance. The house of God and every part of the worship should be attractive.

I like to see a fine, well-finished house for God; painted, and adorned, clean and warm, in winter, free from smoke—cool in summer, with a ventilator or some way of admitting a current of pure air; for it grieves many a pious soul to think that so soon as they got seated, despite all their efforts to the contrary they fall asleep. Now a little more science on the part of the Architect, and the sexton would remove this difficulty with a good many more that "flesh is heir to."

I would like to see the pews without doors, the aisles carpeted, the doors of the house shut without a bang, or creaking hinges; the windows with blinds that the rays of light may be softened. The pulpit plain, but all the fittings good, not tawdry, no matter how costly.

I would like to see a house of worship finished without the aid of a Bazaar.

I like to see those who have fine houses to live in, give liberally of their wealth towards building a house for God. I fear the means used to get money for building our chapels, are among the "Achans in the camp."

I like to see members of the church come in before the loved and honoured pastor, who with slow and solemn tread, with affection beaming in his eye, takes his place in the sacred desk, when to see him is to know that he has been with God. But to get to meeting in time, and to be in a right frame of mind when there, depends greatly on our "early rising." I like to think of the hymn committed to memory in the Sabbath school:

"This is the day when Christ arose
So early from the dead;
Why should I keep my eyelids closed
And waste my hours in bed?"

I like to see those who are on their way to meeting with their friends and the loved companions of their youth conversing on such subjects as engaged the attention of the disciples on their way to Emmaus.

I like to see the congregation in rapt attention. It helps a minister to preach to have the undivided attention of his people. His mind being acted upon by theirs and their hearts made glad.

I like to see enough church members in their places, to hold meetings on the Sabbath when the minister is away, and on weekly prayer meeting occasions too.

I like to see the brethren willing to pray when asked. If we could see each and all in their places at all times and occasions, by every possible means showing our attachment to our master, and to his service which is perfect freedom, then indeed would the church appear in reality the light of the world.

IOTA.

Thistle Down Avenue.

For the Christian Messenger.

DEAR BROTHER EDITOR,

On reading the Caution of 'Watchman' and the rejoinder of his antagonist a few thoughts occurred to me.

This is a free country. We have freedom of thought and speech. Liberty to promote our opinions by fair argument. This liberty belongs both to the promoters of truth and error. The former should use it as well as the latter.

Viewed in connection with religion this liberty is peculiarly sacred. To be faithful to himself, to God, and to man, every honest christian is bound to promote what he believes. Baptists should be the last to complain of these principles.

It is obvious that Presbyterians depend largely upon their educational schemes to promote their faith. They have learned the power of education, by the experience of centuries. There is no power either divine or human to hinder Baptists from using the same weapons in defence of truth.

While one of the above writers blames, and the other excuses the teacher alluded to for stating that baptism is the substitute for circumcision neither affords us any information on the point.

Is there not an analogy between the two rites? Are not children the subjects of both? Was not circumcision performed on natural children, and is not baptism required from spiritual children? How could you, Mr. Editor complain of this doctrine? It seems to me whenever that to assert any other relation between these rites than that of mere analogy is to deny the gospel. To say that baptism is a substitute for circumcision is saying that the spiritual birth is the same thing as the natural birth—is to deny regeneration altogether, to destroy the corner stone of the christian character. This error is implied in the argument for pedobaptism drawn from circumcision. Hence I presume that intelligent or pious pedobaptists would not resort to it. The bible requires faith, repentance, regeneration before baptism. They must be born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. These are the subjects of the Christian ordinance, while the Jewish ordinance did not require this, but only the natural birth. Strange that an enlightened age and country like this should retain such an absurd idea as that above alluded to. It can only be accounted for as Paul teaches, "The carnal mind receiveth not the things of the Spirit; they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned."

Yours in the truth,

SCHIEDSRICHTER.

March, 14, 1860.

For the Christian Messenger.

Obituary Notices.

DAVID ROSE, SENR.

Died at Dartmouth, Yarmouth Co., Feb. 9th, Mr. David Rose Senr., in the 86th year of his age. Our aged brother was converted in the year 1792, and was one of the first of the apostolic labours of the late venerable Father Harris Harding. During the very extensive revival in 1806 he openly confessed the Saviour, and with his beloved partner, was baptized by Rev. T. H. Chipman, and became a member of the First Yarmouth Baptist church. He was a man of strict integrity, always acting on the apostolic injunction, "owe no man anything." He was cheerful and persevering in piety, and during his christian course, seems to have enjoyed much of the confidence and joy of God's children. To his family he was very fondly attached, and during the many years he had around him a family circle, untroubled harmony and mutual affection reigned. His illness was brief, but his hope in the Redeemer remained unshaken to the last, and he "died in faith" and calm expectancy of eternal life. His aged widow still survives, waiting the summons to rejoin him in the better land. His death was improved in the Chegogan Meeting house, to a crowded congregation by Rev. H. Angell from Rev. 14. 13. Two sons (one a Deacon of the west Yarmouth Baptist church) survive him, and a number of grandchildren, may they tread in the steps, and imitate the consistent piety of their departed parent.—Com.

DEATH OF THE WIDOW OF THE REV. ROBERT HALL.—The widow of the late Rev. Robert Hall, so well known and so much beloved, died at her residence, near Bristol, on the 15th inst., at the advanced age of 74.