

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Letters to a Young Preacher.

LETTER XVII. SELF-ACQUAINTANCE.

My Dear Brother,—

Every man shall sedulously endeavor to form a correct estimate of himself. In many cases the want of this self-acquaintance has done much harm, both to the individual and to those in any way connected with him. This is undoubtedly true with reference to men engaged in the work of the gospel ministry.

When a man has arrived at the deliberate conclusion, that he is called of God to this important work, he should attentively inquire to what particular department of it his talents, acquirements, and temperament are best adapted. One may be a prudent and useful pastor, but not an efficient and successful missionary, or itinerant preacher. The gifts of another may qualify him to labor acceptably and beneficially as a missionary, or itinerant, though he would not succeed well in the pastoral office. An ignorant or imprudent man is not fit to occupy any position in the Christian ministry. There are individuals, however, whose mental resources are not adequate to the task of interesting a stated congregation for years, or who do not possess the prudence and caution requisite for the discharge of pastoral duties, who may nevertheless labor very usefully by visiting destitute settlements, and preaching from time to time in different places.

There are, moreover, some preachers whose special calling seems to be the promotion of revivals. If these, when they labor with churches, act in concert with the pastors, and, instead of exciting prejudice against them, strengthen the bonds of union, they may greatly subserve the interests of vital godliness. It is best, in general, for them to have a roving commission; for they do not usually make good pastors. At the time in which pastoral aid is most needed, they are very liable to become disheartened and impatient, and to leave the churches under their care in a destitute and scattered state. In cases of this kind, and indeed as a general rule, it is important that a minister shall be aware of his own forte and of his own infirmities, so that he may occupy his appropriate sphere advantageously.

Unquestionably there are men of sterling worth, who underrate their own abilities. Such are their modesty and self-diffidence that they need to be encouraged and urged to fill situations for which they are competent. In many cases, however, preachers, as well as other men, are very liable to form too high an estimate of their own talents. (Rom. xii. 3, 16.) Hence instances occur in which a man who is laboring comfortably and beneficially in a retired and humble situation, aspires to occupy one more populous and elevated. In this he fails to give satisfaction; and his usefulness, if not destroyed, is greatly diminished and the cause of Christ suffers.

From these considerations it appears advisable for a young preacher to ask counsel of discerning, experienced and faithful brethren. Here caution is requisite. Those who are the least competent to form an opinion, are usually the most ready to give it; and that ordinarily in a way of flattery. I recollect an instance in which I was called to preach on occasion of the burial of a colored lad, whose grandmother was partially deaf. For her accommodation I spoke louder than usual. After the service she remarked to me, "You have preached a good sermon." I asked her if she could understand what I had said. "No," said she, "but I could hear the sound." Happily I was not inflated by this commendation. Candour, however, compels me to confess, that encomiums passed by persons ill qualified to judge, imprudently communicated to me, either directly or indirectly, have sometimes tended to foster pride, and have involved me in much trouble. Unquestionably other young preachers have suffered injury in the same way. It is, therefore, obviously important, that they should regard only the judgment of the prudent and well-informed.

Moreover, those who tender advice, or express an opinion, should do it with great care. As some preachers may be injuriously elated by expressions of approval, so may those who are timid and diffident suffer from the want of encouragement. Indeed almost every preacher is liable to be depressed at times, and to require words of consolation. (Deut. i. 38. Prov. xii. 25.)

It may be remarked, in conclusion, that a young preacher ought to make it a subject of earnest prayer that he may be enabled to form a correct estimate of himself, and be led to occu-

py that department, and that field of labor, to which his talents are best adapted, and in which his services may be most useful. He should seek counsel from those whom he may reasonably regard as best qualified to give it. He must then exercise his own judgment, regard the openings of Providence, and, instead of seeking his own aggrandizement, ease, or temporal interest, cheerfully pursue that course which appears most likely to be conducive to the declarative glory of God and the real welfare of his fellow men. May it be yours, my dear young Brother to be ever found in this path.

Yours in gospel bonds,  
CHARLES TUPPER.

Aylesford, Sept. 10, 1861.

For the Christian Messenger.

"Do Rocks grow?"

This question is frequently asked. We propose giving in this article an answer to it.

It seems by many to be supposed that rocks and stones grow in a manner very similar to vegetables. This is a mistake. In the rocks and stones which we see scattered over the land or buried in the soil there is no growth. Instead of becoming larger, they are gradually wasting away by decay. See, here lies a huge boulder of granite. The air, rains and other influences are busy in its demolition, in decomposing its material and in crumbling it to pieces. Its surface, all studded with green mosses and lichens, presents not the fresh lustre of the newly fractured surface. There is no growth there.

That black, hard, compact rock, (trap) which lies in rounded masses, strewn so thickly over the fields of King's and Annapolis counties, and elsewhere throughout Nova Scotia, break off a piece of one of these boulders, within it is compact, crystalline and unaltered, but, at the surface, it is soft, rusty and decayed. There is no growth there. Time only is required for its total destruction.

Men raise massive monuments of the "enduring rock" and grave thereon the exploits of the great, fondly dreaming that they will last for ever. A Leo erects a St. Peter's, men build gorgeous palaces and splendid castles, but think you that power which spares not old Blomidon, whose brow has been swept by the mists of centuries long gone, but is bowing his head into the dust, will spare these puny fabrics? The Pyramids come down to us from the far-off times of the Pharaohs, but decay is slowly, but as surely as slowly, working their demolition. Decay is the order of things in the visible mineral world around us, we are insensible to it, for our life is too short, aye, and we pay so little heed to things that are apparent, that we do not take notice of such slow, such almost insensible changes.

"Everlasting as the hills." The geologist would say, "Unstable, mutable as the hills."—The mountain-stream is unceasingly and untiringly laboring in the transportation of sand, mud, and pebbles to the plain, ever busy in deepening and widening its channel, undermining and precipitating into its bed the adjacent rock and soil, which the pent-up waters labor all the more untiringly to remove. The winter's frosts are no feeble agents in this work of destruction, now loosening a stone, now a mass of rock of hundreds of tons weight, from the face of some precipice, and when the thaw comes sending it thundering into the valley below, every where in these latitudes busied near the surface in splitting up the rocks, their work is no feeble one, where the work of demolition goes on unceasingly, and there is no building up, there will be destruction.

The student at Acadia looks out of his study window and wonders for how many centuries the morning sun has gilded the rugged brow of old Blomidon, or the evening sun has buried him in gloom and shade,—for how many centuries the fogs have rolled over his head and shot down aslant upon the waters of the Minas Basin. Old Blomidon is to him the very type of endurance, of firmness, age, and of grandeur too. The vacation finds him, hammer in hand, rambling over its shingly beach, or anon scrambling among its crags and precipices, in search of its famous minerals. Like some old ruin it seems, with its broken walls and heaps of fallen masonry.—Every where the destroyer has been at work, here throwing down a cliff headlong upon the shore, where, mingled with the broken trunks and branches of noble forest-trees that once flourished on its crest, it lies a rich mine opened for the mineralogist; while here the thundering surf has breached the wall, and the castle-like rocks of Cape Split stand out like fortresses to guard the entrances to the Basin, and the thought comes in upon him, with a tinge of sadness, that these mighty agencies will one day complete their work of destruction; and mayhap he en-

deavors to measure the time necessary for its consummation.

No, Farmer. Those rocks you find scattered over your fields and which you turn up with your plough, are not growing. They are decaying. But decay is not the universal rule, even upon the land. There is a building-up process going on, that counterbalances all this decay, but for the most part it is invisible and by most, unsuspected. In the dark depths of the sea, in lakes, at the mouths of large rivers it is going on; and the volcano too, is busy even in adding to the rock surface of the earth, and in upheaving and diversifying that surface, which the waters are laboring to reduce to a level with the sea.—But the deep waters of the sea conceal earth's great manufactory of rock. There, in seas and lakes and at the mouths of rivers, rocks are growing. The waste of the land is here deposited and re-formed into rock. Here a current sweeps out into the ocean, laden with sediment, this is deposited in still waters and beds of great thickness are being formed. A river-current is bearing down to the sea vast quantities of sand and forming at its mouth extensive beds of stratified sand which may form hereafter a sandstone.—Here, the coral insect is building up amid the roar of the surf in some southern sea the coral-reef and a limestone is in process of formation. Gravels were formed from fragments of rock of various kinds rounded by attrition in water, either in the bed of some stream or by the breakers on the sea shore. Sandstones were once sandbanks such as are now accumulating near the mouths of rivers, or at a distance from the shore deposited by currents. Slates were once soft mud such as is deposited by moderate currents. Granite is a rock that was once in a fluid state, so are also other rocks that are of a crystalline form.

If you take a quantity of water and dissolve in it as much alum as it will hold in solution, setting the vessel, which should be a shallow one, where the water may evaporate, crystals of alum will be formed, small at first, but growing larger and larger until the greater portion of the alum shall have assumed a solid form. Here is growth, but of a different kind from that which takes place in animals and plants. The latter grow from the supply of new matter from within, elaborated from external matter by a complicated apparatus working under the guidances of a principle called life. Minerals increase only from the addition of new matter from without.—The little atoms of alum held in suspension arrange themselves under the guidance of a beautiful law, in regular crystals, whose faces are polished as only Nature can polish them and whose form and symmetry are such as are worthy of the skill of the great wonder-worker, Nature. There will be in each perfect crystal the same number of faces, not always of a size mayhap, but the angles between the corresponding faces will be always alike in all the crystals. The little crystal becomes larger while it does not change its form by the equal deposition of atoms over its whole surface. This is growth, but a totally distinct growth from that which takes place in the organic world, it is growth without life.

CARL S.

For the Christian Messenger.

Vegetable Electricity.

A NEW SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY.

All who are familiar with the laws of chemistry and natural philosophy know that wherever a chemical change takes place, or wherever particles of matter are exchanged or are set in motion, there electric equilibrium is disturbed, and currents of electricity are the invariable results.

In vegetative life, in the leaves of trees and plants for instance, we find numberless pores open to the access of the atmosphere and the rays of the sun, or its reflected light, ready to absorb and to decompose the carbonic acid, breathing out the oxygen while the carbon is chemically combining with the hydrogen and nitrogen of the plant. We have here a galvanic battery or better a vegeto-electric machine of high intensity, as well as volume; a compound electric apparatus producing and reconsuming; a power, only one grade lower than the so-called vital electricity, and were it not for its own conducting power, which gives off or absorbs its peculiar electric fluid to and from the earth beneath, or through its own humid conductor—its evaporation to and from the atmosphere above, we would have long ago been startled by electric phenomena of such an indicative nature that like the lightning spark of Franklin they would have led to numerous applications.

The vegetable kingdom appears to be another storehouse of useful materials and will serve to increase the knowledge, as well as the power, of

man over matter. By a few accidental experiments I found that not only can Vegetable Electricity by proper arrangement be induced and joined to an ordinary galvanic current, but by the parts being perfectly insulated, a current of its own will be produced, giving a precipitate of metal from a solution of sulphate of copper.

Except in the case of some Egyptian magicians, who attributed to the presence of certain trees peculiar magic influences and powers, and Messmer and Ennemoser who magnetized young plants to make them conductors of vital electricity I have no knowledge of any one ever having brought the existence of Vegetable Electricity before the public, and I think that not many years will pass, ere this first ray of light in a new and yet unexplored region of science will find useful applications; and I feel rejoiced in having been the first who by accident opened the doors to this new science.

Vegetation is greatly aided by electric currents; we have instances where in a few hours seeds have been developed to perfect plants by the aid of galvanism, a process which in the ordinary course of natural growth would have required several weeks. These experiments were made in Paris several years ago and seem to prove what I here state.

May we not be able to apply Vegetable Electricity itself as an agent to increasing the growth of other plants? May we perhaps not be able to bring in Vegetable Electricity a new healing power to suffering mankind? I shall keep you posted of the further progress of my experiments and send you some further scientific communications.

A. L. FLEURY,  
Chemist and Electrician.

New York, Aug. 8th, 1861.

For the Christian Messenger

To the friends of the French Mission.

Dear Friends,—I am happy to acknowledge the amount received by me from the churches of the Eastern Association visited by me, and to return my hearty thanks to those noble Christians who were so much engaged in the Mission. I hope we shall not soon be forgotten by each other, but that our prayer for each other will continue to ascend and meet at the throne of God; and that his Spirit may abide with us until we meet at the right hand of him who bought us with his precious blood.

The following are the amounts received by me from the different churches.

At the Association at Guysboro,	£2 0 0
Cape Canso,	1 1 2½
Manchester,	0 5 0
Indian Harbour,	1 1 2
Antigonish,	0 10 0
St. Mary's, 1st,	0 9 2½
St. Mary's 2nd,	1 1 1½
Isaac's Harbour,	0 7 8½
Upper Stewiacke,	0 15 9
Lower Stewiacke,	1 5 5½
Truro,	3 7 7½
Brookfield,	0 9 10½
Onslow,	1 3 6
Great Village,	0 12 0
Portaupique,	0 17 8½
Economy,	0 13 8
Pugwash,	0 8 0
Hantsport,	0 12 3
Rev. R. S. Morton's deceased child left	0 2 6
Gaspereaux, omitted last winter.	1 18 8½

Very truly yours,  
M. NORMONDAY.

Tusket, Sept. 14th, 1861.

For the Christian Messenger.

Obituary Notices.

MRS. ANNE CHURCHILL,

Wife of Ezra Churchill Esq., of Hantsport, who died by means of the melancholy and heart rending occurrence as narrated in your issue of Sept. 4th, had been for many years a remarkably consistent and pious member of the Baptist Church at Hantsport. She was peculiarly amiable in heart and life. Her kindness and generosity caused her to be dearly beloved by a large circle of friends and relatives.

Not only has her family (which is large) lost a kind, affectionate and Christian mother, but also the Church and community have lost a pious and useful member. We rejoice to know that our loss is her gain.

May God bless our Brother and his family in this very deep affliction. May He give them such grace as they need, such sympathy as He only can bestow.—Com. by J. H. Langille.

The best sometimes err, yet still remain the best; while the worst do well at times, yet still remain the worst.

The rays of happiness, like those of light, are colorless when unbroken.

He who enters upon a career of crime will probably come to either a halt or a halter.