

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Letters to a Young Preacher.

LETTER X. BREVITY IN PUBLIC EXERCISES.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—

"Wisdom is profitable to direct." All injurious extremes should be cautiously avoided. In some instances preachers undeniably are too brief in their religious exercises in public. The appearance of a desire to despatch these hastily, as if they were unpleasant services, from which speedy release was sought, is adapted to produce an unfavorable impression. Neither preachers nor people when spiritually exercised, will be in haste to leave the house of God. They will be disposed to say, with the Psalmist, "A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand." (Ps lxxxiv. 1, 4, 10 xxvii. 4.) Sufficient time should be allowed for serious and profitable attendance on all the exercises, singing, prayer, reading the Lord's word, and preaching. If any one of these be performed in a hurried manner, the benefit that might otherwise be derived from it will undoubtedly be lost. When these are attended to with due deliberation and seriousness, each, may, through the divine blessing, be highly serviceable. "Let all things be done decently and in order."

Unquestionably, however, there is an extreme on the other hand, namely, that of prolixity, against which it is needful to guard. Undue brevity may prevent believers from deriving benefit from the means of grace; and tediousness may deprive them of the blessing which they had begun to enjoy. The frailty of human nature should be considered. Men are not angels. Even when "the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak." The most spiritual exercises when greatly protracted, become oppressive to feeble human nature, and produce weariness. When this commences, devotion necessarily ceases. There is no reason to doubt, that cases have frequently occurred in which, had the preacher closed at the proper time, numbers of his pious hearers would have retired in a joyful and profitable frame of mind; but he wearied them by talking after he had communicated all that he had to say, and they have returned to their homes in a state of depression, both painful and unprofitable.

I remember an instance in which a very pleasant session of Association was enjoyed. At the close of it a sermon was preached. Had the preacher stopped when he had spoken half an hour, his discourse would have been an agreeable appendage to the former exercises. But he was one of those everlasting allegorizers, who must expatiate on many things that never entered the mind of the writer of the text. Preaching from Ps. cx. 3, he told us about the smallness of the drops of dew, and then how small Christians are in their own estimation; the brightness of drops of dew, and how believers are in the sight of the Lord, &c. &c. &c. In this way the congregation, with minds jaded, many of them in haste to set out on their journeys, and others who had devoted their time to the meetings and attendance on friends, greatly needed at home, were kept at least one mortal hour longer than the time occupied in an ordinary sermon. The Association was "killed." The distressing and injurious effect produced on my mind is distinct in my recollection. I subsequently learned from many, as was apparent at the time, that I was not a solitary sufferer. Every preacher should consider the circumstances in which he is placed, and be careful never to commit such an outrage upon discretion and patience.

We ought, moreover, to regard the welfare of the unconverted. Tedious sermons will be likely to deter them from attending on our ministry. We can not, of course, gratify the wishes of such as are desirous to hear the *Amen* almost as soon as the text is read. But it is evidently advisable to keep within such reasonable bounds that people may not be driven away by our prolixity.

It is well known that young children profit most by short lessons. And it has been justly remarked, that "men are but children of a larger growth." Accordingly the prophet Isaiah represents the Jewish people as being like children recently "weaned," who must have "precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little." (Isa. xxviii. 9, 10.) In the nature of things a short discourse is better adapted than a long one to make an impression; and the substance of it is more likely to be remembered.

On one extraordinary occasion Paul protracted his sermon, with subsequent admonitions, to a great length, (Acts xx. 7-11). In general, however, both the prayers and the discourses recorded in Scripture, are brief. The former instance may justify long services under peculiar circumstances; but the latter fact admonishes us to use brevity in ordinary cases. In protracted meetings where many different gifts are called into exercise, especially if the people be powerfully moved, it may be well to continue one service for a considerable length of time. Even in these, however, a long prayer offered, or a long speech made, by any individual, usually produces a chilling and deadening influence. Brief and earnest exercises, without long pauses between them, are usually productive of the best effects. The noon-day prayer meetings, held in different cities, limited to an hour, and each one taking a part restricted to five minutes, have been attended with highly beneficial results.

No definite rule can be laid down, that will be applicable at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances. In general, however, it does not appear to me advisable for a minister to occupy more than an hour and a half in one public service. I would recommend, in accordance with my own usual custom, that about one half of this time be devoted to the sermon, and the other to singing, reading the Scriptures, and prayer. No person can reasonably regard exercises of such length as prolix. If prolonged much beyond this, they may be justly so considered; and the extra time will probably be worse than thrown away.

That you, my dear young Brother, may be enabled to exercise discretion with regard to this matter, and to avoid that tediousness which has diminished the usefulness of the labors of some preachers, is the sincere desire of,

Yours, in Gospel bonds,
CHARLES TUPPER.

Aylesford, April 10, 1861.

For the Christian Messenger.

Letter from Burmah.

My Dear Messenger,—

About this time last year I sent you some account of the first meeting in Association of the Burmese Baptist Churches in Southern Pegu. The second Anniversary of the Association was held on the 25th, 26th, and 27th days of last month. But, as I've already sent an account of the meetings to the Magazine, and as I perceive you are in the habit of extracting from its pages, it is unnecessary to give you any very detailed report of the doings upon that occasion. The Association was organized and conducted very much as such anniversaries are conducted at home. A Moderator and Secretaries were chosen. Letters from the churches were read. Questions connected with church organization and discipline, as also various difficult passages of Scripture were discussed. Among the delegates were two brethren whose exhortations and relations of experience were listened to with delight by the Burmese Christians. These were Mr. Abraham and Ko Yakob, or Jacob, the former an American, the latter a Hindu Mussulman, both having been baptized and united with the Baptist Church in Rangoon during the past year. From these men the Burmese brethren learned that God deals with sinners of all nations in precisely the same manner; that the bigoted Mahomedan and the self-righteous American were brought into the fold by that "Door" through which they themselves had entered.

We feel that the influence for good of these meetings, in strengthening and reanimating the native disciples, can scarcely be exaggerated.

The next Anniversary will, Providence permitting, be held with the Henthada church.

You know the closing month of 1860 saw the mission-house and chapel, together with all the dwellings of the native Christians, laid in ashes. We have been able, providentially, to purchase a good house, and thus avoid the toil and loss of time which would inevitably have attended building anew. But we still stand in pressing need of a chapel, and of a *zayat* in the town, where hearers may resort to obtain tracts and hear the good news of salvation. Who will help towards these objects? your Board have ordered that the money which they send shall be scrupulously devoted *only* to the support of native preachers. Again I ask, who will help? The rains are at hand, when, in order to labor to the best advantage in this large town, a *zayat* is indispensable. Of course, therefore, I intend to build a *zayat*, money or no money. Brethren in N. S. and N. B., and all in every place to whom these words may come—HELP! Let not the Word of Life be dispensed under a roof which is not paid for! In the North-west

Provinces of India *famine* is stalking among millions. The papers by every mail tell us appalling, blood-chilling stories of the famine-smitten, their woe, their dreadful want. They tell us in cold, unanswerable figures, that where benevolence and philanthropy have done their utmost, even there probably a *million* will die of starvation!

While we bow and tremble, and stand in awe before the Lord of all the Earth, O let us remember too, that the famine-smitten are *here* also, smitten in their souls, "having no God, and without hope." *Think—pray—and then* you will help those who are dying for lack of knowledge.

Yours faithfully,

ARTHUR R. R. CRAWLEY.

Henthada, Feb. 18, 1861.

For the Christian Messenger.

English Correspondence.

From our own Correspondent.

THE FINE WEATHER IN ENGLAND—THE STRIKES AND CO-OPERATION STORES—THE BUDGET—MR. GLADSTONE'S SPEECH—THE PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE TARIFF AND THE INCOME TAX—GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY TO VOLUNTEERS—AMERICAN AFFAIRS—GARIBALDI IN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES AT TURIN—THE WARSAW OUTRAGE—EUROPEAN COMBINATIONS.

MR. EDITOR,—

We are now basking in a most delightful sunshine, the genial weather now blessing England is the more cheerful because for eighteen months we have had almost incessant bad weather. Last summer was almost a blank and two winters in succession of unusual severity have prepared us to receive with real thankfulness and joy a whole week of fine, warm, calm sunshine. The farmers are making the greatest efforts to get in the seed, corn and potatoes. It is already late for our spring crops, yet as the season so far has been cold and bleak, the vegetation has been kept back, and with a fine spring and an absence of frosts for the next two months we shall not have to complain of bad crops. We may indeed hope for a fine summer and prolific harvests to succeed the very wet summer of 1860, as has frequently heretofore been the case. Our farmers stand now in great need of a favourable turn, for a long season of prosperity, with good prices for produce caused a general rise in the value of land, and brought about a more expensive style of living, so that the diminished incomes of last year have been felt as privations to the better class of agriculturalists. The laborers however have not had so much cause for complaining, for labour has found a ready market at good rates of payment, and thanks to free trade, we have had no lack of food. The corn markets of course vacillate with the weather, still the fluctuations are very narrow, a fair quality of flour reaches the consumer at two pence per pound. Potatoes too are rather abundant. Large stocks being held by the growers in Yorkshire, which with fine weather will be hurried into the market, the price is about two pence for three pounds for good quality.

The full benefit of returning spring cannot be felt here this season by reason of the dark forebodings of politicians and manufacturers. The foolish contest between labor and capital still holds full sway in the cotton manufacturing districts. The deluded operatives acknowledge themselves unable to succeed in carrying their own terms with the employers, and openly characterize their turn-outs as ill-timed and imprudent, and yet out of a foolish bravado, and with a hope of doing the Capitalists at least a little harm, they resolve to stay out of work a little longer. When savings of years are expended, credit worn out at the stores, superfluous clothing and furniture sold or pawned, then they will gladly go in and be obliged to accept whatever terms are offered. In former strikes, the shopkeepers were obliged to support their customers on credit, but now so many co-operative stores have been opened in every populous district, which have no resources beyond the weekly earnings of their members, and which trade on the no-credit principle that the people have lost one great means of sustaining a long struggle. The shopkeepers and public generally do not sympathize with the operatives this time.

The praiseworthy order and quiet of the unemployed demonstrates the great advances the lower classes have made of late years in intelligence. The employment of physical force to attain any fancied good is by all deprecated, and the superior efficacy of argument and reason to secure permanent benefits everywhere acknowledged. These facts speak favorably of the progress of education in England.

The great event of the week is the Budget. Mr. Gladstone has again most skillfully established his reputation for financial skill. He shows surplus for last year instead of the large

deficit predicted by his detractors. His cleverly arranged speech of more than three hours length was a complete answer to Disraeli. Lord Derby and the *Times* who have most mercifully heaped abuse upon him, attributing unworthy motives to him in his financial operations. He argues rightly enough that if the country have been so productive during the past year, so unfavorable as it was from seasonal influences that we may fairly anticipate a considerable advance in an average of years. Such a wholesale clearance was effected last year in our customs duties that this year little scope remains for further relief from taxation in that direction. Just one change in the Customs, the doubling of the duty on foreign chicory, and one in the Excise, the repeal of the duty on paper is all he proposes. The tea and sugar duties, and tax on spirits being so highly productive are to be retained, and to prevent any mishap this year with the paper duties, he proposes to include in one bill the several duties of tea, sugar, and paper. With regard to the income tax the extra penny is to be taken off, leaving the tax at 6d. on incomes of £100 to £150, and 9d. on those above £150. These for the present are all the changes proposed. Our hope that an entire reform in the mode of levying an income tax would this session be attempted is now destroyed. Still as it is the fashion to legislate on these burdens for one year only, we live in constant hope to see something like justice done. Mr. Gladstone humourously told the House of Commons that it would be quite possible to dispense entirely with the Income Tax if it would be content to spend 62 millions in governing the country, but if it was their will to spend 72 millions, that tax would not be dispensed with. He has now fairly thrown the onus of that burden upon themselves. The Budget is looked upon favourably or not, just as persons feel themselves interested in its reliefs or burdens. The *Times*, of course, shows its teeth at the prospect of this final stroke on its monopoly. That journal can never forgive Mr. Gladstone for being instrumental in raising up a host of competitors. The trade community of the metropolis express their disappointment that the tea and sugar duties are to be retained. On the whole however, we may declare that the public generally look favorably upon it. The improving state of the money market unmistakably shows this.

It is to be regretted that there is a feeling in some quarters to bring the Volunteer force under governmental control by means of a government subsidy. Under the pretence of a necessity for its existence, it is proposed to get a grant of £150,000 a year for the same number of Volunteers. The paltry sum of 20 shillings a head would be quite enough to destroy the noble principle, which at present animates the force; and soon we might have to double or treble that amount. There is some fear that a gradual declension would follow till the Volunteer army dwindled into a kind of militia. I trust the pride of position will evoke a strong opposition from the Volunteers themselves.

This week's news from America is of a sombre character. If we are to put much confidence in the *New York Herald*, which we don't, we might expect the next packet to bring us news of a fierce civil war already raging. Some of those New York papers display extravagant zeal in the cause of disorder and strife, doing their very best to precipitate a quarrel between North and South. It is hard for us to form an opinion of the probabilities of peace or war, but we have such a strong feeling of the good sense of Americans to preserve their own interests that we would fain believe in a pacific solution of their quarrels. To judge by what is seen rather than by what is not seen, we might be impressed with the activity of the Southern Confederacy in raising a government, in embodying an army, and in diplomatic energy, and we might consider the apparent inactivity of President Lincoln to forebode ill to the States, but things are not always what they seem. It is politic for President Davis to make a good noise in the world and create a favourable impression amongst his own adherents by showing some strength and determination. The opposite is the case with the government at Washington. Discretion there, and secret movements are essential to carry out a safe policy. We must calmly wait further developments of the position. Events are not wholly in the hands of man.

In Italy Garibaldi has at last turned up, but on quite a new stage of action. On Thursday, April 18th he made his first appearance in the Chamber of Deputies at Turin, amidst great applause. He made a speech on Italian politics, expressing great dissatisfaction with Cavour and others of the ministry, complaining of the treatment of his army, and declaring his want of confidence in the friendship of France, so long as