

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Letters to a Young Preacher.

LETTER XIII. FAMILY VISITING.

My Dear Brother,—

The duty of ministers to visit the sick and afflicted, and the aged and infirm, has been considered in the last two Letters. While, however, this should in no case be neglected, it is far from embracing the whole range of ministerial visitation.

I have very often thought, I trust with profit, of an inquiry made by a physician, who did not like to have preachers visit his patients. "Why," said he, "did they not go to see them when they were well?" It is true, indeed, that in some instances our visits may not be as highly appreciated by persons in health: but the time of sickness is often unpropitious for the imparting of religious instruction and admonition. Not unfrequently distress of body almost precludes all attention to the welfare of the soul; or the disordered state of the mind prevents it altogether. While, then, a minister undoubtedly should attend to visiting the sick, he ought to regard it as imperative upon him to pay ministerial visits to families in health. This is one of the most important, and when rightly performed, one of the most useful parts of his work.

We are informed concerning the apostles, that "Daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." So Paul says, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." In like manner he charges Timothy, saying, "Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." (Acts v. 42. xx. 20. 21. 1 Tim. iv. 2.) This charge, which evidently applies to every preacher, plainly requires the diligent improvement of all opportunities both in public and in private, for benefiting the people, and promoting the interests of piety. In accordance with the apostolic example addressed, this unquestionably includes the frequent and faithful religious visitation of families.

A preacher must by no means spend his precious time in idle visits, and trifling conversations. He may, indeed, occasionally convey a social visit with friends; but this should be conducted in a Christian manner, and invariably accompanied with religious exercises.

So diversified are the situations of preachers, and the circumstances in which they are placed, with reference to the extent of their fields of labor—the writer has upwards of three hundred families to visit—the time at their disposal for this work, &c., that no specific rule can be laid down as to the frequency with which families should be visited. It appears to me, however, that, excepting peculiar cases, no pastor can discharge his duty in this respect without visiting every family connected with the church, or churches, and congregations under his care, at least once in each year. In most cases his visits should be more frequent. Neither the rich nor the poor professors or non-professors, should be passed by. None who are willing to receive a ministerial visit should be neglected. People, however, ought to be careful not to be unreasonable in their demands. A minister's duties are so numerous and so onerous, that each family in a extensive field of labor can not consistently expect a large portion of his time and attention. None should indulge groundless suspicions of partiality.

Ministerial visits ought to be conducted with friendliness and urbanity: but these should be tempered with gravity. It should be evident to the people, that the promotion of their real welfare is the preacher's object. In ordinary cases it is not advisable that these visits should be protracted; but they must not be mere hasty calls. Time should always be allowed for the collecting of the family together, the reading of a portion of the Lord's word, with suitable remarks and admonitions, and the offering of appropriate prayer. As far as it can be consistently done, it is desirable to inquire tenderly into the different states of mind of individuals; and to impart instructions and counsels accordingly. The timid and desponding need encouragement. The self-confident require to be cautioned. The sluggish should be exhorted to diligence. Backsliders ought to be faithfully warned, and yet kindly allured; that, if possible, they may be reclaimed, and led to return to the Lord immediately. Such persons as give no evidence of

piety, must be faithfully apprized of their imminent danger, and affectionately urged to embrace the gracious Redeemer without delay.

As many persons are diffident about speaking of their exercises of mind in the presence of others, a minister ought to avail himself of all favorable opportunities to converse with individuals personally by themselves. One thus addressed cannot so evade the admonitions given, or apply them to others, as is often done in public assemblies, or even in the family circle. Such direct addresses, when judiciously and faithfully made, are frequently attended with an especial blessing. In this way the excellent Harlan Page, though not in the ministry, was eminently successful in winning souls to Christ, and in promoting the interests of true godliness. Thus should every Christian, whether old or young, male or female, labor diligently in this department of useful effort. Surely, then each minister ought in this to set an example. Paul could say, "By the space of three years I ceased not to warm every one night and day with tears." (Acts xx. 31. Col. i. 28.)

Family visitations, conducted in an affectionate, attractive, and dignified manner, are not only adapted to attract the people to their minister, and to increase the number of attentive hearers, but also to make him acquainted with their states and exercises, and thus prepare him to labor more usefully in public. They are mutually beneficial to those visited and the visitor.

If you, dear young Brother, happily possess a natural aptitude for this work, may you diligently employ it with zeal and profit: if not, may you sedulously and successfully strive to acquire it, as one of "the best gifts!"

Yours in gospel bonds,

CHARLES TUPPER.

Aylesford, Oct. 30, 1862.

For the Christian Messenger.

United States Correspondence.

WORCESTER, MASS., Oct. 27, 1862.

Dear Brother,—

Judging from my own feelings, almost any news from a foreign land is acceptable. This is my apology for troubling you a second time with a letter, which you can publish or suppress, as you think best.

In my last I made a few statements as to church matters. You will pardon me for alluding to the subject again. I now have before me a neat little volume, embodying the Articles of the First Baptist Church in Worcester, followed by an appendix containing a brief history of the church, rules for business, regular meetings, and a list of all the members. The Articles and Covenant are precisely the same as those of our Nova Scotia Associations. As to the history of the church, "previous to 1795 there were three persons only of the Baptist denomination in Worcester." There are now three churches, with 682 members. According to the history the second and third churches were set off, not, as is too often the case, by an unpleasant separation, but by the action of the parent church, and for the spreading of the cause. The officers are a clerk, a treasurer, a standing committee, and an auditing committee. The duty of these is evident, except the standing committee. The duty of this standing committee is to co-operate with the pastor and deacons and the church. All business of receiving members, and of discipline is to come before the church through them. The pews in the church were originally owned by the members, as is generally the case in Nova Scotia. But to obviate the difficulty of raising the pastor's salary, the pews were taken out of the hands of the original owners, and are now rented mostly by the first proprietors themselves. Those who were willing for the good of the cause to give up their pews, did so, and money was raised to pay those who refused to yield up their seats. One brother yielded up his pew for which he originally paid \$300 and contributed \$700 additional to pay others who refused to relinquish their seats. Another brother gave up his pew and subscribed \$3000 additional for the purpose above named. After doing this these brethren continue to pay a quarterly rent for the occupation of these pews, to support the pastor. Many others did the same. No difficulty is now felt in raising all the monies needed. The pastor receives a salary of \$1400 a year, and now in his illness they give him time to recruit, and continue his pay. Besides this, the church raises, for benevolent objects, by direct contribution, according to a regular scheme, the sum of \$800 a year. This does not include special appeals to the benevolence of the church for transient objects, nor the sum

of \$150.00 raised, by the Sabbath School for the support of a colporter in the West.

On the third Sabbath evening in the month the Sabbath School holds its concert. On this occasion a letter is read from their colporter, the treasurer reports as to the colporter's salary, and the clerk of the school presents his report of the school for the past month. The children recite verses of scripture on which the superintendent makes occasional comments. Also these recitations are interspersed with remarks from any persons present. Sometimes the scene becomes very lively from this free strain of pointed remarks by one here and another there. If the interest threatens to flag, the superintendent or the pastor is on hand to make observations, or the children sing some lively tune from the Bell. The interest of the concerts is manifest from the fact that on these evenings the vestry is crowded with an attentive audience.

A few days since we attended, a few miles from this, the meeting of the Worcester County Association. There were about a dozen ministers present. The meeting occupied nearly two days. The time was occupied by each minister giving an account of the state of religion in his church, then papers on exegesis of scripture, plans of sermons, and various religious topics were presented by persons appointed at the last meeting. To ministers engaged in the great conflict these meetings are peculiarly refreshing. In the evening a sermon was preached by Rev. Mr. Banvard, well known by his works. These meetings are held once in two months, and if no other benefit resulted than the renewal of old acquaintanceship they would be abundantly profitable.

In writing from a large city like this, one difficulty experienced is to know what subjects to omit and what to dwell upon. One thing we have been struck with here is the efficiency of the Schools. To-day, in conversation with Rev. Mr. Jones, the superintendent of schools, —if I remember correctly, he told me that the city raises, by direct taxation for the schools, the sum of \$40,000.00 a year. He says that he has been connected with schools in several States where only a part of the support of schools was raised by taxation, the rest by subscription; and his experience teaches him that no system is so efficient as that of direct taxation on all the property to the full amount required. A few evenings ago we witnessed what was to us a novel exhibition, in connection with one of the high schools of this city,—a gymnastic exhibition by all the children in the school. A thorough teacher in callisthenics had been employed to develop the physical as well as the mental powers. The pupils, to the number of about three hundred, of both sexes, occupied a large space in the centre of Mechanic's Hall, the largest hall in the city. They took their position in rank and file about three feet apart each way, the girls occupying one portion by themselves. Before them on the platform, stood the teacher, who went through with each motion required, each and all of the pupils simultaneously imitating him, except when occasionally he descended among them, and marshalled them in numerous beautiful marches and counter marches. They used first dumb bells, then small rods about four feet long, then rings about eight inches in diameter, then simply their own limbs. It was astonishing to see the various evolutions performed on each of these principles, and the exactness with which they performed them. Imagine to yourself 300 children simultaneously moving their bells, rods, rings, or hands in almost every possible way, so that not a single muscle in the system can escape being used. At the close of this novel scene we involuntarily exclaimed, we have not lacked entertainment, neither will these young friends suffer for want of exercise to night. Men of high position encourage the movement, all feeling that it is high time that education should embrace the whole man, and not be confined to one part of his nature. Too often the mind is cultivated at the expense of the body. The knife is made too sharp for the scabbard. It is bad enough to have people butchered in war, but too bad to have it done in schools and colleges.

The public mind has been much agitated here for the last few days in preparation for the election on the fourth of November. Hon. Charles Sumner, Republican Candidate for Congress, is lecturing his constituents through the State. A short time since he held a monster meeting here, and made a very eloquent address to about 5,000 people. He is much changed within eight years, and yet the bludgeon of slavery did not kill the spirit of liberty within him. The brutal attack made upon his life has not, in these times, diminished the zeal of his friends to place him in the front ranks of freedom.

After holding forth his opponents to contempt he expressed his ardent desire for peace. But peace could not be secured by entailing an age of war and bloodshed. Permanent peace could only be gained by victory over rebellion. He sustained the President's proclamation of emancipation, as a war measure. He rejoiced to see this day. He said the message of God to Pharaoh was "let my people go that they may serve me." In the trials of his country he heard Jehovah saying "let my people go." In every gathering host, in the booming of every cannon, in every soldier slain on the field, in every fresh grave opened to receive the dead, in every family cast into mourning by the war, he heard the voice of God, saying "Let my people go!" Julian, the apostate, having once embraced christianity afterwards opposed it. But he died crying "O Galilean, thou hast conquered." And the so-called democratic party, while they seem determined to oppose the march of freedom, will yet in their expiring agonies exclaim, "O Liberty thou hast conquered." We were struck with the high moral tone of Mr. Sumner's speech, and if he should not be elected, it will not arise from any lack of earnestness on his part.

Yours, &c.,

D. FREEMAN.

The Grande Ligne Mission.

DEAR BROTHER,—

I greatly regret to learn that our excellent friends of the Grande Ligne Mission are much straitened for want of funds. Scarcely any assistance is now procurable from the United States, the burdens which the war has imposed pressing so heavily on the people. The Grande Ligne Mission is therefore labouring under considerable embarrassment, and stands in need of immediate aid. Notwithstanding the difficulties of the times there are brethren and sisters in our denomination who have "enough and to spare." If they will kindly devote a portion of the property God has given them to the advancement of the cause of truth among the French Canadians, by the Agents of the Grande Ligne Mission, their donations will be very thankfully received, and they will enjoy the satisfaction of doing good.

I shall be happy to take charge of any funds contributed for this object, and to remit the same to the Mission, rendering an account in your columns.

Yours truly,

J. M. CRAMP.

Acadia College, Nov. 4. 1862.

For the Christian Messenger.

Review of C. Mosher's Strictures on "Discipulus."

MR. EDITOR—

Although I am willing to avail myself of any suitable occasion, to discuss the merit, or explain to others, the reasons which constrain me to receive as Scriptural and true, or to reject as unscriptural, any doctrine of religion which claims Christian decision and obedience, yet the more I advance in age and experience, the more do I feel a distaste and unfitness for mere controversy, so often productive of no good, or other result, than to verify the trite but true saying;

"Convince a man against his will, He is of the same opinion still."

because not being conducted in the spirit of strict impartial inquiry for truth on whichever side this may be found.

Yet with all this, it is due to the subject that I make some explanatory notice of C. Mosher's strictures on the former communication of "Discipulus."

That the information in this should, as he apprehends, be calculated to make no one wiser, may be as much the fault of the reader as of the writer,—for it mainly consisted in scriptural references to the subject in question with no theory, and but little comment of the writer, beyond his statement of the conclusions which these references seemed fairly to suggest. Be this as it may, C. Mosher ought to know that shewing merely the plain and obvious meaning of a passage of scripture, and directing attention to it, may be information the wisest, and the most needed to an inquirer after truth, who may haply not have as yet observed this meaning, or who has not been able to perceive it or willing to receive it, because it may happen to conflict with some other pre-conceived opinion of his own.

Thus any one who entertains the unscriptural and irrational notion, that the souls of the departed are in some indefinite state of existence, without bodies, will not readily believe that the