

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Letters to a Young Preacher.

LETTER XLIV. ATTENTION TO THE YOUNG.

My Dear Brother,—

The duty of visiting the aged, with a view to promote their spiritual welfare, has been considered. That of paying attention to the young is equally evident and indispensable.

With reference to the conversion of such as are unregenerate, there is much more encouragement to labor in the latter case than in the former. It is well known to all acquainted with the subject, that of those who give evidence of piety a very great majority are brought into the fold of Christ in the season of their youth. The seed of grace is usually implanted and vegetates, if ever, in the spring time of life. Hence the Divine admonition, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." So also Wisdom says, "Those that seek me early shall find me." In accordance with this, Moses, the man of God, regarding the state of the young as more hopeful than that of others, presents this petition, "O satisfy us early"—Hebrew, in the morning, evidently referring to the morning of life—"with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." (Eccles. xii. 1. Prov. viii. 17. Ps. xc. 14.) The ministers of Christ ought, therefore, to improve this favorable season, by all the means in their power, for disseminating the seed of truth. As the unregenerate advance in years, their hearts ordinarily become more obdurate, temptations and cares increase, and consequently obstructions to their conversion are multiplied. The duty enjoined on parents, with all who have the charge of children, to instruct them in the ways of religion is evidently incumbent, in its measure, on pastors in their respective fields of labor. (Deut. vi. 7. Ps. lxxviii. 4—7. Prov. xxii. 6. Eph. vi. 4.) Children are susceptible of religious impressions at an early age. Many well authenticated and satisfactory instances illustrative of this fact are recorded in books, tracts, and periodicals of modern date. They frequently fall under the personal observation of the pious. This is strictly accordant with the records of holy writ. (1 Sam. i. 24, 28. ii. 26. 1 Kings xviii. 12. Ps. lxxi. 17. 2 Tim. iii. 15.) The Lord's ministering servants, therefore, as well as parents, should be encouraged and stimulated to commence the imparting of instruction and admonition, to the youth while in their tender years.

As aged believers must, according to the course of nature, soon leave their places vacant, and those of middle age, ere long, it is especially to the young that we naturally look for the continuance and increase of Christian churches. This consideration should prompt us to the immediate employment of diligent efforts to gather them into Christ's fold.

The liability of the young to be removed by death before they attain to manhood, or womanhood, the deleterious consequences which result in many instances, both to themselves and others, from youthful dissipation, even in cases wherein persons are subsequently brought to repentance, and the extreme danger that, if not converted in youth they never will be, should excite ministers of the gospel to labor sedulously for their conversion.

Moreover, if the fruits of these efforts do not immediately appear, great good may ultimately result from them. Even the restraining influence which may preserve the young from immorality, is an object of no small moment.

Ministers may promote the welfare of the rising generation in various ways. Of these a few may be specified.

1. Preaching sermons for their benefit. These should be appointed beforehand, the subjects such as may interest the young, and the language adapted to their capacities, preaching in general ought to be such as may, so far as the nature of the case admits, be understood by children. But these discourses, being expressly designed for their advantage, and suited to this object, in style, matter, and manner, may be expected to attract their special attention, and do them good. By this means also they may be led to pay more regard to the preaching of the gospel in the ordinary way.

2. Pastoring Sabbath Schools and Bible Classes. Ministers who preach to a number of different congregations, can not, of course, impart instruction to any particular school or class as he can that labors steadily in one place. They may, however, by promoting them, and giving instruction, counsel, and encouragement, contribute largely toward benefiting the young.

3. Conversing familiarly with them. A few

kind words addressed to children, reading the Scriptures with them, making inquiries of them and informing their minds, inducing them to learn portions of the Lord's word, hymns, &c., have often been peculiarly serviceable. The questions affectionately proposed, and the admonitions kindly given, by the truly venerable Edward Manning, to the writer in the days of his childhood and youth, are still remembered with feelings of reverence and esteem. They were decidedly beneficial. In this way much good may be effected. When children perceive that they are noticed, and their spiritual welfare is sought, by the ministers of Christ, their affections are naturally drawn toward them, and they are much more likely to profit by their labors in the pulpit.

4. Give them tracts, or small books. These, presented with personal admonitions, are adapted to be highly useful. An excellent Christian minister, doubtless now in heaven, referred his early religious impressions especially to the reading of a hymn on a tract given him with counsels, by the writer, commencing with the lines—

"Stop, poor sinner, stop and think,
Before you further go:
Will you sport upon the brink
Of everlasting woe?"

Numbers of other believers, brought up from infancy in the principal field of his labors, have likewise cheered his heart by expressions of grateful remembrance of lasting benefits derived from this combination of efforts for their good.

May you, my dear young Brother, be encouraged and animated to discharge this important part of your duty with alacrity and zeal; and may your labors be rendered extensively beneficial to the children and youth in the field occupied by you!

Yours in gospel bonds,

CHARLES TUPPER.

Aylesford, Nov. 23, 1862.

For the Christian Messenger.

Infirm Ministers' Fund.

It is very desirable that we should have a Fund for the support of God's servants who have diligently labored in the cause of their master, and whose infirmity prevents them from further usefulness in that sphere.

There have been contributions made from the churches to the Associations for this purpose. The Fund is placed under the control of a Board in each of the Associations. The Infirm Minister's Fund of the Eastern Association is now entirely exhausted by the frequent drafts made upon it.

There is now near us, one whose necessities call loudly upon our sympathy. I may be pardoned for mentioning his name. Rev. Hezekiah Hull has recently removed from Pugwash to the head of Amherst. His pecuniary wants are such as should arouse the churches and individual members to an inquiry into their duty, in contributing to his support. For some years past he has been depending upon the sympathies of friends and aid from the Board. He has now become more helpless, and consequently requires more assistance.

Should any church or individual in connexion with any of our Associations, or otherwise, contribute to his support, it would be very gratefully received. The Board here, seeing there is a considerable sum in the Infirm Minister's Fund of the Western Association, thought of addressing a letter to the Treasurer, Rev. C. Randall, soliciting an appropriation from that fund, but as this would probably reach all the members, we supposed there would be less delay by appealing to them through the Christian Messenger. Any contributions can be sent to Mr. B. Douglas, of Amherst, the Treasurer of the Eastern Board.

We hope to have responses to this appeal, either from the Board of the Western Association, from churches, or from individuals, as we think necessity demands it. Would not the churches, or such of them as feel able, take a special Collection for this purpose, and forward it. Any sums received will be acknowledged in the C. Messenger.

Yours truly,

CYRUS BLACK,

A member of the Board.

Anherst, 15th Nov., 1862.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Provincial Normal School.

While the Normal School is before the public, and is being made the subject of remark by its friends and others, an expression of opinion by

a Baptist teacher and graduate of that institution will not, I think, be deemed an intrusion. This is done with reference to questions and opinions which are known to exist in the minds of many through the Province, who are true friends of education, rather than to the passage at arms now going on between its friends and assailants.

Believing that those who strive to represent unfavorably the success of the efforts made by the Province for advancing Education through the Normal School, and to attach to it the stigma of Sectarianism, are mistaken in their opinions, and injuring a cause which it should be the desire of all to advance, I would ask all who wish to investigate this matter, and all should do so, to free their own minds from all sectarian bias and honestly review the benefits which have resulted from the school, with the zeal, energy and fairness with which the difficult duties of the Principal have been discharged, and I have no fear for the result. True, it has not been as successful as it might have been, but here the fault rests with the fault-finders.

Few have better opportunities for judging the merits of the theory upon which our System of Education is grounded, the way in which a knowledge of that theory is imparted, and the success which attends when teaching is carried on in adherence to it, than its professors, and whether ability to judge be granted or not, we have many young men in our own and other denominations known as successful teachers, who themselves attribute their success to the knowledge of the science of teaching, gained at the Normal School. We observe also that there are schools, some of them long established which are awaking from the dull routine of old forms through the influence of the Normal System though many of their supporters do not consider themselves its friends.

It seems that some would remedy defects which they suppose to exist by having Normal attachments to denominational colleges. But such efforts would fail of their object. A Baptist teacher would suit Baptists, and so of other Denominations, but school districts include persons of different sects, and the choice of a teacher would occasion divisions destroying the efficiency of any school that might be established. The efforts of different denominations united in confidence and fidelity can alone furnish a class of teachers to which there can be no personal objection.

With respect to the moral training which is necessarily joined with the intellectual, all know that the great principles of religion—all that one has a right to teach in common schools—are emphatically unsectarian, and may be and have been taught with no shade of Denominational views. It was, as we understand, on such a principle that the Normal School was commenced, and we believe it has been carried on in adherence to it.

Of the causes of complaint which are urged against that institution, some are the recital of difficulties which every system of education must meet in its struggles with existing prejudices, and not a few would be removed if the men who are so fearful that others may become affected by Dr. Forrester's denominational views, might receive a spark of his enthusiasm. We hear of Presbyterianism, spent thousands, and poor teachers. But the objection to the expenditure seems to be not that it is too great, but that it has been made for the benefit of Presbyterians especially, so the question of 'thousands' merges into that of Sectarianism. In respect to this objection I can only say that if any one after examining the circumstances which can be brought to sustain it finds any thing which favours it he will have found something new to me. After attending the Normal School; after studying, graduating and teaching side by side with Presbyterians, after hearing the opinions of those of our own Denomination who are acquainted with the working of the institution at Truro, and above all, after receiving 'bigotry's most treasured items' from its enemies I know of nothing which an unprejudiced man would not be ashamed to urge as a proof of its Sectarianism. As far as I can learn equal inducements are offered to Baptists to attend the Normal School, equal advantages are enjoyed by them there, their attainments are judged by the same standard as others, and he same interest is shown in their success as teachers. If we have not received as great benefits from the Normal School as other Denominations have, I know of no other cause than our own act. Baser influences have induced some to become its opponents without examining the cause they may have for such opposition.

The failure of teachers, although it has been made use of by those not favoring the Normal

School, has not, I think, in many cases been at prime cause of complaint, and even if it had it would prove nothing. Schools have been begun by Normal teachers and carried on in strict adherence to the Normal System, which have been eminently successful, and the instances are not isolated. College graduates have been refused as teachers because they had not studied at the Normal School, and that by those who had had the experience of years in Normal teachers. Such instances are enough to prove the excellence of the System. And while there are some who have utterly failed, as might be expected, are there not many who have been obbed of the elements of success, by the indifference or perhaps opposition of those for whom they labored, and many who had undertaken the work with no sordid motive, and carried it on with no flagging zeal, whose efforts have been attended with success, but who have been forced to relinquish the work by experiencing the folly of warfare at their own charges, or have been laid aside as useless when health was destroyed in accomplishing a thankless task. Let the Province put itself in position to call for teachers of a higher grade, and the Normal School will supply them, but while their support rests in so many cases with ignorance and prejudice, we can hardly wonder that one who has spent no time in studying the science which he pretends to practice, should be preferred to one who has, and while this is the case there is little cause of complaint, because more time is not spent in such preparation.

Let Baptists rally round their institutions, and receive the benefits which they are capable of bestowing; let other denominations sustain their colleges and seminaries, and diffuse the blessings of education, and let the people of Nova Scotia, undivided by denominational lines, labor for the prosperity of their institution at Truro, and the good which has been accomplished through it will be increased, and the causes of complaint, which exist either in their own fault or mistake, will be removed.

WM. ELDER.

Acadia College.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Normal School.

MR. EDITOR,—

I do not think that the Normal School can be fairly accused of sectarianism, unless it be from the fact, that certain parties suppose that no one can be qualified as a teacher, but a graduate of this institution. Dr. Forrester has avowed this faith in the Register and Circular and Mr. Bars in the Messenger.

By way of disavowing and opposing this belief, I will first quote from the Dr's Register and Circular, page 11: "Scholarship is indispensably necessary to the Teacher, and the more thorough and various that scholarship, the better is he prepared for his work, even in the most elementary branches. It is simplicity in the mode of communicating knowledge, constitutes one of the highest qualifications,—and this is admitted by every sound educationist,—who does not perceive the vast stores of learning required to make even the most common things plain and level to the grade of every intellect." There is no narrow sectarianism about this; it is the broad catholic tenet of education; it embodies the golden rule of education; it is the Primary in the great system of education. Now let us compare this principle with the fact, that the college course is four years, while the Normal School course is about as many months; also that the qualifications for entering the latter, are not extraordinary, whilst those for coming out honourably are truly formidable. Add to this also, that a very large part of the time at the Normal School must be taken up with the professional department. Now does it admit of a question, as to which institution will turn out the student having "the vast stores of learning required to make even the most common things plain?"

But it is no doubt by means of the professional department of the Normal School, that the teacher is qualified and equipped! "But," says the Dr., "the grand design of these institutions is the acquirement of the knowledge, both theoretical and practical, of the business of teaching," and not the acquirement of "the vast stores of learning."

Why this "grand design" is not compassed as well and better by the Common and High school, I do not understand. Does not the student become as much trained in the system, by which he receives his education, as in the sciences learned. He is not only an observer or a hearer, but is the subject on whom the system is practiced. Say the student has been taught in classes, all through his course, would