

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Our Missions in Burmah.

HENTRADA, JUNE 27TH, 1865.

My Dear Dr. Tupper,

The last mail brought me yours of April 8th. Many thanks for the 2nd of exchange of the two bills, £112 and £80.

I also have heard from Bro. Dimock, respecting the offer of a member of his church to support a preacher. I have appointed a young man to be supported by her, and have written to Bro. Dimock accordingly. The young man is Mouny Yike, the former student who left us for a while with the intention of trying to get a secular education before giving himself to preaching. He had no sooner commenced his study than he was visited by a severe illness, which prostrated him for a number of weeks. After restoration to health he found that his desire for secular education had vanished, and he came back saying he wished to study the Scriptures, and work for the Lord the rest of his days. He is employed as sayat preacher in this town.

Pastor Ko Aing returned yesterday from a visit to a village where there were a number of applicants for baptism. He baptized two out of eight who applied, and reports well of most of the others.

With kindest regards from Mrs. C. and myself to Mrs. T.

Yours faithfully,

ARTHUR R. R. CRAWLEY.

For the Christian Messenger.

Practical Suggestions respecting Sabbath Schools.

MR. EDITOR,

Much is being said and written on the subject of Sabbath Schools, and perhaps a few practical suggestions, or observations of what I have experienced through life may not be entirely void of usefulness. I do not deem it necessary to point out the different manner in which Sabbath Schools are conducted; now, to what they were thirty or forty years ago, when I first became a scholar, but it is certain that the institution has undergone very great improvements; and that it is still capable of greater improvements, must be readily admitted. But my present intention is simply to give a few outlines of what I have witnessed in different parts of our own country, and of the neighbouring republic, where about four years of my life have been spent. First, permit me to point out what I believe to be a very prevalent error, and one (particularly in our own country) which very much retards the progress and usefulness of the institution, viz. That it is designed for the benefit of the children; and although I freely admit, that when the immortal Raikes founded this institution for the world, that to benefit children, thousands of whom had no other means of instruction, was his worthy, grand and only object; and that at the present day, the principal object is, to gather in, and nourish the "lamb of the flock," yet I can see no reason why their sheep cannot feed, and feed to their soul's delight in the same pasture. Having said this much, I will proceed to the practical remarks which I intended. In the town of A. in N. S., the place of my nativity, where I had the pleasure of being some twenty five years ago, it was truly delightful to witness the vast improvement that the Sabbath School had undergone from the days of my early boyhood; the school occupied the body of the church, the classes being as widely separated as possible, and all having the same reading lesson. When the teachers had gone through their exercises, the whole school was called together, and reviewed by the superintendent. This review consisted merely of asking a few practical questions from the lesson which they had just been studying, and it was truly delightful to witness the readiness and accuracy with which many of these questions were answered, and sometimes by very small scholars. Again in the town of B. in N. S., where I spent a few Sabbaths some years ago, I witnessed another method not unworthy of notice. The classes were placed similarly to those in A., but when the lesson had been gone through, and the school called together, the superintendent recited one verse of Scripture commencing with the letter A. He then resumed his seat, and called upon each class separately, who rose with the teacher at their head, and each recited a verse commencing with the same letter; such, the kind superintendent afterwards informed me was their practice; and

when they had gone through the alphabet in this way, they would commence, and go through it again. I could not forbear asking myself, what a vast amount of Scripture truth will thus be stored up in the memory, there to remain so long as life shall last; and, who can tell the strength and comfort, that the portions of God's word thus treasured up may impart to these children and youth in after years, when the cares and toils, the sorrows and disappointment of this life shall be theirs? How much it is calculated to ease the cross and lighten the burden of the scholars, to have their teacher rise and recite with them. They feel that he leads the way, and they can easily and safely follow. Again, in the town of C. in the U. States, I entered a spacious vestry, alone, and in the midst of strangers; I had been seated but a very few minutes, when a gentleman came from a distant part of the room, and kindly invited me to a seat in the Bible Class, which I cheerfully accepted, and no longer felt myself an entire stranger; the class consisted of some twelve or fifteen persons, all of whom appeared to be men of intellect and intelligence, the gentleman who had invited me being one of the leading mechanics of the community, his partner in business being another scholar; the school was very large; old men and women, young men and maidens, children and youth were there; just so it should be here, just so it should be every where, I can see no reason why heads of families, and professional men of all classes, should not have a seat in the Sabbath School. The Bible is an inexhaustible treasury, the more we draw from it the more we may continue to draw, and I can conceive of no way in which a portion of God's holy day can be spent more profitably by the members of his church, or any other class than by meeting together in the Sabbath School, and drawing instruction from its sacred pages. If that institution is the nursery of the church, then let it be nursed by the church, not by a few members only, but by the body, and nursed in such a way as to preserve its health and promote its growth.

But as I am travelling from place to place, and do not wish to trouble you with a lengthy communication, I must hasten onward to the town of D. in the U. States, where I will not stop to relate the changes or improvements which the school underwent during my stay, but merely give an account of my own reception, and the condition of the school when I left. The first day I spent in the town, was the Sabbath. I entered the vestry of the Baptist Chapel a few minutes past one o'clock, and if my memory serves me right, the services of the school had commenced, but I was immediately beckoned by one of the teachers near, to a seat in his class. Being seated, I was invited to take a part in their exercises. Such was my reception. Now I would have it borne in mind, that I was an entire stranger, not having the least acquaintance with a single individual there present; but permit me to ask. Are strangers so treated among ourselves? I fear not; in fact, I very much fear, that it would be looked upon as not treating a stranger (particularly if he be a man past the meridian of life), with due courtesy, but be this as it may (judging from my own feelings while travelling abroad) the stranger does not feel so himself; let him go and sit down in a remote part of your school room, no person giving him any attention, and he will feel like one sitting out in the cold. But go to him, give him a cordial invitation into some one of your classes; (I care not though it be the infant class) and his heart will warm in a moment. The school in D. numbered between two and three hundred, consisting of people of all ages, from the venerable grandaunt, whose furrowed cheeks and silvery locks told the tale of "three score years and ten," down to the little prattling, who could little more than lap the name of its "Great Creator;" and a goodly number of these latter, constituted what was known as the "infant class." The whole school, (infant class excepted,) studied the same lesson. The teachers met weekly, once a fortnight for the purpose of special prayer for the success of the school. This was known as the "Sunday School prayer meeting," but was open to any person who chose to attend. And once a fortnight they met to examine the lessons for the two succeeding Sabbaths, this meeting was particularly edifying and instructive, here they met headed by their pastor or superintendent, and actually taught one another, thus preparing their minds for the duties of the coming Sabbaths; this was known as the "Teachers' meeting," and like the prayer meeting, was free to all who wished to attend. Their monthly concerts were always numerously attended. Their manner of reciting was somewhat different from that of B., each Teach-

er choosing the subject, narrative or parable for his own class, and the Superintendent announcing the subject when calling upon the class; one verse only being recited by each member of the class, but none were exempt. The oldest, and the youngest recited some portion of God's Holy Word, or some verse of a hymn, (the latter being often done by members of the infant class.)

I just now call to mind a circumstance which I must relate. A gentleman who visited the school at D. from a distant part of the country, told of a class in the Sunday School where he belonged, whose ages varied from about sixty to eighty years. Could not a similar class be got up in Halifax? How interesting, how delightful it would be. How encouraging to the rising generation, to see their aged grandfathers there; the idea so much complained of, that boys and girls at the age of 15 or 18 years think they are "too old" or "too big" to go to the Sunday School, would be abandoned forever. And now Sir, permit me to ask, is there nothing in the foregoing worthy of imitation? Could not some of our own schools be greatly improved by adopting some of these methods? Take for example that of D., I contend that it would be no sacrifice on the part of the teachers to meet once a fortnight for special prayer, nor would it be any sacrifice for them to meet once a fortnight; for the purpose of imparting instruction to one another, thus preparing their minds to appear before their scholars. But on the other hand, they would be greatly benefited thereby. The earnest adoption of such practices, will do more towards promoting the welfare of the school and the building up of the church, than all that can be written on the subject for generations to come.

Very respectfully yours,

Halifax, Sept., 1865.

W.

For the Christian Messenger.

OBITUARY NOTICES.

MEMOIR OF REV. JAMES PALMER.

The exit of an aged Minister of Christ, who has labored long and usefully, excites no surprise. The loss of his edifying conversation, his prudent counsels, his earnest prayers, and his beneficial example, is indeed keenly felt; but his removal, after he has by the will of God served his own generation, is naturally expected by all. When, however, a faithful and zealous young man, who appears evidently to be divinely called to the work of the ministry, and gives promise of extensive usefulness, is taken away, the dispensation of Providence seems dark and inscrutable. It pleased God to prolong the lives of the Baptist Pioneers in these Provinces generally to an advanced period. But of late a number of instances have occurred in which young Ministers of much promise have been unexpectedly removed from fields where their labors seemed much needed. Ours it is, however, to bow with calm submission to the Divine Sovereignty, and to obey the heavenly mandate, "Be still, and know that I am God." As all His works were done "in wisdom," so unquestionably are all those of His providence. His reasons for them may not be obvious to us; but they are known to Him.

Precisely three weeks after the decease of our justly venerated Brother, William Chipman, who had almost completed fourscore and four years of a life highly beneficial to his fellow men, and of whom it may be truly said, "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and much people was added unto the Lord," our esteemed and beloved young Brother James Palmer was called to enter his rest at the age of twenty-eight. Short, however, as was his life, there were some events in it of which a record may be serviceable. In cheerful compliance, therefore, with request, this brief Memoir is prepared.

In the early part of the year 1854, while the writer was laboring a portion of the time with the Baptist Church in Upper Aylesford, there was a gracious revival of religion in Morristown, a section of that field. A goodly number of young people became impressed with a sense of their guilt and danger, embraced the Saviour, and professed faith in Him. One of these was James Palmer. His convictions were not mere transient emotions, but were evidently pungent, deep, and abiding. They were secured by "joy and peace in believing." It became his sincere desire to do the will of God. But a severe trial ensued. He viewed it to be his duty to acknowledge and obey Christ by "being buried with him in baptism," and to unite with the Baptist Church. But his parents entertained a different view. He earnestly wished to please them; and yet his conscience dictated what they disapproved. But by the adoption of a mild and persuasive course, coupled with decision and perseverance, he succeeded in obtaining parental consent. He was then baptized by the writer, in the month of May, 1854.

Though our brother was at that time only seventeen years of age, yet he duly appreciated family worship, and was ardently desirous that it should be maintained in their house. He therefore respectfully requested his father to lead in this exercise. On his declining, the

youth, with extraordinary fortitude, inquired, "Then will you allow me to pray with the family?" Receiving an affirmative answer, he immediately commenced, and happily continued, as much as possible, to discharge this duty, and enjoy this privilege, so long as he remained under the parental roof. This example is well worthy of general imitation. Not only should every pious head of a family maintain the daily worship of God in his house, but any religious wife or child that can lead in it, if the husband or father decline, should do so, provided his consent can be obtained.

From the first, Bro. Palmer took an active part in the maintenance of prayer meetings. In process of time his mind became strongly and permanently impressed with a conviction that it was his duty to devote himself to the work of the gospel ministry. He fervently desired to be wholly engaged in winning souls to Christ. But an apprehension of his unfitness for so arduous a work tended to repress the ardor of his soul, and to induce him to adopt a course calculated, as he imagined, to relieve him from the disquietude which he endured with reference to this subject. In February, 1857, he was united in marriage with Miss Julia Cogswell, daughter of Deacon Oliver Cogswell; purchased a farm, and commenced laboring upon it, intending to relinquish his former idea of entering the Lord's vineyard.

His mind, however, was still disquieted and much troubled. At times the hand of God seemed to press so heavily upon him, from a consciousness of the neglect of imperative duty, that he was unable to attend to his worldly occupation. He felt assured that the language of Paul was applicable in his case, "Yea, wee is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" Undoubtedly he erred in not complying at once with the call. As Moses and Jeremiah at first offered excuses, and declined to yield obedience to the call divinely given them, some have imagined that a man exercised with regard to the ministry ought to resist the impression as long as he can. But these men were rebuked for the reluctance expressed, while the conduct of Isaiah and Paul, who readily complied, evidently received the approval of the Most High. (Exod. iv. 10-14. Jer. i. 6-8. Isa. vi. 8, 9. Acts ix. 18-20. xxvi. 15-20.) It can not be reasonably questioned, that had Bro. P. at once yielded to his impressions, he would have avoided much anguish of spirit, and been more useful in the Lord's service.

After a painful conflict that continued for years, in 1859, constrained by the love of Christ, he became decided in his resolution to abandon his worldly pursuits, and to devote the remainder of his life to efforts for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the salvation of his fellow men. Having made known to his brethren the exercises of his mind, and his determination, he was readily licensed, and commenced preaching, with manifestly happy effects.

Aware, however, of his deficiency with reference to education, and the desirableness of it for a minister of the gospel, in whom it is incumbent to teach and to expound the sacred Oracles, he sold his place in order that he might obtain it, and went to our Institutions in Wolfville, in the year 1860. While engaged in the acquisition of useful learning, he diligently improved opportunities to publish the glad tidings as extensively as he could. As he had a family, his expenses were necessarily heavy; and he was unable to pursue his studies there longer than about two years.

Bro. Palmer's missionary labors in some of the southern parts of the Province are said to have been evidently attended with the divine blessing. In November, 1862, he went to Cumberland County, where he had great encouragement. The gracious declaration "Lo, I am with you," was manifestly fulfilled, as evinced by the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints. As he kept no diary, particulars can not be given. It appears, however, that his eminent piety, his truly Christian deportment, and his faithful and diligent efforts to do good, commended him to the affectionate regards of the people among whom he labored.

Having been requested to take the pastoral charge of the Baptist Church at Advocate Harbor—one of the places first visited by the writer forty nine years ago, and where he first administered baptism—Bro. P. accepted the invitation, and was ordained on the 3rd day of June, 1863.

While zealously, acceptably, and usefully discharging the duties of his office in that region, by the mysterious allotment of Providence he became ill, and was attacked with bleeding at the lungs early in August, 1864. As there appeared no prospect of his recovery, he and his wife and child were removed to Morristown, Aylesford, where his relatives live. He remained in a remarkably helpless state to the close of life. His afflictions were endured with such exemplary patience that he was never known to utter a word of complaint.

In extreme bodily debility he sometimes expressed fears with regard to his state. In general, however, he was wonderfully sustained by the power of divine grace. His faith became stronger, and his consolation increased, as his dissolution drew nigh. On the 4th day of August, 1864, he triumphantly departed, in the confident assurance of being for ever with the Lord.

On the 6th his funeral was attended by a great concourse of people, who evinced their high esteem for this beloved Minister of Christ, and their deep sympathy with his bereaved and sorrowing widow and other relatives. An appropriate discourse was delivered on the occasion by Rev. James L. Road, from a text provisionally chosen by Bro. Palmer, namely: 1 Cor. xv. 57. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."—Com. by Rev. Charles Tupper.