

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Agency Jottings.

Among the brethren of Upper Stewiacke one finds a pleasant sojourn. The Pastor, Bro. Chipman, and his good wife, know well how to assist us in our work, and to make us happy in the enjoyment of their hospitality. Our brethren and sisters, few in number, are interested in our denominational enterprises and have a mind to work. Cultivators of the soil—they are better resisting the pressure of the times, than are those depending on other resources. In this, as well as in adjoining sections the modern new school house is built and occupied.

Here we tarried for a night at the birth place of the lamented Bentley, and here too we visited the early home of our Bro. E. N. Archibald of P. E. I. The seed sown here by the Fathers has brought forth good fruit. It is our pleasure to meet and tarry for a time with our brother, Rev. O. Chute, who is now fast regaining his health, lost years ago in the toils of our extensive French Mission field. Toils but dimly appreciated by the brethren and but poorly remunerated by the churches. With a family dependent upon him, with purse and health and spirits low, he turned his face to the cold world and struggled for a livelihood. The world accepts his services—God hears his prayers, blesses his efforts—he succeeds—his family is comfortably provided for and his health is returning. In the mean time he is able to render good service to the church by an occasional sermon, and constant assistance in other services. And yet the galling question, by the brethren, Ought not the minister who turns his attention to worldly pursuits to forfeit his honors? God answers "Honor to whom honor."

A long dreary drive of 60 miles brings us to St. Mary's. Here we find Bro. Eagles toiling as he has done for the last twenty years over a most extensive district for the spiritual good of the people. Twelve miles is comparatively a short drive in his field. On entering Guysborough County one soon learns that the fields are numerous and the laborers few. Canso, Crow Harbor, Coddle Harbor, Isaac's Harbor, and New Harbor Churches are all without pastors, besides extensive mission fields without laborers. There are but two Baptist ministers in this county and these are more than forty miles from each other. The services of at least two strong men are here needed at once.—Where are they to be found? Will "Acadia" furnish them? Shall not the churches pray the Lord of the Harvest to send forth laborers? And then will they not provide for their support; even more than the small sum of four hundred dollars a year?

From St. Mary's to Guysborough, a distance of forty-four miles, we find the roads very heavy, twenty miles of this especially is quite untrodden, and then for our comfort we are favored with one of the most beautiful silver storms we ever saw. After sitting in our coat of mail for eight hours, with alternate rain and sleet and hail pelting us on all sides, the sight of old Guysborough in the moon-light does us good. The cordial reception given us, and the skilful arrangements made for our comfort, just such as we experienced at St. Mary's, soon made us forget the toils and discomforts of the day. How sweet is rest after toil. How like a cordial, the recognition of friends after a sojourn in the wilderness where only once in a while a stranger is met. How much sweeter to rest in our own dear home. But better far our rest in Heaven! Near Guysborough town we found our aged Bro. David Shaw laboring for the salvation of the coloured people. In the mean time many of the white population are being blessed. I accepted an invitation to preach for him and enjoyed the occasion very much. The place of meeting was not of the most elegant pattern, yet it was beautifully light and glorious; because the Lord was there. Well would it be for our churches, and the lost and ruined ones who mingle with us, if our more elegant places of worship and our refined circles were made as luminous by the Spirit's power.

By the kindness of Bro. H. R. Cunningham my jaded horse was allowed to rest at Guysborough while by his son I was driven to Crow Harbor, and thence to Canso by bro. Ehler.

This little church is much in need of ministerial aid. The people, as the number who attended the Sabbath services indicated, are inclined to listen to the word of life. Worldly prospects are darkened by the failure of the fisheries—distress and sorrow are experienced.

In the Gospel is found the best balm. I here met Bro. Murray who was called to attend the funeral of an aged sister. With him I visited another house of mourning. A widow and fatherless ones are bereaved and needy and sad, because the father is suddenly removed. The neighbors are gathering in sympathy, hearts are softened. What a favorable time to speak of the great Salvation, but the laborers are few.

In the Manchester branch of the Guysborough Church there are indications of a revival.

At Antigonish, a beautiful inland village, a small church, the fruit of the late Father Whidden's labors, is holding on its way unaided by ministerial service.

In Pictou county Rev. W. Hall is laboring over a large extent of country supplying efficiently the small churches here located.

On entering the fine county of Cumberland I find the Pugwash Church without a pastor, and surrounding it are several small churches in the same destitute condition. Why this is the case I cannot fully understand. The little I did learn I would not like to publish.

Amherst is well supplied by the ministrations of Rev. D. A. Steel. The wealth and intelligence of this church, as seen in their fine commodious house of worship, and the taste and elegance of their dwellings, gives it a leading position in the East; and from it much aid may be expected for the support of our denominational institutions.

In Londonderry Rev. T. A. Blackadar is labouring with the Great Village Church. I met with them in special services,—good attention was given to the preached word.

I was sorry to find the Onslow Church much disturbed by a difficulty which I hope may soon subside, and the soft balmy influences of the Spirit of God bring a spring time of prosperity.

The Truro Church had taken in hand the object of my agency in a noble way, working so efficiently that nothing remained for me to do.

After jogging in the sleigh for 600 miles, I was glad to hear the snort of the iron-horse, by which I could be borne more swiftly and comfortably towards home.

By my brethren every where I was kindly received and cared for. In our Pastors we find good men, full of faith; they are zealously doing their work under many discouragements. As a general rule more labor is demanded of the pastor than he can perform, and his pay is seldom equal to his necessities. Many are much tried, and frequently tempted to engage in other pursuits to escape present embarrassments.

How much all these things have to do with the great dearth of laborers I do not know, but I am fully convinced that our churches must materially change their views and practices, in these particulars, ere the Lord of the Harvest will supply the full answer to their prayers.

J. H. S.

For the Christian Messenger.

Fiction.

To the Editor of the Christian Messenger,—

SIR,—Among the many interesting, instructive, and edifying subjects which are weekly brought to the notice of the public, through the medium of your valuable paper, perhaps none is more deserving the attention of christians at the present time, than that referred to in the Messenger of the 9th ult., by our much esteemed and venerable friend, Rev. Charles Tupper. When we consider what an immense amount of fictitious reading is weekly issued from the press to satisfy the morbid craving of the public mind, which is already so contaminated by the exciting trash thus disseminated, that evils of fearful magnitude, both moral and physical, have resulted therefrom; surely it is the duty of all christians, more especially christian ministers, and christian Editors, to raise their warning voice, and show the pernicious tendency of such literature. Eminent Physiologists and medical men have repeatedly verified the truth of your worthy correspondents statements when he says: "Were a tithe of the pernicious effects which have resulted from the publishing and reading of novels truly presented in a book, it would undoubtedly furnish a ponderous volume of woes and lamentations. Unquestionably the constitutions of many persons have been thereby ruined, nervous affections have been engendered or intensified, wise counsels and prudent measures have been rejected, visionary and ruinous schemes have been adopted, and insanity and suicide have followed in the train of evils."

The question naturally arises, Mr. Editor, What means should christians adopt in order to stem this torrent of evil which is inundating the most enlightened portion of Christendom?

Should they go to the "fountain head" and endeavour to stop it by getting a law passed to interdict the use of the printing press? I presume that no christian will entertain such an idea; because the printing press when rightly used, is universally acknowledged to be one of the greatest blessings of modern times. The Press of Ontario is now calling on its Legislature to pass a "prohibitory law" upon the subject. What in this age of varied and light reading should be prohibited? Should we condemn the many light, and, may I not add fictitious, articles that we meet with on the pages of even professedly religious newspapers? Some standard should be adopted. I regret that your able correspondent did not define his principles more explicitly. Should a law be passed prohibiting the printing, or circulation of all works in which fictitious names or characters are introduced? I think not; for although a large portion of the fictitious writings emanating from the Press of late, are productive of evil; it is well known that fictitious names and characters are introduced into some of the best works extant—such for instance, as the interesting book published many years ago, in the elegant diction of the learned and pious Hervey; purporting to be a dialogue between two fictitious characters named "Theron" and "Aspasio;" the interesting and instructive work entitled, "Theodosia Earnest;" and a vast number of other works of merit which I have neither time nor space at present to enumerate; all of which are admirably calculated to convey important truths to the youthful mind in a form, at once the most attractive, and the best calculated to make an indelible impression on the memory.

The truth is, Mr. Editor, the depravity of man's heart is such, that he is liable so to use, or rather abuse the privileges and blessings with which he is favored, as to turn them into curses; but, in my opinion, christians are not justifiable in denouncing unqualifiedly the use of any thing that may prove a blessing; nor in advocating the adoption of coercive measures to prohibit the use of any blessing merely because some persons, in their sinfulness, are liable to make an improper use of the same.

Hoping that you, Mr. Editor, or some of your correspondents more competent than myself, will give this subject that attention which its importance demands.

I subscribe myself,

Yours, &c.,

A BAPTIST OF THE OLD SCHOOL.

Westmoreland, N. B., Feb. 26th, 1868.

For the Christian Messenger.

Jottings by the way.

No. 2.

Six miles from Pictou is New Glasgow, the most thriving town in Nova Scotia which may in time equal the Glasgow of old Scotia, in near proximity to the Albion Mines, it has advantages which no other place can possess. In the eye of the observer the aspects of this locality and its surroundings are most striking; standing upon an eminence above the town the eye roams over a prospect of surpassing interest. Pictou is seen on the hill side with its fine Harbour, Green Hill with its beautiful slopes, affording fine agricultural advantages, attracts the gaze, whilst the lurid fires of the Albion Mines are seen belching out from tall chimneys, whilst the long train of coal cars rolling their rich black freight to the loading ground, indicates the resources of the place; the mines have been the cause of the prosperity and wealth of the adjoining towns. A great improvement has taken place since the first visit to this dingy place. Now may be seen different places of worship in the midst of the mining population, instead of the religious monopoly which existed in former years. Other Companies are now carrying on extensive operations in other claims. The American Company under the Superintendance of their Agent Mr. Hoyt, are making improvements truly magnificent, the coal field is laid out in a scientific manner; a wide road with side walk called Pennsylvania Avenue leads to the work, whilst the houses built for the miners exhibit a striking contrast to the huts of the old company, some of which are scarcely fit for out houses for beasts and hogs. Railways are laid down leading to Middle River and the main track. The Albion Mines Company may have taken the cream of their operations in the coal business. Three pits are now being sunk at the cost of £60,000, eight hundred feet deep, and where the dip is so great in an eastwardly direction, it may be problematical whether much profit will be realized, other companies are also at work. If the coal tariff be taken off by the Americans the present season will be a busy and profitable one.

THE EXTERNAL RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF PICTOU COUNTY.

The external Religious aspects of New Glasgow are imposing, here within the compass of ten miles, may be found nine clergymen doing duty, well sustained, with salaries varying from five to eight hundred dollars per annum, with all the religious machinery in connexion with large congregations, Sabbath Schools, Bible Classes, etc. The Presbyterians are to be admired and imitated for their liberality in sustaining religious Institutions. The minister's stipend must be paid. A system of giving is followed out among them beginning with childhood worthy of all commendation. In their Sabbath Schools large sums are raised for missionary purposes, thus identifying the youthful mind with the principle of giving for religious objects. The feeling of reverence for the sanctities of Christianity is very profound in the Scotch mind; the respect paid to the ministry, their regard for the Bible and the Lord's day, the sobriety of their deportment when in the House of God, might well be imitated by those who profess to be more spiritual, and where the vital element exists, the observance of all religious duties is most conscientious. In no country in the Province may be seen larger and more elegant places of worship than in the County of Pictou.

THE STYLE OF PREACHING AND MANNER OF WORSHIP.

The ministrations of the Pulpit accord with the character of the people. Dogmatic Theology is peculiar to the Scotch pulpit, though a change is going on in this respect on the part of the younger preachers, who are becoming more modernized in the New School. One does not now hear two hour sermons or one hour prayers as in the days of old, manuscript is coming more into use, which brings out more concentration of thought and less of that diffusive verbosity, common to those who preach in the manner called extemporaneously. There is still too much of the Theoretic style, too little of that close pungent appeal to the conscience, which tells so powerfully upon the audience, and which is blessed of the Spirit. A mingling of this with the sound doctrinal teachings of the Presbyterian Pulpit would render its ministry more efficient in accomplishing the main object of the Christian priesthood, viz. the conversion of Souls.

A style more familiar, more natural would produce greater results; the writer is reminded of a circumstance in the life of the celebrated Dr. Guthrie who is a man of rare conversational powers, abounding with illustrations, but who, when preaching in former years, put in that solemn tone that starched stateliness, that holy droning which may be heard in all pulpits. Why do you not preach as you talk Dr. ? asked his servant man one day. He took the hint changed his manner, became natural, and was soon the most popular preacher in Scotland, a similar circumstance is recorded concerning the great Grecian Orator, Demosthenes, who, being wronged by his Guardians was accustomed to make his complaints in a very lackadaisical manner. "I do not believe you" said a celebrated actor to him. The future orator brisped up into fury. "Ah! now I do," observed the player. Garrick was once asked by a celebrated Bishop, how he could produce such effects on his audience by his performances, which were only fictions, whilst he might preach the most solemn truths without any apparent result. "I will tell you the reason, my Lord Bishop," replied the actor, "I represent fiction as if it were a reality, you represent truth as if it were fiction."

H.

For the Christian Messenger.

Church Order and Discipline.

DEAR BROTHER,—

I have been startled by the propounding of certain views of Church Discipline and "ministerial independence" by the Editor of the Christian Visitor. I say startled, because, so far as I know, never has any Baptist newspaper, any private Baptist member, or any minister of a Baptist Church till now, attempted to suggest the creation of a distinct tribunal to adjudicate upon charges preferred against the Pastor of a Church—in other words, to introduce into the Baptist polity a superior ecclesiastical court, with functions to ignore the powers of any church to discipline one of its members, if that member should occupy the place of a Pastor. I am quite certain that the existence of such a tribunal is no where indicated in the New Testament. Even an "Advisory Council" has its origin rather in expediency than in Scriptural injunction.