

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

ONTARIO CORRESPONDENCE.

THE RED RIVER DIFFICULTY AND MURDER THE ABSORBING TOPIC. INDIGNATION IN ONTARIO. THE PROBABLE CAUSE. THE FENIAN DEMONSTRATION. THE GREAT METHODIST. THE BAPTISTS IN MONTREAL &c.

In these days of electricity it seems scarcely worth while for a poor pen-and-ink correspondent, a thousand miles distant, to attempt anything like news-giving. Yet I can hardly pass without notice the absorbing public topics of the hour. First in importance and in interest is the Winnipeg business. I mentioned in my last that we were waiting in suspense for the next turn of the wheel of which Thomas Riel holds the crank. We had not long to wait. As your readers are all well aware that next turn consigned a fellow countryman to a cruel and butcherly death. If the would-be Napoleon intended, as is in all probability the fact, by this deed to make a final break with Canada and to commit himself and his followers to a course of open hostility, the result has fully met his expectations. Compromise with him and his party is now out of the question. A storm of indignation has been aroused throughout the length and breadth of Ontario, that would, unless I greatly misread the signs, quickly hurl from power any Government that would now venture to recognize the Provincial Government at Red River, by any intercommunication or treaty. Crowded public meetings are being held in one city and town after another, denouncing the murderer and calling upon the Dominion Government to assert its supremacy by force of arms, and to refrain from receiving delegates who have just arrived from the scene of the disturbance. The question with reference to the proper treatment of these latter has until of late seemed a rather complicated one. It has been plausibly urged that they come as the representatives of the people of Winnipeg, not of Riel's clique, and further that they come by invitation of the Secretary of State of the Dominion. Hence it is argued they must be received. If, however, as is now asserted by the newspaper correspondents, they come as emissaries from Riel's Government, bringing a new "Bill of Rights," substituted by him for the one agreed on by the people, and hold themselves bound to submit their measures to him for approval, or rejection, the Gordian knot will, I presume, be summarily cut. But it is useless to speculate about what will be well known long before this reaches your readers. One point connected with one of these delegates, however, is of vital interest all over the Dominion. I refer to priest Richot who has been one of the most active instigators of the rebellion from the first. His connection with it, coupled with other circumstances, gives a strong colouring of probability to the assertion so often made, that the insurrection is mainly in the interests of the Roman Catholic party and that one of its chief ends is to secure for the priesthood some substantial advantages in the shape of yearly subsidies or land reserves. If this is the game there is little fear of its success. The people in this section of the Dominion want no more "Clergy Reserves." The Maritime Provinces will assuredly second their resolve to have no more Church and State arrangements. A tolerably strong party might perhaps be found in Quebec to favour something of the kind, but no Dominion Government, I feel sure, would dare be a party to any such arrangement. If there is any one political tenet to which the Protestant subjects of Canada are more strongly attached than another that tenet is the absolute separation and mutual independence of Church and State.

There can no longer be any doubt that a reign of terror exists in the North-West. The loyal and progressive majority are in the grasp of the armed and unscrupulous minority. The very natural and, within certain limits, laudable anxiety of the men of property, the men of peace, and the men of religious principle, to avoid opening the floodgates of rapine and murder by the shedding of the first blood, has led to their being bound hand and foot under the tyranny of reckless characters restrained by no such scruples. To the former it must be matter of thankfulness that the Imperial and Dominion Governments are at one in hastening preparations for their deliverance.

Mean while, true to their instincts and creed, the Fenians over the border are taking advantage of the trouble to make some of their annual demonstrations. Few believe they will have the temerity to set their feet on Canadian

soil, especially in April, when that soil is, in so many places, peculiarly yielding and bottomless. For my own part, little as I sympathize with the unreasoning and unprincipled hostility of the wretched horde, I can scarcely find it in my heart to wish them a worse fate than that they should attempt to cross some of the lower portions of our country, with a detachment of horses, waggons and guns, I should like to be there to see. Nevertheless slight as is the real danger of invasion at the present moment, the authorities cannot disregard the friendly warnings they are receiving. They were caught napping once and do not mean to be a second time. So the din of preparation, the marching of armed men and the tramp of cavalry, and artillery horses are resounding along the border, near the points threatened.

The people in Toronto are fortunate in having amongst them one of the foremost pulpit orators of the day in the person of William Morley Punshon. The denomination to which he belongs, it may well be supposed, are not behind hand in utilizing his presence for the furtherance of denominational interests. The probability is that the churches of the body throughout our towns and villages will soon be freed from debt by the contributions of the multitudes who flock together to be charmed by his sonorous periods and brilliant antitheses. They get value for their money and so no one can complain, while the funds of Methodism are swelled and its prestige enlarged. It is said that a large tabernacle is soon to be erected for him in the city.

It is encouraging to note the progress of the Baptist cause in Montreal. The one church of a few years since has now become three, all active and full of promise. During Bro. Alexander's seven years pastorate of the First Church the hand of fellowship has been extended to 497 members, 221 of them baptized by himself, making an average yearly increase of 71. The actual membership of that church has not increased of late owing to the dismission of large numbers to the Point St. Charles and Catherine Street Churches. The losing of members in such a manner and for such an object is the church's highest gain and glory.

J. E. W.

For the Christian Messenger.

VALEDICTORY SERVICE AT PINE GROVE, WILMOT.

The Rev. W. H. Porter delivered his farewell discourse at the Pine Grove Baptist Church, Wilmot, Annapolis County, on the morning of Sunday the 17th inst.

A very large audience composed of Baptists and other denominations crowded the house.

The sermon was powerful, earnest, instructive and affectionate, from Matt. ix: 36-38. The scene was deeply affecting; many were bathed in tears; at the close of which James Wheelock, Esq., by request read the following address:

FAREWELL ADDRESS OF THE PINE GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH TO THEIR PASTOR REV. W. H. PORTER.

Dear Brother,—

On such an occasion as the present we acknowledge our inadequacy to give expression to those deep emotions of soul, which to be understood must be felt, but cannot be expressed. Yet we are unwilling to allow that happily reciprocated christian affection and cordial union, which have so long existed between us to be severed, without tendering to you and your beloved companion our deep and united sympathies in the afflictive and mysterious dispensation of an all-wise Providence which occasions our separation.

We believe what your coming to us was by Divine direction, and demands our gratitude and praise to God, that your faithful administrations have been approved and blessed, in the building up of the Church and in the conversion of many souls; and while our Heavenly Father has been graciously pleased to smile on, and bless your faithful public administrations, we have rejoiced to know that your motto has been, "as you go preach" so that in your social intercourse, in the sick room, and as you have journeyed by the way. "Your words fitly spoken, have been like apples of gold in pictures of silver," and have, by the Divine blessing been made instrumental in leading souls to Christ.

Dear Brother,—Your absence will cause a sad blank, all will miss you, but more particularly those whom you have been the honored instrument of bringing to Christ; many of whom are young; and no class, more than they, will deeply feel and mourn your absence.

We desire Dear Brother, to commend you, with your beloved companion and little ones, to the care of Him, to whose guidance and service you desire so entirely to commit and consecrate yourself, and all you have and are; humbly praying that God may grant you a safe and prosperous passage, that it may conduce to the happy and speedy recovery of the health of your estimable partner, and that you may together enjoy many, many years of happiness and usefulness; and should we, in the arrange-

ments of infinite wisdom, not be permitted to behold each others faces in time, may it be our happy privilege to hail each other in that bright world of glory—where sickness, sorrow, or parting will not be known.

Committee on behalf of the Church,
EDWARD C. YOUNG,
JONATHAN WOODBURY,
T. H. RANDALL.

REPLY.

Dear Brethren and Sisters in Christ,—Were it not that comfort from a higher source than human cheers me, I should almost fail in listening to your words of parting, and attempting to reply.

Having been ordained to the pastorate of this church, and having spent the best eight years, and energies of my life, in the enjoyment of your friendship, the assurance of your attachment, and desire and effort for your spiritual good, deeply interesting, strong and sacred ties of sympathy, have those bright years formed between us. If ever there was a time when our removal must be at the cost of personal interest and of mutual sympathy, it is now. But our comfort is that we go at His bidding, who first directed us to you. The failure of my wife's health, together with the partial filtering of my own, seem to render a change of climate necessary. Providence appears pointing to Jamaica as the scene of our future toils, for how long, or with what results, is known only to Him. During my pleasant but imperfect labors among you, I have known no greater joy or ambition than your spiritual growth. To this I have endeavoured to bend my energies; failure herein has been my deepest sorrow; success my highest joy. "For what is our hope or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming. For ye are our glory and joy." If, however, I have been enabled in any measure to contribute to this, I desire to refer the glory to Him who bestows the grace.

Your reference to my partner awakens my deepest sense of your kindness and love. In her may I be allowed to say, you have had a most interested friend. May your kindness to her, as well as to myself and our children, be remembered in that day when "He that giveth a cup of cold water only to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose his reward." Indeed your kindness to us, has always been all that we could desire, and will ever be remembered by us with feelings of gratitude to the Father of mercies and to you.

And should far off scenes, or distant years add joys or sorrow to our lot, we'll think of seasons spent and friendships formed at Pine Grove, as, I doubt not, among the most dearly cherished of our lives.

You speak of my benefit to the young. The reference awakens my tenderest emotions. They actually live in my heart. I would fain lift them above temptation, and establish them on Christ. Oh! with what interest have I watched and thought of them. May they advance in all that is essential to true happiness, and may Pine Grove church and people never lack the earnest labors, holy pattern, and blessed fruits, of an esteemed and faithful ministry. "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." Amen.

The services were closed by the Pastor, with one of the most solemn, fervent prayers to Almighty God, that it has ever been our privilege to listen to, committing and commending his people to the care of Him who cares for them.

For the Christian Messenger.

PASTORAL LABORS.

"Preach the gospel to every creature," is the divine commission given to all God's servants. We are to preach the gospel, by a living daily piety, by our conversation, and by carrying the sweet story of the Cross from house to house. But especially, is this blessed work intrusted to the under-shepherd of the flock "No person can disapprove of that kind of pastoral visitation which amounts to nothing more than a friendly call and frivolous gossip, more than myself; and, so far as my feeble endeavors go, I would do all in my power to dissuade my ministerial brethren from such a practice—and check the foolish and extravagant expectations which many attendants on the ministry entertain in relation to it. And I also freely admit, that private visiting, for the purpose of spiritual edification, is not the duty of the pastor exclusively; neither is it limited to the deacon's office. Private spiritual intercourse is obviously a christian duty, and as such is obligatory upon every servant of God. It is not the ministers, as such, it is not deacons as such, but members of christian churches generally whom the Apostle exhorts "to edify one another,"—"to admonish one another"—to warn the unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all."

As it would be not merely very unedifying, but in many cases quite impossible for the majority of church members to carry into effect these precepts, except in private interviews, we must regard them as involving an obligation upon christians, as such, to visit from house to house. It is then as clearly the duty of mem-

bers to pay such visits as it is that of the pastor; and no private christian can reasonably complain of his minister's neglect, who is habitually neglecting, in the same way, his fellow men."

Pastor and people must work together, he looking after their spiritual welfare; and they looking after each other; "watching over one another in the fear of the Lord."

It is sometimes contended that—the word of God is silent on this subject, and that the minister is not commanded in Scripture, to visit any save the sick. If this statement were correct, we should deny the inference.

"Is nothing clearly obligatory but what is distinctly enjoined in the word of God? Was it absolutely necessary for the Divine Spirit to specify in minute detail every separate exercise of the ministry? If so, how can we prove it to be the duty of the minister to be generally resident among his charge,—to give his particular attention to the enquiring, the anxious and the distressed,—to be habitually studying for the benefit of his flock,—to meet them for prayer and christian intercourse at appointed periods? Far be it from me to question the duty of the minister, to attend to those other exercises which are enforced in the word of God. I merely ask can we point to explicit statements of scripture which clearly and unequivocally enjoin those particular duties to which I have referred? Every one must allow too, I am confident, that it is the minister's duty to conduct the devotional services in the sanctuary—to preside at church meetings—to be a strenuous advocate of Bible, Tract, and Missionary Societies—to appeal against all the predominant evils of the day, &c."

Neither have I any difficulty in inferring these obligations from the general principles of the Word of God. But scripture is just as silent in respect to distinct, separate, minute precept on these matters, as it is in relation to pastoral visitation from house to house." Proper visiting operates very advantageously on the Pastor himself. It constitutes an appropriate diversion from the laborious, and, in some respects, deadening pursuits of continuous secluded study. It directs his mind to topics of meditation that would otherwise escape it. It affords him the finest opportunity of enlarging his knowledge on one most profitable subject of ministerial attainment—human nature. It checks the excessive tendency to theorize and generalize, which much reading is calculated to promote. It enables him to decide many theological questions, by a frequent reference to facts. It supplies him with a great variety of experimental information, which he may introduce with the greatest advantage into his public discourses. It will fit him to adapt himself to the perpetually changing aspect of his flock, and hence will give to his public instructions the very attractive charm of strict correspondence with the reality of things and practical direction for their improvement.

Nor is the natural tendency of such personal inspection to promote a lively interest in the welfare of the flock, and to throw around the advice of the preacher the attractive influence of parental counsel, rather than of professional dictation to be forgotten. The Inquiry-meeting and the Bible-class may yield some of these advantages, but as these assemblies are generally confined to only a small portion of the congregation, and as the intercourse on such occasions is less free and minute than that which the private interview promotes, the benefits derived from such opportunities of personal conversation cannot be fairly deemed to supercede that of visiting from house to house. Is not such visitation equally beneficial also to the people themselves? How easy it is to parry the public appeal, but how difficult to resist the personal and private inquiry?

How many who have been converted by the latter who have for years resisted the former? What difficulties too, some of the hearers are laboring under, which in many cases, ten minutes conversation with the pastor, might remove. How many are sometimes waiting to enrol themselves as the professed followers of the Redeemer, but whose preparation may pastors would never learn without a private interview?

Such visits tend, however, greatly to endear the minister to his hearers, and in proportion to this circumstance will be their readiness to profit by his public instructions.

How encouraging for a pastor to know that he has the prayers and sympathies of his entire flock—that his arms are staid by sure props—the saints' prayers. For without that love and unanimity, which become christians, little can be accomplished.

May the Lord give unto us, as stewards of his manifold grace, both love and zeal with which to glorify him now and forever, is the prayer of your fellow laborer in Christ.

ROMAN.