

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE PEW SYSTEM.

Mr. Editor,—

There are two questions of the highest moment to the Christian Church. One is, How the members may best perform their duty in sustaining the Christian Ministry? The second is, How they may best present the gospel to the world in their places of public worship? In dealing with the first a variety of modes may be pursued. A stipulated amount may be guaranteed, and paid, monthly, quarterly or yearly, or the ministry may be provided for as occasion may suggest, or as the affection of his people may dictate to them.

The latter question, although essentially connected with the former, is that which I would now refer to. How the churches of Christ may most effectually present the gospel to the world; whether by having a house of worship open alike in every part to all comers, as their more social worship is held, or whether a certain portion of the church edifice shall be allotted to an individual or family for a stipulated amount to be paid by them. This has been somewhat discussed in your columns but almost wholly on one side.

Those of your correspondents who have written, appear to have great faith in what they term the Free-seat system; and, it appears to me, are very desirous of drawing an invidious comparison between it and what they call the Pew-rent system. I have no desire to shake their faith in their cherished idea of what is their duty in this matter, or in promoting benevolent objects; or in making contributions towards the support of the ministry of the gospel; but, I must be allowed the same freedom of opinion. If I choose another mode and time than giving a variable sum on the first day of the week for making my contributions, I believe that I am not therefore less scriptural than they. It is evident that in holding religious meetings some expense will be incurred, and this must be met in some way. The Lord has appointed that "they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel," and, I think it does not much matter what method shall be employed to collect the voluntary contributions of those who are under obligation to make them. If I engage to contribute \$5 per quarter and say \$5 as an additional subscription for this object, mine is surely a voluntary contribution as much as if I give 50 cents a week, on each Lord's day morning, or a dollar one week in which I have done pretty well and then nothing at all for two or three subsequent weeks in which I may make nothing in my business, or less than nothing.

When the Apostle Paul advised the churches of Galatia and the Corinthians "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him;" this was for a specific purpose which he mentions and he gives this as the reason for his request: "that there be no gatherings when I come." It may be said and often is, that this lays down the principle that weekly "gatherings" are the rule for the church to sustain religious objects. But I do not think so. By a similar course of argument it might be said that the advice given to Timothy, by the same Apostle, "Drink no longer water but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and their often infirmities" is an argument against Total Abstinence from intoxicating beverages. But by taking another view of this matter would it not appear that Timothy had up to this time been a total abstainer? and that such was his practice, and probably also that of other Christians. So that the advice given to him proves that it was in the nature of a medical prescription for his "often infirmities" that the Apostle Paul prescribed it. And by the same line of argument does it not also appear that the Corinthians were accustomed to "gatherings" for the purpose of paying the necessary expenses of the church. But as this "collection for the saints" was a large demand upon them, they were advised "every one to lay by him in store" for that object. It then the time and mode of contributing is merely a matter of choice and propriety. I think it is not for the advocates of one mode to charge those accustomed to another with being less Christian than themselves.

The Pew System is supposed to entitle each family to seats or a pew for their own use when the House of worship is open for public service. The Free System allows every one, equally, to have the same right to any, and all parts of the house, whether they contribute anything or nothing. For the convenience of families, and in

many other respects, I must say that the former commends itself to my judgment as preferable to the latter. Of course it should be understood that effort will be made to afford accommodation to strangers and others who may be disposed to join in worship with the regular congregation. The Pew system does not prevent this, nor does it necessarily make men uncharitable or selfish. It rather gives them the opportunity of inviting their friends and others to come and participate in the sittings to which they have a claim; enabling them in the spirit of Moses, to say: "Come thou with us and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." I feel it a privilege to bring with me to the house of God as many persons as possible, and, if I can fill my own I feel assured of finding room for myself in some other, a dozen other persons are ready to do the same and pleased to give seats to all who wish them.

These are a few stray thoughts I have had on this subject, not however so full or so well considered as I wish they were. If they shall lead any of my brethren to think of their obligations to those around who do not hear the gospel I shall be glad.

A DISCIPLE.

For the Christian Messenger.

ACADIA ATHENÆUM LECTURES.

Mr. Editor,—

Will you allow me through your columns to give a brief notice of some Lectures which have been delivered before this body during the present season. I feel it is but justice to the lectures themselves that they should be publicly noticed, while a few hints that may tend to draw attention to the operations of the Athenæum, may perhaps, not be uninteresting to the friends of the Institution.

The first Lecture of the course was delivered on Friday, Oct. 22nd, by

PROF. R. V. JONES, A. M.

In this production we were carried back to ancient classic lore. "Blind yet saw" was the apt heading of a treatise on the genius and poetry of the immortal Homer. As my mind recurs to the Lecture itself, and the feelings awakened by its delivery, I do confess that it seems quite impossible to do justice to the effort except by procuring its publication. The Professor struck a lofty key. There was an elevation of style, a purity and elegance of diction, a grace and fervor of eloquence which carried captive every intelligent listener. The character of Homer's poetry,—its profound originality—its spirit and fire, was clearly exhibited; and the influence of his immortal works on great minds of all succeeding ages was thoroughly discussed. The polish and vigor of the Attic mind was admirably portrayed, and the famed scenes of classic story were painted with gorgeous imagery.

The philosophy of true greatness and of the manifestations of genius was unfolded with great clearness and power. This Lecture was a master piece of style and composition, indicating much thought and ability, as well as learning and culture. It was splendidly adapted to the tastes and wants of a body of students, and was highly appreciated by the members of Acadia Athenæum.

REV. DR. ROBERTSON.

We are now suddenly transported to "The Nineteenth Century." The learned doctor did ample justice to his interesting theme. He traced the various indications of progress which have signally marked the present century. The improvements in science—the advancement of education—the elevation of moral excellence were all dwelt upon with much clearness and force. Anecdotes were frequently introduced to illustrate stages of progress and reform in various pursuits. The whole was delivered in that pleasing and impressive manner which is essentially and peculiarly the doctor's. All present were entertained and highly gratified. The high reputation of the Rev. Lecturer exclude the necessity of any further remark.

Our next Lecturer was the

REV. JOSEPH HOGG

who favored us with his well-known Lecture on "Jerusalem." This proved to be a singularly interesting production.

The delivery was very fine. The easy, flowing, earnest eloquence of the Rev. gentleman seemed to transport his hearers to the real places and scenes so graphically described. We were conducted through Palestine stopping briefly to notice the more prominent places on the road. Joppa was described and circumstances noted coinciding with the Scripture Narrative. The distinguishing feature of Lydda and Ramah were hastily portrayed, till, coming on, we at last from a distant eminence get a view of the Holy

City. The Lecturer described beautifully the sensation produced by the first view of this interesting spot,—the remembrances awakened—the associations called up on gazing upon this place hallowed by so many scenes of undying interest and unspeakable importance to the human race. There stood the city, one of the centres of our Lord's Ministry. There were the mountains, the valleys, the plains and the brooks all sacred to the memory of our Blessed Redeemer.

We enter the city and view its present condition,—its inhabitants—its buildings—its remains. The magnificent Mosque of St. Omar is accurately described.

The customs of the people are noted and all the traditions of the remaining Jews vividly, and touchingly narrated. Time forbids me following this bewitching sketch further. The Lecture was just what might be expected on such an unusually suggestive theme. It was interspersed with very rich poetic imagery, and the whole audience were seemingly entranced during its entire delivery. All must have left with the great events, which marked the beginning of the Christian era, impressed upon their minds with more than ordinary freshness and force.

During the coming term other distinguished gentlemen will occupy the platform from month to month, notices of which will be forwarded to your office.

STUDENT.

Acadia College, Dec. 23.

For the Christian Messenger.

IN MEMORIAM.

ANNIE A. PARKER,

Died at Lunenburg, on the 8th inst., eldest daughter of Obidiah Parker, Esq., in the 26th year of her age. Her sudden and unexpected removal has cast a shade over the family circle, and the community in which she was so very recently engaged in carrying on a retail mercantile establishment. Her demise is a solemn admonition to the young to seek the Lord, and live in constant preparation for the hour when death shall come. Be ye therefore ready also for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh. Her interment took place on the 10th inst., at North West, on which occasion a sermon was delivered by the Rev. S. March from Job xvii. 13, to a large and sympathizing congregation. May the bereaved family find abundant consolation in the promises of God, and experience in this hour of trial his supporting and sustaining grace.—Com.

ELLEN FOSTER,

youngest daughter of the late Capt. Charles Foster, of Port Medway, departed this life at Bridgewater on Sunday morning the 19th inst., after a short but severe illness at the early age of 18 years and 6 months, deeply lamented by all her friends and acquaintances. She was widely known in the community as a young person of great amiability ever ready to show sympathy and render aid in affliction, buoyant and cheerful in social life; a constant attendant at the Sabbath School, in which she was a thoughtful and attentive pupil; an earnest worker on behalf of the benevolent objects in connection with the church although not a communicant; a lover of the prayer meeting; an ardent friend of temperance, and a devoted daughter and sister. How sadly do we miss her genial face, her cheerful voice, and active footsteps, but we shall see that face, hear that voice, harken to that footstep no more—we doubt not she is with the angels now, walking the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, and joining in the song of the ransomed before the throne. As peacefully as she fell asleep, so may she rest until the resurrection dawn; then "rise to meet the Lord in the air." And so may she "be for ever with the Lord." The funeral was attended by a large concourse of sorrowing friends, who were accompanied by the members of "Acacia Lodge," of Freemasons, the "Rose of Sharon Lodge" of G. T., "Phanix Division" S. of T. and the Bridgewater Baptist Sabbath School—a sermon was delivered by the Rev. S. March from Job xiv. 14. "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come." May God support the sorrowing mother, who so very pensively declares "She was a comfort to me," and the bereaved sisters and absent brothers, and prepare them all with a well grounded hope to say,

"Yet again we hope to meet thee,  
When the day of life is fled;  
Then in heaven with joy to greet thee,  
Where no farewell tear is shed."

Com.—

Missionary Intelligence.

MISSION TO THE Teloogoes.

LETTER FROM MR. CLOUGH.

Ministers' Institute at Ongole. Ongole, Aug. 6, 1869.—I have been very busy; the day is hardly commenced before it is night, and yet I suppose that each is of the proper length. From the first of May until the middle of June, while the hot winds were blowing, we had a "Ministers' Institute" as near like those two held at the West as our circumstances would admit. All the native preachers, colporteurs, etc., were in attendance, making, with the more advanced scholars in the normal school,

quite an audience,—fifteen or twenty. Excellent men, Mr. Jewett and Timpany, were invited to lecture for the "Institute," but as they failed to come, I, in my poor way, lectured to these earnest listeners nearly every day. The lectures were taken down, or rather notes of the lectures were taken by the preachers, ect. The lectures over, each one went his way to write out as much of what he had heard as possible. This done, they by themselves met and compared papers, and again made out a report of the morning lecture, which was submitted to me, re-corrected, and then transcribed into a blank book. In this way they got the lectures almost in full, which gives them quite a book, ready for reference.

Fifty Candidates for Baptism. Last Sabbath, Aug. 1st, was another time long to be remembered by us. Just fifty were present for baptism; some of these were from Cumbam, Ravy-pawa, one of the city of Cumbam, where there are said to be thirty other believers in Jesus. Twelve were from Sookasul, a town of eight or ten thousand inhabitants, twenty miles north of Ongole. The candidates for baptism were of all ages, from the youth of fourteen or fifteen years of age to the old and decrepit whose sojourn here below is nearly at an end. In the afternoon I immersed forty-two, on profession of faith in Jesus. A little Pentecost it was. The ordinance was administered in our new baptistery, which we had just completed. The baptistery is not in the chapel as is customary at home, but about a hundred yards distant, under a beautiful tamarind-tree.

I need not remark that the forty-two were thoroughly examined; besides, either myself or the native preachers have known most of them, and more or less of their walk for months. The eight whom we did not receive are Christians, I think; but are entangled in marriage affairs. They may make everything right, and yet be numbered with the people of God.

The whole scene, the place, the converts, the evening, the thus dedicating the new baptistery, the soul-cheering news from many villages and the many other encouraging signs of good in store for the—as most people think—God-forsaken Hindust, made us greatly rejoice, and gave us a foretaste of the happiness in store for those who love Jesus, when all enemies shall have been conquered and He shall reign King of earth, as He is King of heaven.

An hour after the baptism, we again all repaired to the chapel and partook of the Lord's Supper. This was over, as usual, about nine o'clock; a hymn was sung, and then, did we go out? No; the disciples did not want to. They wanted to hear from me more. Then commenced a general talk of the trials, difficulties, temptations, abuse, beatings, perhaps,—and perhaps worse, (several have been beaten, and at one time sixteen were in jail one hundred miles northwest of Ongole, because they were Christians,) and the way they must meet all such trials.

At 11½ o'clock I took leave and went to my cot to try to sleep, and they to their mats to sleep until daylight next morning, when all, except the preachers, colporteurs, etc., went on their way to their homes.

"This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes."

BURMAH.

Mission to Shans.—Mr. Cushing baptized a Shan woman the first Sabbath in September. She seems to have been a Christian for a long time.

Maulmain.—Miss Haswell's school for Burman girls, during her temporary absence in Rangoon for her health, was continued very successfully under the instruction of native teachers. Several young women wish to enter the school, who will shortly be formed into a class for the study of the Bible and arithmetic, and improvement in reading, writing, and needle-work. The Burman Woman's Society have just held their annual meeting. Their contributions the last year were over 200 rupees. Some of the women have maintained family worship throughout the year. A Sunday afternoon Bible class has recently been commenced, which numbers over sixty members, old and young, men, women, and children.

THE FREEDMEN IN THE SOUTH.

Walking 24 Miles to School.—A Missionary Teacher writes from Augusta, Georgia, "I have seventeen colored pastors, preachers and licentiates, in my theological school. O! how eagerly they listen. O! what a work to instruct them! I never was so happy in any work I have undertaken for God, as in looking down through the glistening eyes of these eager pupils and letting light from God's Word into their souls. What a work for them! What a work for others, through them! One good earnest brother preacher walked twenty six miles to spend this week in our Theological School, and almost wept when he parted with us last evening. I bless God for the past week especially, among these dear brethren!

We are informed by high authority that a Southern Presbyterian Elder has sent a check for three hundred dollars to the Baptist General Association of Kentucky, saying in substance as follows:—

"The colored people are with you. They are Baptists. You, and not we, can, and should educate their preachers. I send this \$300 to encourage you to undertake this vitally important work."

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST was a missionary spirit. "He went about doing good." O! that all his followers resembled Him in this respect. How is it with the reader!