

Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business : fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF A MINUTE.

It died, the little, bright-eyed thing,
Just at the dawn of day;
Ere Faith awoke, behold, it slept!
And thus it passed away.

Faith sent with weeping eyes to Hope,
To come her grief to share;
"O yes I'll come," said bright-eyed Hope,
"But sister, love,—beware!"

"You've many precious children left.
And many more to come;
Now, watch! and see their work is done,
Before Love calls them home!"

And so they took their wee, small thing,
And bore it to the grave;
And Godly Fear and Zeal came in
And wept, but could not save!

The place where Faith her treasure left,
Is very bleak and vast;
Myriads of precious things lie there,
And it is called the Past.

With weeping eyes Faith left her love,
And wrote with bitter tears:—
"Stranger, the passing minute nurse,
And thus preserve the Year."

W. POOLE BALFERN.

Religious.

We like many things in the following communication; but would suggest that when "A Teacher" writes on the duties of the Pastor, he should do so with much deference. We are fully satisfied that the writer did not intend to present his views by way of dictating, nor do we suppose that any pastors would take exception to the opinions here expressed. Yet the duties pointed out might come more acceptably before brethren holding the pastoral office if they were less positively stated, and rather as the opinions of the writer than as truths absolute and certain. Respect and reverence for Christian Ministers, as the Divinely appointed Teachers and special agents of Christ in bringing the world to himself are matters too little regarded in some communities.—Ed. C. M.]

For the Christian Messenger.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL AND THE PASTOR.

Much difference of opinion appears to exist concerning the duty of the Pastor to the Sabbath School. Many church members, who themselves take no part in the work, seem to think that Pastors should be Superintendent, teacher and chief supporter of the Sabbath School operations. Not a few Pastors, on the other hand, appear to believe that their whole duty to the school is to pray for it on the Sabbath, and to attend a Sabbath School Convention once a year, and then read a nicely prepared essay or make a fine speech in behalf of Sabbath School work.

The real path of duty lies somewhere between these two extremes. Its exact position, however, depends on the character of the Church, the number of preaching stations, the amount of pastoral labor and other duties belonging to the pastor's situation. The instances are perhaps rare where it is really his duty to undertake the superintendence of the School, and, however much it is desirable, very few Pastors are able, on account of their numerous appointments, to act as teachers.

There are, however, many other duties which may and should be performed by every Pastor.

As the principal officer of the church he should see that the school is not neglected by the church. To present this he should take care to have the Superintendent, teachers and committee appointed by the church, and should use his influence both

in the meetings of the church, and elsewhere to secure the general attendance of church members. That the church never has been accustomed to make these appointments, or that she does not regard the Sabbath School as of much importance is no excuse for omitting this duty. Every Pastor knows, or ought to know the value and importance of the Sabbath School institution, and should leave no means untried to make the church feel as she should towards it.

He may also do much for the schools by advising and encouraging the Superintendent, teachers and others engaged in the work. This advice may be given during his pastoral visits or on other occasions when he may meet them, and if given in the right spirit will always be gratefully received. Kind words cost the giver but little, but they often do the recipient much good. In this case, they will increase the earnestness and zeal of the labors and cause them to feel that they have the hearty, and not merely the formal sympathy of their pastor.

But besides this, the Pastor should, whenever it is at all practicable, attend the teachers' meeting and over the lesson with them. He could on such occasions suggest many things concerning the methods to be employed, the illustrations to be used and would greatly assist them in understanding difficult points, and prevent any wrong interpretation of the Word. By this means the teachers would be more impressed with the importance of their work and the need of preparation for it, and both Pastor and teachers would feel that they are co-workers in the Lord's vineyard.

In his pastoral visitation he has also a good opportunity to find out whether all the children attend the school. If not he should urge their attendance, or, if poverty or any such cause prevents them from attending he should report such cases to the committee appointed to look after that matter. Nor should he let slip any opportunity, either on these or other occasions to talk with the children about the school. This will furnish what some say they can never find "something to talk to the children about," and will also increase the interest of the children and encourage them in their attendance. He should also seek for opportunities to speak to the children in the school. These may not be often found by many, but we do not hesitate to say that if really sought, they will occasionally be found. Such visits will occasion pleasant changes in the usual routine, and will, if the words be fitly chosen, be productive of much good.

Other duties might be enumerated, but we leave them to be suggested by the conscience of those who "feed the church of God." As an excuse for the neglect of these duties let none plead the want of time. Every minister of the Gospel should regard the Sabbath School as an important pastoral charge and should give it its proper proportion of his time. If Christ could find time to take little children in his arms and bless them, Pastors should likewise seek for opportunities to do good to the "little ones" and while they labor "to feed the sheep" should not forget "the lambs." Let pastors, who wish to have good healthy churches remember the command and the promise: Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it."

A TEACHER.

Feb. 11th, 1870.

For the Christian Messenger.

MARY, THE MAGDALE.

Who and what was she? The prevailing belief seems to be this: She was a woman of Magdala, who had lived a very wicked life, and had been possessed by demons, which Jesus cast out; she repented of her sins, was forgiven, and afterwards devotedly followed her Lord in his journeyings, was present at the crucifixion, and, lingering about the tomb, was the first to behold the risen Saviour. This is correct as far as it relates to her life, subsequent to the first mention of her by the evangelists, when she is introduced as accompanying Jesus and his disciples, with many other women "who ministered to them of their substance" (Luke 8: 2). But regarding her previous character, an opinion has been generally accepted which is altogether groundless. There is no hint in either of the Gospel narratives that she ever was a great sinner, unless it was a great sin to be possessed by evil spirits. She had been the victim of seven tormenting demons from which dreadful condition Jesus had mercifully released her. Possibly it was deep gratitude for this blessing that led her to devote herself so constantly to the service of her divine benefactor.

When comes it then that the very name by which she was distinguished from the other Marys is used to designate women of the worst character? How is it that we hear of Magdalen Asylums and the like? How is it that we see pictures of the scene described in John 8: 9, 10, entitled "The Magdalene?" How is it that the notion becomes so fixed in men's minds as to give not only this name to the language, but also the corrupted form "maudlin," which now means half intoxicated or silly? Strange as it may seem, it has all arisen from careless reading or from unfounded assumption.

In the 7th chapter of Luke we read that a woman, "who was a sinner in the city," (B. U. Version) came into the house of a Pharisee where Jesus was entertained, stood behind him weeping till his feet were wet with tears, wiped his feet with her hair kissed them and anointed them with ointment. Jesus took compassion on her, forgave her sins and dismissed her. Shortly after this "Mary called the Magdalene" is mentioned, but with no hint that she was the same person. Probably the origin of the mistake may be found in the fact that Matthew, Mark and John relate an incident very similar to this, when a woman named Mary was the actor. But this Mary was a sister of Martha, and the time of the occurrence was probably more than a year later than the other. Another common error has arisen with regard to these two similar anointings, of which we may write at another time. Let us beware of accepting current opinions, without referring "to the law and to the testimony."

LUKE.

A GUESS.

"I have had no falling out with the Lord, and guess all will be well," was the language of a dying man in the late summer-time, who had lived many years between two sanctuaries, whose bells calling to public worship, had been unregarded. He had lived towards his fellow-men a moral life, but had no family altar, no visible read by him. And when the servant of God stood by his bedside, pointing him to eternity and his Saviour-King, the only response was, "I have had no falling out with the Lord, and guess all will be right."

What awful insensibility had stolen gradually upon his heart! A life of utter forgetfulness of God and contempt of his claims and ordinances closed with a guess that all would be well—that Jehovah would be as indifferent to his love and atonement and means of grace bought with the blood of Calvary.

How blinding is sin! Impenitence gradually but surely hardens the heart and darkens the soul of man. Unpardoned transgression is like some poisons, the precursor of whose fatal finished work is insensibility and loss of sight.

No unsaved sinner can tell when this moral malady he cherishes will reach that rock-like hardness and night of the soul, which death will not soften or illumine, excepting with the flashes of a near retribution.

WARN YOURSELVES.

There are many persons who, if they could, would sit by the fire and draw in its heat without exertion or trouble. And so they may, when they are so feeble as to

be incapable of labor. But if one be in good health, the physician says to him, "Stir abroad. Rouse the energy of your system by exercise. Work, walk, climb! Let your blood be your stove!"

There are many Christians who use meetings as lazy and dainty people use fires. They go to them to be warmed, and suck in without exertion a certain moral stimulus not wholesome because derived from no exertion of their own. Their pastor should say, "Go out and work! Create your own feelings! Life in earnest is the fuel for the soul. Bring to the prayer meeting the feelings which you enjoy. Do not forever sit before the fire. Work and warm yourselves!"

NEW ZEALAND.—The account from New Zealand are the best we have had for a long time. Mr. McLean, on behalf of the colonists, has met the lately hostile chiefs, by their own invitation, and what may be termed the preliminaries of peace, or something more than that, have been cordially agreed on. By their wish the fighting is to cease, and Mr. McLean has already fulfilled his part of the stipulations, and Rewi has sent out messengers to stop the fighting in different parts. Te Kooti is a fugitive, but if he comes into Rewi's jurisdiction, he will be delivered up if he causes further trouble. Some of the native chiefs are themselves engaged in searching for this troublesome man. New Zealand, like other colonies, sends no delegates to the conference or congress proposed by some officious ex-colonists here but it is sending over one or two of its first men to undo the mischief caused by their proceedings.—London paper.

REVISION OF THE COMMON PRAYER BOOK.—The Record, the organ of the Evangelical Churchmen says:—

In the revised Lectionary proposed to her Majesty we observe with regret that instead of the words "morning and evening prayer," and contained in the order prefixed to the Prayer Book—the Order how the rest of Holy Scripture is appointed to be read—the Romish terms "matins," and "even song" are to be used. We are the less surprised, observing that the Bishop of Winchester was chairman of the sub-committee. We do not consider the change unimportant. The words "even song" imply intonation.

INFANT BAPTISM AND COMMUNION.—A correspondent writes to the Record:—"Would any of your correspondents favour me by recommending the best book to read on the two following subjects, 'Infant Baptism and Infant Communion,' giving the evidence in favor of the former being from the apostles, but the latter not, and consequently an innovation and an error."

PRESBYTERIAN.—The evils of the system of patronage in the Church of Scotland are again engaging the attention of the public in the North, and the Presbytery of Stirling have held several protracted meetings for the purpose of considering the objections taken by upwards of 500 parishioners of Alloa to the settlement of the Rev. Mr. Gunn, who was recently appointed to that parish.

As the result of a revival in the Baptist Churches of Ira and South Hannibal, N. Y. new and good horse sheds are being built, the members having learned that a man's religion is not worth much which does not increase the comfort of his horse. The owners will hear the gospel with more attentive ears from the knowledge that their horses are not shivering in the cold.

A REMEDY for hard times may be found not in grand financial schemes, but in such common things as work, retrenchment,—the payment of small debts, and in economical legislation.

The centenary of Beethoven's birth occurs this year, and it will be celebrated with all honours at Bonn, his native place.