

Correspondence.

The Editors of the Church Times do not consider themselves responsible for the opinions of their Correspondents.

FOR THE CHURCH TIMES.

Mr. Editor,

Enclosed you will find a cut from an English paper, signed, "A Lancashire Incumbent," which I should like very much to see reprinted in the *Church Times*, for the benefit of both myself and others.

We think we work a great deal in this country, and, doubtless, the climate, and the roads, and society in general, make very different calls upon our time and energies, but it must also be admitted that if we all had the same mind and the same self-denying good will by which so many of our English Clerical brethren are actuated, we would work a little more, at least, with a better spirit.

I remain, Mr. Editor,

Your's, &c.

RUSTICUS.

To the Editor of the *Evening Mail*.

"The clerical profession is the idlest among us, because it is the worst rewarded; and it is the worst rewarded because it is the idlest. . . . If the clergy were made to do their daily work, and render an account of it to their superiors in Church and State, and if they were paid and promoted with due regard to their work and qualifications, the work would soon be done. . . . The first thing to be done is to make them do their work as everybody else is made to do his work in this country. Require of them the actual performance of their duties, make them render a daily account, have an efficient and permanent superintendence, and, as a necessary consequence, a system of promotion according to service and merit."—*The Evening Mail*, Sept. 10.

Sir,—Whatever may be thought of the correctness of your views, it is a great advantage to have them enunciated so distinctly. If the opinions of our whole population could be ascertained, I think you would find very few who would object to any reasonable amount of censure upon the drones in our hive; but very many who know from daily experience that, as a class, they are fast disappearing. Your description of the clergy looks as if it had been written previous to 1820 and published in 1856. Considering how the Church of this country has both lengthened her cords and strengthened her stakes within the last quarter of a century, in an age of great mental activity and independence, yet without an undue regard for ancient institutions, I venture to think that your censures have been too promiscuous, and that your suggestions are neither reasonable nor practicable.

A clergyman is not paid by fees like a barrister or a surgeon, nor can he, in the majority of cases, increase his income by any amount of extra devotion to his duties. Yet we do not find that he contrasts unfavourably with the members of other professions similarly circumstanced; officers of the army and navy, for example, and the members of the civil service. Providing his duties are performed, he may be absent from his post during three months of the year, yet who ever heard of a working clergyman availing himself of this privilege? Though he must be ready to meet the wants of every class of the community, the infant and the adult, the living, the dying, and the dead, it is vulgarly assumed that his attendance is compulsory on only one day of the week, and with characteristic charity it is inferred that he attends at no other time. He can act by proxy more easily than the member of any other profession, and men who are themselves disposed to be idle imagine that he does so as frequently as possible. He ought to have a mind well stored at the commencement and regularly improved from year to year; yet he is in no instance to be judged by results, but most invariably specifies details! He is occupied with intellectual duties, and especially with moral and spiritual ones; he may be engaged for months and even years in sowing the seed without living to see the harvest; yet he is to be measured by mechanical rules, and is called upon, not merely for a journal, but for a daily time table. There are certainly some favoured spots in England well adapted for literary and devotional leisure, but in or near the busy haunts of man they do not exist, and with an increasing population all over the country they are fast disappearing elsewhere. Of course, all men are not equally young, strong, healthy, or energetic, and we are unaccustomed to the ready expedients for removing physical and mental energy. The law of the land steps in between the employer and the employed giving the latter a Ten Hour's Bill, and I can assure you that if any such merciful enactment were possible in our case it would be a great boon to many of the clergy of my acquaintance.

For several years of my life I have kept a diary for my own private satisfaction, and a good deal with a view to the verification of dates. Since January 1850 the events of the day have been noted in *Whitaker's Diary* attached to *Gilbert's Almanack*, and the following statements contain an analysis of the whole for the year 1856. I should gladly give you name for publication, but that my motive would be very liable to be misunderstood, and without it thousands of your readers, to whom the facts are partially known, will recognize me at once.

I am the incumbent of a new parish in a large town, with a special population of 8,500; and I am ably assisted by a curate and two scripture readers. The nearest point is distant from my own residence more than a mile, and to the church and schools it is exactly a mile and a quarter. During 15 days of the year I was unwell, I was absent on public business 30, kept within doors by stress of weather 4, and took 20 holidays, single and consecutive. These amount in all to sixty days, so that 297 remain to be accounted for. I was in the parish and engaged in general clerical duty 251 times on 172 separate days, and must therefore have walked, in going and returning, more than 600 miles. The parish lies at right angles to the line of distance, and consists of independent streets parallel to it, so that the space traversed in visiting from place to place cannot have fallen short of double that amount. I have made 1,200 visits at the houses of the inhabitants, independently of attending to occasional and special calls; and it is a significant fact that the families attending public worship occasionally or regularly have risen within the year from 234 to 475. The Scripture readers are expected to visit 50 families per week, but with less power of selection, though they still pursue a system. Besides taking part in several church services when others preached, I have preached 122 sermons—101 in my own parish, and 21 elsewhere. Of these latter six were on behalf of schools, nine for religious societies, and six in exchange with clerical brethren, or supplying their place during occasional absence. I venture to believe that any of my "superiors in Church and State" would regard this as an honest and faithful discharge of duty for one year.

For eight years I have supported and superintended daily, Sunday and ragged schools, without the slightest aid either in counsel or action, except recently from my curate. Every farthing necessary for their support during that time has been raised by my own personal canvass, as well as the cost of altering a temporary building and subsequently restoring it. Even the annual subscriptions so obtained have in many instances to be collected by myself. During the past year I have made many hundreds of calls, and spent more time on this business than in all my parochial and pastoral visitation; though I am quite unable to say why a clergyman should be expected, much less morally compelled, to be personally responsible for duties which belong to all citizens in common. With men of business, however, "time is money," and we are accused of professional negligence at the very time when the self-interest of other men obliges us to leave the Word of God and serve tables. On one day (the 21st of October) I called at 34 offices and walked more than seven miles; yet from the accident of finding scarcely any one within, I only 4 subscriptions amounting in all to £3.

I do not know accurately the number of institutions, societies, committees, and sub-committees which I am authorized and expected to attend; but I know that I have done business with 25, some of them sitting frequently, and occasionally for hours. I am the honorary secretary of four societies, and was chairman during the year for three objects. One of the former held 51 meetings of its members, committee, and sub-committees, at 50 of which I was present from the commencement to the close. I was not in England when the remaining one was held. I have kept no record of the number of meetings which I have attended in all, but it can scarcely have fallen short of 300.

As meetings generally consume a large portion of the day, so intellectual occupations sometimes carry one far into the hours of night. Yet my acquisitions have been unobtrusively and lamentably small. I have read about thirty volumes of works, new and old, and perhaps as many pamphlets, besides the newspapers pretty regularly. But I wrote two magazine articles, three papers for learned societies, and six literary and scientific articles for ordinary newspapers, besides making 23 public speeches and delivering seven lectures to associations for elevating working men. I also edited and partly wrote a volume of 300 pages, requiring many hundred of references, for correction, verification, and addition.

For four or five years past my correspondence has averaged from 1,300 to 1,500 letters per annum; and, in addition to this, I issued upwards of 2,000 circulars last year. All the letters which it was necessary to preserve were copied by my own hand. I may mention here that I find I have shared the hospitality of various friends on 174 days of the year, including nearly all the 50 days of absence.

The manner in which you have connected duty and remuneration obliges me to notice the latter. I was for four years a curate without a farthing of salary, and never considered my programme complete till I had three full services for Sunday. For two years I conducted a gratuitous service for the poor, which has resulted in a new church and a flourishing congregation. For about four years I had temporary charge of two ecclesiastical districts, the joint population of which, poor, ignorant and immoral, was 23,852. Frequently, without any assistance, I conducted five full services weekly; and both districts were systematically visited and classed for the first time during my incumbency. My present sphere of duty consists of part or one of these districts. For twelve years I was connected with the colleges of three universities, and the expenses inseparable from such an extensive course of education exceed the entire sum which I have received from the Church since my ordination. If the whole had been invested at an ordinary rate of interest it would have afforded me a larger return as a life annuity, without any tie of residence or occupation, than I have received for all these duties during the past year. Yet I am not one of the grumblers; and I think you will find that these usually belong to two classes—the laity within our own circle and the very idlers whom you mean to censure within it.

Yours, &c.,

Jan. 1.

A LANCASHIRE INCUMBENT.

Selections.

A PIOUS CRIMINAL.—The following epistle was received a few days ago by the Rev. Mr. Stirling, chaplain of the Dundee prison, from a Dundee convict now undergoing penal servitude at Portland, to which he was sentenced at the Circuit Court, where he was charged with seven cases of theft, falsehood, fraud, and wilful imposition, besides two previous convictions. The precious document was no doubt written to secure a ticket-of-leave, but the thing is so evidently overdone that even the "too good ministers" flattered in the letter will scarcely be deceived by it:—

Portland Deer 16 1856.

My Dearley Beloved Minister of my Lord and your God whom you serve I send you these two Lines to let you know that I am removed from Wakefield to Portland I was sent hear on the 26 of July and ded this is such a place that I long to be out of it—O sir this is such a place that I cannot Describe it to you there is two in our city that would beleve me if I was to Describe it as ar as I know but if you look to the iii. chapter of Romans begineng at the 12 verce to the 19th, you will see there ways, but I am also happy to let you know that there is some of Gods, children here also and I love to dwell with them But we cannot dwell together hear But I propose to another tow and myself that we should met together at the Footstool of the throng of grace in the Morning before the other prisoners rise to the noise and the same in the Evening after they go to beed it is 3 Months since we begin this and thanks be to God our number is doubled in that time But O how my soul is troubled when I think on my broken Sabbaths, and yet I praise the Lord that I am out of hell; and that he has given me that witness in myself to know that my sin is blotted out with the Blood of the Lamb of God, Der Sir I am indebit to you for laying the wages of my sin before my eyes which I hope I will not forget But thanks be to God that has placed me under tow Good Ministers in this Market of the divel for the divel is busy hear but our Ministers is pulling sinners from him O that God would give them both the duo of the Spiret that was poured out on St. Peters' church in Dundee. Dear Sir would you be so kind as to let me know if my mother is alive or removed I send a letter on the 26 of July and it came back to Portland and I sent another on 12 of Agest to . . . No more at presnt but Remains ever the Brand that you polled out of the fire write me soon if you Please I Send my kindit Love to my Governor and all his famley and I hope that the Lord will bless him and his Famley the Prayer of Boos be on you My Minister. Amen.

JERUSALEM.—We are gratified to learn that the sad condition of that part of the holy city known as