

Correspondence.

Letter from Bro. T. F. Campbell.

ALTO, LA., Feb. 12, 1883.

Bro. D. Stump:

DEAR SIR,—From Arkansas I made a visit to my relatives at my old home in Rankin county, Mississippi. The devastating hand of "rampant war," and lapse of time have wrought such changes since my former visit in 1860, that I was indeed "a stranger in a land of strangers." Comfortable homes and fertile fields have been converted into wretched hovels and desolate wastes. The sedge and the briar, gradually yielding to the invading groves of young pine, mark the place where well directed labor formerly produced the luxuries of life. No healthy reaction has yet been established after the depression incident to the change of the labor-system in the South. The wisest have not been able to solve the problem by which prosperity shall be re-established where black men will not, and white men know not how to work. The Negro, unaccustomed to provide for himself, literally "takes no thought for the morrow." If he has that which satisfies the demands of the flesh to-day, he is more than willing to let the future take care of itself. With him, "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Whether the rising generation will become more provident and careful remains to be seen. The progress of education amongst an ignorant and dependent people is necessarily slow. It may ultimately accomplish a revolution which will result in improved labor, and establish better relations between the muscle of the Negro and the brain of the Caucasian. Until then, decent poverty and squalid ignorance must continue to characterize many sections of the South.

While in Rankin county I delivered fourteen discourses; but as there were no organizations into which to invite converts, I did not make any effort at proselyting. I limited my labors almost exclusively to subjects demonstrating the folly and wickedness of division, and the wisdom, possibility and practicability of the union of all God's people. At Jackson, the capital of the State, and former home of old brother Clark the pioneer of Mississippi, who built up a large congregation here in his day, I found only a few disciples, without a shepherd, and whose house of worship was rented to the

Methodists who are engaged in building. I passed on to Utica, in the same county, where there are many disciples, but the church is in a languishing condition. This is the home of Bro. A. R. Bishop, a young man of fair attainments and more than average ability. The

congregation has been unanimous in its call for him to preach; yet, because it has not met its previous engagements with him, he declines to preach for it. It may be doubted whether this course will improve the liberality, punctuality or honesty of the people. My appointment previously sent forward failed to reach Bro. Bishop. The audience was, consequently, small on Saturday; and because the rain was almost incessant and the roads nearly impassable I had no congregation on Sunday. It was my intention to continue a meeting here of ten days; but the situation was so destitute of hope or promise that I left Monday morning for Raymond, where court was in session, hoping for better prospects there. Rain and mud, unpaved streets and dilapidated sidewalks, and a people indifferent alike to the warnings of the Gospel and the hopes of the future, all combined to make my stay unprofitable. I hastened to leave Mississippi as the most unpromising field I have yet visited in all my travels. Returning to Vicksburg, I passed over into Louisiana. At Rayville I met a venerable preacher, D. A. Campbell of the Presbyterian church, who received me most cordially, and, though it was late in the evening, circulated an appointment in the village, and had me to preach to his congregation. The next day, by hack, over a fearful road of twelve miles, and after an adventure of a tumble in the mud in which a widow, a Negro and a small boy participated, I reached this place having sustained no more serious damages than a few scratches and bruises.

LATER.

ALTO, Feb. 15, 1883.

I made at this place four lectures and two sermons, all of which were well received by small audiences, for the weather and the state of the roads limited the congregations almost exclusively to the people in the village. I find the rain here, at this season, nearly as incessant as in the Willamette valley. This, like other communities, is cursed with scism and division, one claiming to be Methodist, another Bap-

tist, another Presbyterian and another Christian. This Paul gives, in his letter to the Coriuthians, as evidence conclusive of carnality. And certainly anyone who will consider for a brief period only the jealousy and envy, the bickering and hate, potent and intense, cher-

ished and practiced by these parties one against another, must reach the sad conclusion that there is not a single trace of the spirit of love in all they do, except it be the love of the "publican," who loves them only who love him. Such love contains not one element of Christianity, but is "earthly, sensual, devilish." Why preachers, claiming to have the spirit of the Master and professing to be competent to teach, should by precept and example, sustain and encourage this deplorable state of affairs, is to me passing strange. If they could claim for their conduct even the selfish merit of financial gain, it might relieve it of the extreme of folly. But the result is to divide the available resources of a village, only able, at best, to build one decent church and support one preacher, into a dozen parts, to be distributed amongst as many incompetent men who eke out a scanty living, by monthly preaching at many points. It is not possible that any man's labors can be made efficient when spread out over a large territory. The time occupied in traveling could be more profitably engaged in systematic study or pastoral labor among the flock. A union of effort and concentration of means at this point would secure the services of a competent man at an ample salary, whose labors would be worth more to the community in one year, than the scrimp, selfish, partiza efforts of a dozen half educated, badly fed, little spirits, who seem to think that all the religion in the world is concealed under the thin crust which selfishness has indurated and baked over their party. This class of ministers, unfortunately very large, is greatly annoyed by our efforts to expose the folly and wickedness of these divisions, and to show the possibility and the practicability of union and peace among the wise and the good. Many of these, who inflate their vanity by appending to their names "Rev." or "D. D." first sound the note of alarm by crying "Campbellite," and then pull themselves in, like a turtle into its shell, and nothing more is seen of them,

unless, by chance they condescend to recognize you on the street by a formal bow and a frigid salutation. The leaven of reform is working, however, and the people are beginning to demand a reason for this foolish state of affairs, and no man can give one that has the sanction of reason. Prejudice is dissolving under the light and life of increasing intelligence and the hope of better counsels is cheering the hearts of many. This part of Louisiana has no Church of Christ organized in it. A few members are found, too remote to gather into an organization. A few of them, desiring church influence for their children, have united with other organizations, chiefly the Baptist. The principles and purpose of the reformation are but little and only imperfectly understood in the South.

Missionaries are needed, and the field is inviting, for a noble and generous people, such as form a large per cent. of the Southern population, will readily accept the Gospel when presented in the simplicity and beauty of its ancient power and glory.

Your brother in Christ,

T. F. CAMPBELL.

New England Letters.

NUMBER XIII.

STONE HALL, Feb. 14, 1883.

Dear Friends at Home:

The weeks have gone by, very swiftly and pleasantly since the beginning of the New Year, and to day, we look into each others eyes and say, "it is St. Valentine's day," and with it we finish the first half of the Winter term. The snow has come and gone several times since the fine Christmas weather, and it now lies perhaps twelve inches deep and deeper where it has been shoveled away from the paths. The lake lies asleep under its white coverlet and sometimes where the sun has shone brightly we have watched the blue shadows of the trees stretching in a protecting way towards it, and again when the snow has melted, we have looked upon what seemed a miniature ocean with its billows frozen. At such times men have dug out great blocks of ice and piled them upon carts drawn by patient donkeys to neighboring ice-houses. It seemed almost cruel and very prosaic to spoil the beauty of a perfect landscape in order to store away the coolness that will be precious when summer comes,