

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT LOATHFUL IN BUSINESS : FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

NEW SERIES.  
Vol. IV. No. 26.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 1859.

WHOLE SERIES.  
Vol. XXIII. No. 26.

## Poetry.

### The Old Psalm Tune.

You asked dear friend the other day,  
Why still my charmed ear  
Rejoiceth in uncultured tone  
That old Psalm tune to hear?

I've heard full oft in foreign lands,  
The grand orchestral strain,  
Where music's ancient masters live,  
Revealed on earth again:

Where breathing, solemn instruments,  
In swaying clouds of sound,  
Bore up the yearning, tranced soul,  
Like silver wings around—

I've heard in old St. Peter's dome,  
When incense rise,  
Most solemn the choral swell  
Mount upwards to the skies.

And well I feel the magic power,  
When skilled and cultured art  
Its cunning webs of sweetness weaves  
Around the captured heart.

But yet, dear friend though rudely sung  
That old psalm tune hath still  
A pulse of power beyond them all  
My inmost soul to thrill.

Those halting tones that sound to you,  
Are not the tones I hear;  
But voices of the loved and lost  
Then meet my longing ear.

I hear my angel mother's voice—  
Those were the words she sang;  
I hear my brother's ringing tones,  
As once on earth they rang;

And friends that walk in white above,  
Come round me like a cloud,  
And far above those earthly notes  
Their singing sounds aloud.

There may be discord as you say;  
Those voices poorly ring;  
But there's no discord in the strain  
Those upper spirits sing.

For they who sing are of the blest,  
The calm and glorified,  
Whose hours are one eternal rest  
On heaven's sweet floating tide.

Their life is music, and accord;  
Their souls and hearts keep time  
In one sweet concert with the Lord—  
One concert vast, sublime.

And through the hymns they sang on earth  
Sometimes a sweetness falls,  
On those they loved and left below,  
And softly homeward calls.

Bells from our own dear fatherland,  
Borne trembling o'er the sea—  
The narrow sea that they have crossed,  
The shores where we shall be.

O sing, sing on! beloved souls;  
Sing cares and griefs to rest;  
Sing, till entranced we arise,  
To join you 'mid the blest.

—H. B. Stowe.

## Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

### The Introductory Sermon

Preached before the Western Baptist Association held in Upper Wilnot, N. S. on Monday, June 13th 1859, by the Rev. George Armstrong, and now published by request of that body.

"Walk about Zion, go round about her; tell the towers thereof; mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following," Ps. xlviii. 12-13.

SUBJECT:—A Survey of our Zion; or the strength and weakness of the Baptist Denomination in Nova Scotia, the cause of the latter and its remedy.

Zion of old was a most interesting spot to a pious Jew. The Church is now the most interesting and important organization to a Christian. The Church is a glorious structure, the habitation of holiness and truth on the earth. The church is the product, the workmanship of Divine Grace, and is designed to be the everlasting memorial and exponent of that grace, and the grand instrumentality by which the world is to be evangelized. Without the

church the world would be morally a desolation, without light to radiate, or salt to preserve it. The church is the light-house for this lost and sin bewildered world; but Christ himself is the light of the Church.

The church is God's militant army called forth under the leadership of Immanuel, to contend against Sin, error and Satan;—it is God's city and fortress in this world and from whence issue the words and influences by which the nations are to be subjugated to Christ.

We profess to be a portion of that church whose names are written in Heaven. It is wise to survey our position, and ascertain whether as churches professing allegiance to Christ, we are in the condition required by Him and necessary to our preservation, progress and success in the great work to which the churches of Christ are called. But in order to do so fairly and profitably, we must have some *criteria* by which to judge. It will be proper therefore to lay down some characteristics by which a true church of Christ is distinguished.

1st. A cordial belief of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel is essential to a church of Christ: such as the Incarnation and Divinity of Christ,—his Atonement and Resurrection, Justification and Salvation by grace through faith, Regeneration Sanctification by the agency of the Holy Spirit, &c., and the Inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures and their authority as the only rule of faith and practise. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ,"—1 Cor. iii. 11. "And one built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the Chief corner-stone,"—Eph. ii. 20. But take away from our conceptions of Christ, those great fundamental truths I have mentioned, or let there be no real cordial belief of them, and Christ is to no people or Society a foundation, or a Saviour; and they, however called, constituted, or recognized by men, and notwithstanding their professions, are *not* a church of Christ.

2nd. Embracing and endeavouring to carry out the principle that *Conversion* is necessary to qualify for membership in a Church of Christ. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, &c."—1 Pet. ii. 5. vid. also 1 Cor. xiv. 33, and Eph. ii. 19-22.

3rd. Observing and maintaining the ordinances as they are delivered to us in the Gospel, i. e. in the Scripture form and order, and to the proper subjects. The Apostle Paul praises the Corinthian church because they kept the ordinances as he delivered them:—See 1 Cor. xi. 2, also Acts xviii. 8, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, Matt. xvi. 16. Compared with 1 Cor. xi. 23.

4th. Giving faithful and unflinching testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus;—a true church is a witnessing church, holding forth the word of life, and thus endeavouring to glorify Christ, and save sinners from the wrath to come. Vid. Phil. ii. 15, 16, Jude 3; John xv. 27.

5th. Some degree of Union among the members in the belief of the truth—in love—in efforts to maintain the cause of Christ, and extend the knowledge of his Gospel among men and in performing the functions of a christian church. I say not how much union; but there must be some degree of vital spiritual union among the members as being one with Christ, and as receiving, and holding "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." See Eph. iv. 3-6, 1 Cor. xii. 11-14, also v. 27, Phil. i. 27, Eph. ii. 22, Phil. ii. 2.

6th. A true church of Christ is supplied with the Holy Spirit's influences;—He dwells in the church, directing, helping, enlightening and sanctifying. A church without the Holy Spirit's vitalizing and refreshing influences is not a church of Christ, just as a person, however much he may profess, or however great may be his reputation for piety, is not a Christian, unless he has the Spirit of Christ. John xiv. 16-17, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 2 Cor. vi. 16.

7th. Separation from the world, and consecration to the service of Christ. "My kingdom," says our Lord, "is not of this world," John xviii. 36. "Wherefore come

out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, &c." 2 Cor. vi. 17, 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.

Now if we apply these principles faithfully our strength as a Denomination and our weakness may be discovered.

We profess to receive cordially and truly the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. The doctrinal views of our churches as set forth in the "Declaration" of our faith &c., are sound and scriptural, and if truly and firmly believed, are towers of strength. Our strength consists not in a cold, dead, correct creed, but in a living faith in the living and unchangeable word of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. May the great doctrines of the Gospel be held more intelligently and unwaveringly by all in our churches!

We hold more consistently than any other Denomination, the Bible as the only sufficient rule of faith and practise for the church of Christ; and we desire to be conformed to its Spirit, principles and teaching.

The principle that converted persons only are eligible to church membership; and the ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's supper distinguishes us as a Denomination from all others. With us it is a foundation principle; and where faithfully carried out, as far as is practicable in the imperfection of our knowledge of human character, and of motive, &c., is a means of preserving a church from the incumbrance and injury that result from the intrusion of numbers of unconverted persons within her pale. This is another tower of our strength.

The ordinances of the Gospel we hold in their primitive and apostolic integrity. This is one of our distinguishing peculiarities, in opposition to all the world—that *believers only* are the proper subjects of baptism, and that immersion is the only mode. Believers' baptism is one of the principles for maintaining which our fathers were persecuted and proscribed, and for which we ourselves sometimes suffer reproach. Our views on this subject have been, either from ignorance or malignity, much misrepresented; but they have never been successfully controverted, nor have we any apprehension that they can or ever will be. From a protracted, and not partial examination, we have long settled down on the conclusion, that if the New Testament teaches any such ordinance as baptism, we have it in its true and proper form, and aim to administer it to the proper subjects. So also in respect to the Lord's supper. We regard it as an ordinance of the Gospel designed to commemorate that grand act of Love—the Saviour's death;—and is designed for baptized believers only, or at least those who, in submitting to that ordinance, make a credible profession of faith in Christ. The two ordinances are for the same class of people, morally considered—both require faith in the recipient; and for any one to administer the ordinance of baptism or what professes to be such, and yet refuse or withhold the Lord's Supper from the same party, we hold, to be unscriptural and utterly inconsistent. Believers' baptism we regard as another tower of our strength, and baptized believers' communion is another, and both beautifully harmonizing with the teaching and examples of the N. Testament.

We have as a Denomination in this Province as elsewhere borne testimony to the truth, and often when truth was unpopular. It has not been in the power of princes, priests or politicians, with fire, fines, or imprisonment, and all the other machinery of persecution to prevent the noble army of Baptist confessors from a bold and faithful utterance of the truth—the whole truth, as it is in Jesus, so far as they understood it. We have this fact in our favor—that to a large extent it is the desire and aim of our churches and ministry to bear testimony for Christ and his truth, and thus endeavour to win souls to the obedience of faith. In such disposition and labour lie much of our strength. We have been repeatedly blessed with the renewing influences of the Holy Spirit in our churches. In the Spirit's presence and operation lies our great strength, as churches called to do battle in the cause of our crucified and exalted Lord and Master. "Not by might,

nor by power, but by my Spirit" saith the Lord. During the past year many of the churches in our Association have been richly blessed with revival influences;—souls have been converted, and many of the converts have been baptized and have taken their place in the church of God. What hath God wrought! We were brought low, and there seemed to be a dearth of spiritual influences in many of the churches; but the Lord has turned our captivity and the waste places of Zion have been made to rejoice,—her breaches have been restored, and new material, "living stones," as we trust, have been brought in and added to the temple of the Lord. In our Association upwards of *seven hundred* converts have been baptized in our churches, and have united with us in the fellowship of the Gospel. Thanks be to God for this success! May they all be kept to the praise and glory of Divine grace! May true converts to Christ and his truth be increased mightily in the land! As long as God's Spirit is with us, and we are united in the love of the truth, we need not fear the misrepresentation, the combinations and wrath of our enemies. Baptized in that Holy Spirit of promise, the ministry and the church are mighty and, fitted for the work required of each, will be successful. May those influences from above be abundantly and continually bestowed on us, that we may worthily exhibit the power and excellence of the Gospel, in the holiness of our lives, in the abundance and faithfulness of our labours and in the multiplication of the converts by our means! Our fathers in the ministry were successful chiefly by their uncompromising adherence to the truth, and their entire dependence on the Spirit of God.

But our subject as announced intimates that there is weakness among us in this province as a Denomination. However unpleasant, such is the fact. It is wise to observe it, and to endeavour to strengthen the weak. If tried by the fifth and the last mark of a true church, which we have mentioned, I fear we must confess that in a want of conformity to them consists much of our weakness.

We bless God there is much of Union in our churches and of separation from the world, and of consecration to Christ; but it is our grief and shame, and the cause of much of our trouble that we do not feel and manifest more deadness to the world, and that we do not sufficiently maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. There is by far too much conformity to the world, in its spirit, pursuits and maxims. It is manifest there is among us, a deficiency of union, brotherly love and confidence. We are not accomplishing what we might and ought, in the cause of our Master. The weakness we speak of is not in our principles, or properly resulting from them; but arises mainly, if not wholly, from not carrying them out faithfully and perfectly. Not to dwell on this part of our subject, let us look about for the cause of this weakness.

The cause is in my view complex, and includes several things.

1st. The *ignorance* of some of our people in respect to their own principles is a source of our weakness. It is undeniable that some among us are very imperfectly acquainted with Baptist principles. Though believers' Baptism, or immersion is a grand, distinguishing feature in the system we regard as scriptural, yet the doctrines of grace, election, &c., lie at the foundation of our system and are of the utmost importance. Those doctrines we fear some in our churches receive not heartily, or hold them very feebly and unintelligently, and as if ashamed of them. There are other principles, the legitimate and proper outgrowth of Baptist principles,—the right of conscience,—and the right of every man to enjoy civil and religious liberty. Baptist principles imply and declare the right of all men to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience without interference or intimidation from human governments, tribunals or organizations, so long as he does not break the public peace, or trespass on the civil rights of his fellow