

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Poetry.

### The Homestead.

BY LADY SPENCER

It is not as it used to be,  
When you and I were young;  
When round each elm and maple tree  
The honeysuckles clung;  
But still I love the cottage where  
I passed my early years,  
Though not a single face is there,  
That memory endears.

It is not as it used to be!  
The moss is on the roof,  
And from their nests beneath the eave  
The swallows keep aloof.  
The robins—how they used to sing  
When you and I were young;  
And how did flit the wild bee's wing  
The opening flowers among!

It is not as it used to be!  
The voices loved of yore,  
And the forms that we were wont to see,  
We see and hear no more.  
No more! Alas, we look in vain  
For those to whom we clung,  
And loved as we can love but once,  
When you and I were young.

## Religious.

### Women in the Church.

Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak.—1 Corinthians xiv 34, 35.

"Every woman that prayeth or propheseth with her head uncovered, dishonoureth her head." &c.—1 Corinthians xi 5.

What are the duties and privileges of women in the church? Like all questions of religious obligation, this is not a matter of human opinion, but of Divine revelation, and must therefore be settled by the Bible. To prove any proposition by the Scriptures, we must rely, solely upon their express declarations, and not upon any human opinion of the meaning of the declarations. The province of exposition is not to develop a meaning not found in the statements of the Bible. One brief rule of interpretation would save all the errors of men, which they suppose to be based upon the Scriptures. That rule is, "Never explain any difficult or figurative passage to mean something not positively stated in other passages that need no explanation. And never set aside any of the statements of the Bible by others which we suppose to be counter statements. The proof of any proposition by the Bible must be brief, but entirely conclusive."

The first passage quoted above forbids women to speak, and enjoins silence in the churches. The other passage recognizes and regulates their praying and prophesying (i. e., speaking in edification, as the Greek word denotes), in the public congregation, with the other sex. Are these passages contradictory? Does the Apostle regulate in one place what he condemns in another, in the same epistle? As this is inadmissible in an inspired writing, the points proved by the two texts are, that certain speaking is prohibited, and other recognized and regulated. What is admissible is public prayer and ordinary speaking, as in a prayer and conference, or a covenant or fellowship meeting. This the Apostle recognizes as the ordinary practice of the female members of the churches, and endorses it as right, by giving directions for its suitable performance. What speaking is unbecoming in the females, is learned from the words added by inspiration in explanation of the prohibition.—That it was not prayer, exhortation, or instruction, we know from the expression, "If she would learn anything let her ask her husband at home." We thus conclude that it was a sort of public questioning or discussion. This is the end of the question, as far as direct proof is demanded. With facts thus established, we may inquire for the illustrations of them and their uses. And although we might err in these matters, we do not alter the facts thus established.

At the reading and expounding of the law, in the synagogues, it was customary for any man who chose, to ask questions for the better understanding of what was read. The same practice prevailed in the preaching of the primitive church. Thus while Peter preaching on the day of Pentecost, unbelievers objected that the wonders of that scene might be the effect of new wine. Peter answered that they were not drunk, and it was unreasonable to suppose them to be so, at that early hour of the day. This was often carried so far, as to amount to an argument, or a sharp controversy between a preacher and some of his hearers. The same practice now prevails with our missionaries among the heathen. No small part of the preaching is in answer to queries raised by some of the hearers.

It would seem very probable that this public controversy or inquiry was the speaking that the Apostle prohibited. It is simply saying that to get into an argument, and, perhaps, a controversy with a public teacher, and in a public place, is not becoming in females. That if the women would have further explanation of the doctrines taught, it would be more becoming to consider them, after their return home. In the state of society at that time it would have been a great scandal to the church for its female members to enter into public discussions and controversies with the minister. To promote good order, the Holy Spirit prohibited it.

It may be well to notice further the place assigned to females under the Gospel. Joel ii. 28:—"I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." The daughters as well as the sons were to speak, alike publicly, without restriction. On the day of Pentecost Peter declared this prophecy fulfilled. Acts i. 14:—"These all continued with one accord, in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren." Gal. iii. 28:—"There is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Such statements and examples occur often, and in various forms, in the Bible.

The practice of keeping the women silent, is a remnant of those errors of the past, which always degraded women as the weaker sex. Weaker she may be in physical strength, but not in intellect or heart. This notion is also supported by the desire that some have to regulate everything according to their notions of what will give the greatest worldly dignity to religious worship. They say that where the practice is general for females to speak in religious meetings, occasionally one will be too forward and bold.

True, it may be so. But the proportion of the females, whose remarks may be inappropriate, too confident, and, perhaps, a little trying to others, will not be so great as it is among the men in the same church. And then, very few of our Christian ladies will ever speak in any other manner, than with that calm sincerity and unaffected modesty that becomes their sex, and that strongly commends our holy religion.

The prohibition we have considered does not forbid females to take part in the business of the church. It relates not to church business, but to public teaching, inquiry, or discussion. It follows that females may speak and act, and vote, in all matters affecting the fellowship and interests of the church, according to their convictions, the same as the men. And in all social religious meetings their voices should be frequently heard in praise, prayer, and remarks, as well as those of the brethren. All allow that women may sing Divine hymns, and the Psalms of David. These hymns contain prayer, exhortation, comfort, and all the doctrines of grace. If women may sing these in public, why may they not speak them in remarks of prayer? Satan strikes a great blow at the piety and usefulness of the Church, when he closes the mouths of its female members, by a misinterpretation of Paul's prohibition. Woman, last at the Cross and first at the Sepulchre—who first preached the resurrection of Christ to the Disciples—is inspired with the love of God, on purpose to speak it to others. Let your women keep silence in the churches, with the wrong interpretation we have noticed, is a convenient and pretty little passage for those females who seek excuses for always remaining silent on the subject of religion; but it will never satisfy those who, filled with the love of God, are sighing for the salvation of souls. "Those that feared the Lord spake often one to another and a book of remembrance was kept for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name."

There are, however, many sincere and devout christian ladies who are silent, solely from wrong views of these passages.

But on this, and all similar questions, let none be contentious, but all prayerfully seek the mind of the Spirit, and practice what the Word of God teaches, with all charity toward others.

### The "Christian Connection" so called.

The Morning Star (Free-Will Baptist) says it is well known that the Christian Connection, or "Christian Baptists," as they are sometimes termed, took their rise at about the same time as our own denomination, and were somewhat akin to it in origin. The early sentiments of the two were so much alike as at one time to make a union probable. In later times, however, there has appeared one point of divergence of such moment as not only to preclude union, but to even diminish the warmth of their mutual sympathy.

Deeming it wrong to adopt a creed, and carrying to excess the principle of "liberality," the Christian Connection welcomed Unitarians to their fellowship. Though at first firm Trinitarians, the denomination, as a whole, was soon deeply tinged with this error. In 1833 we find one of their writers stating that "they have,

almost unanimously, rejected the Trinitarian doctrine as unscriptural." Since that time the proportion of Unitarians among them has been variable, but always large.

There seems now, however, to be a sort of crystallizing process going on in this body. The evangelical element is gradually consolidating into a distinct party, leaving the rest to seek their natural abode elsewhere. Within about a year at least four of their prominent ministers have gone over to the Unitarians, with whom they have long been in sympathy. Others will probably follow soon.

We congratulate our brethren on their loss, if such it can be called. They are better off with out than with men of such proclivities, however talented. How they have so long endured the burden of such "helpers" is a mystery. That their aid has not proved even more disastrous than it has, is strange. Partnership with radical error is as unsafe as it is unnatural.

We wait with hope, and yet with some impatience, to see them rid of the remainder of this dangerous faction. We would not object to a process more summary than is likely to be adopted. Were it left to us, we should be very apt to open the door for those that deny our Lord's divinity, and hint that they had better

"Stand not upon the order of their going,  
But go at once."

With Antioch College under their full control, as the fact of their having the president and a majority of the trustees makes it, and with their various denominational organs consolidated into one, as they have recently been—whenever the Christian Connection shall have completed the doctrinal purification so happily begun, it may expect, we think, a far more vigorous and healthful life than it has ever yet enjoyed.

### Close Communion.

It is not uncommon to find persons in our congregations who give good evidence of Christian character, but are hindered from uniting with the church by their feeling of opposition to the strictness of our practice in regard to the communion. They are fully persuaded in their own minds in regard to baptism,—that immersion is a profession of faith is the only Scriptural way; but they think we might be more accommodating, and receive to our communion those whom we admit to be true believers, and who themselves sincerely believe that they have been scripturally baptized. Most of those persons have dear and dear relatives—parents, brothers or sisters—who are worthy members of pedobaptist churches, and they think it very hard that they should be deprived of the privilege of commemorating the Lord's death with these excellent and beloved disciples of the Lord. We wish to present for the consideration of such persons a few thoughts which seem to us adapted to relieve their minds from this difficulty, and to make their duty plain.

There are just three courses open to them, one of which they must take. They must either remain as they are, or join a pedobaptist church, or else join a Baptist church. If they choose the first, they deprive themselves of the privilege of communing with any of the Lord's people, besides neglecting the plain duty of baptism. If they choose the second, they deprive themselves of the privilege of communing with those whom they regard as properly baptized. If they choose the third, they deprive themselves of the privilege of communing with those whom they regard as unbaptized. Can they hesitate which of these three evils to choose? Is not the last even on their own principles, much the least of the three? Can they choose either of the other two in preference to the last, without being guilty of treating with disrespect one of the Lord's sacred ordinances?

Such persons commonly appeal to the conscientious persuasion of their pedobaptist friends that they have been rightly baptized, as if that was a sufficient reason why we should admit the validity of their baptism, and invite them to commune with us at the Lord's table. But if this is a proper way to reason in regard to one ordinance, why not in regard to the other? If the church ought to act upon the judgement of the candidate, and not upon its own judgement, in regard to his qualification for the communion, the same rule ought to hold in regard to this qualification for baptism. Indeed, the argument should be stronger in the latter case than in the former, for the communion is certainly more a church ordinance than baptism is. Would those who reason in this way, then, in regard to the communion, venture to apply the same argument to baptism? Would they say that the church ought to receive a candidate for baptism whom they did not regard as qualified, because he regarded himself as qualified?—that they ought to receive to baptism one whom they regarded as unconverted, because he regarded himself as converted? To be consistent, they must either maintain this position, or abandon the other. If this shocks their sense of propriety, so should the other.—W. & R.

### The Sun inhabited.

People who think the sun a ball of fire may be surprised to learn that Sir John Herschel thinks it habitable by living beings. He says:

The sun is a planet abundantly stored with inhabitants; his inference being drawn from the following arguments: On the tops of mountains of sufficient height, at an altitude where clouds seldom reach to shelter them from the direct rays of the sun, are always found regions of ice and snow. Now, if the solar rays themselves convey all the heat on this globe, it ought to be the hottest where their course is least interrupted. Again, astronauts all confirm the coldness of the upper regions of the atmosphere. Since, therefore, even on our earth, the heat of any situation depends upon the aptness of the medium to yield to the impression of solar rays, we have only to admit that, on the sun itself, the elastic fluids composing its atmosphere, and the matter on its surface, are of such a nature as not to be capable of any affection from its own rays. Indeed, this seems to be proved from the copious emission of them; for if the elastic fluids of the atmosphere, or the matter on the surface of the sun, were of such a nature as to admit of any easy chemical combination with its rays, their emission would be much impeded. Another well-known fact is, that the social focus of the largest lens thrown into the air will occasion no sensible heat in the place where it has been kept for a considerable time, although its power of exciting combustion, when proper bodies are exposed, should be sufficient to fuse the most refractory substances.

Thus, remarks the *Scientific American*, from arguments based solely on the supposed physical constitution of that luminary, he deduces the somewhat astonishing idea that the sun is inhabited.

### Good Counsels.

I. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.—In some of you we see the grace of God, and are glad. But of others of you we stand in doubt. You can talk hopefully and experimentally, as men can easily do who have lived long under a faithful ministry; yet your faith is not manifest. This half-religion is a most perplexing thing to those around you, and to yourselves it is a most uncomfortable and dangerous thing. Oh, begin at the beginning, by resting your heavy-laden souls on Jesus.

If you are leaning on your church-membership as your hope for eternity, the sooner you flee to Jesus out of that refuge of lies the better. Many years ago we stood by the dying bed of an old woman, who was a stranger to us. "What is your hope of eternity?" we asked. "I have no fear," she answered. "I've been a communicant for fifty years—a regular joined member of the church." Alas, alas! there is a way to hell even from the gates of heaven.

II. Let your light shine before men.—It will be grievous, so to speak, if Christ is not glorified in you till you get to heaven. Be a follower of Him who said, "Father, I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do."

Confess Him before your family and neighbours. Your lips may do much; your life may do more. The regularity and heartiness of your family worship; your kindness to neighbours; your sympathy in times of trial—may exalt the name of Jesus in a whole neighbourhood. Your careless neighbours will watch you. Be attentive to your business, pay your debts regularly and promptly; live in peace with your neighbours, or rather with good-will do them service; avoid all appearance of evil, still more the reality. Shun all mean and shabby ways. Let go the doubtful penny; act as one of God's royal priesthood whose treasure is in heaven. Let your family and neighbours learn something of Jesus by what they see of His likeness in your temper and conduct. The living epistle will be read by many who never open a Bible. "A hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour;" but a faithful talk, joined to a consistent life, will give any man a great power for good.

III. Do not let yourself get into a grudging, grumbling way about church matters. Take a happy, hearty, kindly interest in them. Many things in this world, both civil and ecclesiastical, are not what they should be, and might be. But be not you among the grumblers. Thankful for what good there is, put to your hand, and try to make things better. Be like Paul, in Acts xxviii. 3, gather your bundle of sticks when other people are only crying out about the cold.

IV. Keep your heart and hand open to do good. Many things are apt to contract our hearts; thus cares of a family, success in business, the growing demand for a more expensive style of living, all tend to make us more selfish, though they should do the very opposite. Let us watch against this. To every call from the world it is safer to say no than yes; but to every "Come over and help us," it is safer to say yes than no. In our day, there is a vast deal of quiet money-making going on. If your riches increase, set