

# Christian Messenger.

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## Religious.

### Indirect Preaching on Baptism.

A deeper impression is often made by a shrewd suggestion, a striking analogy, or a novel contrast, than by the most forcible logic, or the most earnest appeal. The famous John Leland was a staunch Baptist, and felt constrained to reprove sharply the pervasions of scripture doctrine and practice current in Presbyterian churches. But he rarely did this in a set sermon. He was ingenious in devising ways by which the truth might appear in unexpected lights, and win its way without opposition. The following instance is a good illustration of his methods.

He was once preaching to a large congregation in Pittsfield, Mass., of the Eunuch's conversion. It was natural that he should press upon his hearers the duty of baptism, and attempt to prove the obligation of immersion as the New Testament ordinance. But he knew that many would expect such a discussion, and might brace themselves against conviction by the truth. He avoided, therefore, any formal argument, but set forth the truth in a simpler and more effective way. Towards the close of his sermon he began to read the account of the baptism, as follows: "And the Eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, I thou believe with all thy heart, thou mayest. And Philip said the Eunuch went up the broad side of the meeting-house, and Philip put his hand into a basin of water, and laid it on the Eunuch's head, and baptized him, and they came out of the meeting-house, and the Eunuch went on his way rejoicing." Every eye was intent on the preacher, in mute wonder, when he suddenly exclaimed, "Stop, Leland, on don't read right!" and beginning again, said, "And they went down into the water, both Philip and Eunuch." "Ah, that's it," said he, "that reads better," and made no further allusion to the subject of baptism in the sermon. But the bolt shot home, and several opponents were convinced of their error, and embraced scriptural views of baptism. — *National Baptist.*

### Access to God.

However early in the morning you seek the gate of access, you find it already open; and however deep the midnight moment when you find yourself in the sudden arms of death, the winged prayer can bring an instant Saviour near; and this wherever you are. It needs not that you should enter some awful shrine, or put off your shoes on some holy ground. Could a moment be reared on every spot from which an acceptable prayer has passed away, and on which a prompt answer has come down, we should find *Jehovah-Shammah*, "the Lord hath been here," inscribed on many a cottage hearth and many a dungeon floor. We should find it not only in Jerusalem's proud temple, and David's cedar galleries, but in the fisherman's cottage, by the brink in Genesaret, and in the upper chamber where Pentecost began.

And whether it be the field where Isaac went to meditate, or the rocky knoll where Jacob lay down to sleep, or the brook where Israel wrestled, or the den where Daniel gazed on him, or the hillside where the Man of Sorrows prayed all night; we should still discern the print of the ladder's feet let down from heaven—the landing place of mercies, because the starting-point of prayer.

An admirable reply.—An admirable reply was once made by a careful reader of the Bible to an infidel who attacked him with such expressions as these: "That the blood of Christ can wash away sin is foolishness; I don't understand or believe it." The Bible student remarked: "You and Paul agree exactly." The infidel replied, with much surprise: "How is this, that Paul and I agree?" Said the student: "Turn to the 1st chapter of 1st Corinthians, and read to the 13th verse." The infidel read: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God." The infidel hung his head, and ever after studied the Bible, and he soon believed it to be God's power unto salvation.

## The Roman Coliseum.

### First Article.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING.

As the Romans grew prouder and more fond of pleasure, no one could hope to please them who did not give them sports and entertainments. When any person wished to be elected to any public office, it was a matter of course that he should compliment his fellow-citizens by exhibitions of the kind they loved, and when the common people were discontented, their cry was that they wanted *panem et circenses*, "bread and sports," the only things they cared for. In most places where there has been a large Roman colony, remains can be seen of the amphitheatres, where the citizens were wont to assemble for these diversions. Sometimes these are stages of circular galleries of seats hewn out of the hillside, where rows of spectators might sit one above the other, all looking down on a broad, flat space in the centre, under their feet, where the representations took place. Sometimes, when the country was flat, or it was easier to build than to excavate, the amphitheatres were raised above ground, rising up to a considerable height.

The grandest and most renowned of all these amphitheatres in the Coliseum at Rome. It was built by Vespasian and his son Titus, the conquerors of Jerusalem; in a valley in the midst of the seven hills of Rome. The captive Jews were forced to labor at it; the materials, granite outside, and softer travertine stone within, are so solid and so admirably built, that still, at the end of eighteen centuries, it has scarcely even become a ruin, but remains one of the greatest wonders of Rome.

Five acres of ground were inclosed within the oval of its outer wall, which outside rises perpendicularly in tiers of arches one above the other. Within, the galleries of seats projected forwards, each tier coming out far beyond the one above it, so that between the lowest and the outer wall there was room for a great space of chambers, passages, and vaults around the central space, called the arena, from the arena, or sand, with which it was strewn.

When the Roman Emperors grew very vain and luxuries, they used to have this sand made ornamental with metallic filings, vermilion, and even powdered precious stones; but it was thought better taste to use the scrapings of a soft white stone, which, when thickly strewn, made the whole arena look as if covered with untrodden snow. Around the border of this space flowed a stream of fresh water. Then came a straight wall, rising to a considerable height, and surmounted by a broad platform, on which stood a throne for the emperor, curule chairs of ivory and gold for the chief magistrates and senators, and seats for the vestal virgins. Next above were galleries for the equestrian order; the great mass of those who considered themselves as of gentle station, though not of the highest rank; farther up, and therefore farther back, were the galleries belonging to the freemen of Rome; and these were again surmounted by another plain wall with a platform at the top, where were places for the ladies, who were not (except the vestal virgins) allowed to look on nearer, because of the unclothed state of some of the performers in the arena. Between the ladies' boxes, benches were squeezed in where the lowest people could seat themselves; and some of these likewise found room in the two uppermost tiers of porticoes, where sailors, mechanics, and persons in the service of the Coliseum had their post. Altogether, when full, this huge building held no less than eighty-seven thousand spectators. It had no roof; but when there was rain, or if the sun was too hot, the sailors in the porticoes unrolled awnings that ran along upon ropes, and formed a covering of silk and gold tissue over the whole. Purple was the favorite color for this *velamen*, or veil; because when the sun shone through it, it cast such beautiful rosy tints on the snowy arena and white purple-edged toga of the Roman citizens.

Long days were spent from morning till evening upon those galleries. The multitude who poured in early would watch the great dignitaries arrive and take their seats, greeting them either with shouts of applause or hootings of dislike, according as they were favorites or otherwise; and when the Emperor came in to take his place under his canopy, there was one loud acclamation, "Joy to thee, master of all, first of all, happiest of all. Victory to thee forever!"

When the Emperor had seated himself and given the signal, the sports began. Sometimes a rope-dancing elephant would begin the entertainment, by mounting even to the summit of the building and descending by a cord. Then, a bear, dressed up as a Roman matron, would be carried along in a chair between porters, as ladies were wont to go abroad, and another bear, in a lawyer's robe, would stand on his hind legs and go through the motions of pleading a cause. Or a lion came forth with a jewelled crown on his head, a diamond necklace round his neck, his mane plated with gold, and his claws gilded, and played a hundred pretty gentle antics with a little hare that danced fearlessly within his grasp. Then in would come twelve elephants, six males in the toga, six females with the veil and pallium; they took their places on couches around an ivory table, dined with great decorum, playfully sprinkling a little rose-water over the nearest spectators, and then received more guests of their own unwieldy kind, who arrived in ball-dresses, scattered flowers, and performed a dance.

Sometimes water was let into the arena, a ship sailed in, and falling to pieces in the midst, sent a crowd of strange animals swimming in all directions. Sometimes the ground opened, and trees came growing up through it, bearing golden fruit. Or the beautiful tale of Orpheus was acted; these trees would follow the harp and song of the musician; but—to make the whole part complete—it was no mere play, but real earnest, that the Orpheus of the play fell a prey to live bears.

For the Coliseum had not been built for such harmless spectacles as those first described. The fierce Romans wanted to be excited and feel themselves strongly stirred; and, presently, the doors of the pits and dens around the arena were thrown open, and absolutely savage beasts were let loose upon one another—rhinoceroses and tigers, bulls and lions, leopards and wild boars—while the people watched with savage curiosity to see the various kinds of attack and defence; or, if the animals were cowed or sullen, their rage would be worked up—red would be shown to bulls, white to boars, red-hot goads would be driven into some, whips would be lashed at others, till the work of slaughter was fairly commenced, and gazed on with greedy eyes, and ears delighted, instead of horror-struck, by the roars and howls of the noble creatures whose courage was thus misused. Sometimes, indeed, when some especially strong or ferocious animal had slain a whole heap of victims, the cries of the people would decree that it should be turned loose in its native forest, and, amid shouts of "A triumph!—a triumph!" the beast would prowl round the arena, upon the carcasses of the slain victims. Almost incredible numbers of animals were imported for these cruel sports, and the governors of distant provinces, made it a duty to collect troops of lions, elephants, ostriches, leopards—the fatter or the slower the creature the better—to be thus tortured to frenzy, to make sport in the amphitheatres. However, there was daintiness joined with cruelty; the Romans did not like the smell of blood, though they enjoyed the sight of it, and all the solid stone-work was pierced with tubes, through which was conducted the steam of spices and saffron, boiled in wine, that the perfume might overcome the scent of slaughter below.

an ordinary physician." The merchant answered, "None of us would do half your work for four times your pay." A minister does not preach for the sake of getting pay; neither does a bird fly in the air for the sake of getting wings; still a minister must have money or he cannot live to preach, as a bird must have wings, or it cannot mount the air. The greatest things depend on the smallest. Milton's Paradise Lost could not have been written without food.

A clergyman in Wales was appointed by an ordaining council to address the people who had impoverished their former pastor, and were now to receive a new one. He recommended, in his address, that Jacob's ladder be let down from the skies to that Welsh parish, in order that the new minister might "go into heaven on the Sabbath evening after preaching, and remain there all the week; then he would come down every Sabbath morning so spiritually minded and so full of heaven, that he would preach almost like an angel." Now the people insisted on having their pastor with them on other days than the Sabbath. "That may be," replied the speaker; "but then, if he remain among you, he must have something to eat." The dignity of the angels was not inconsistent with their ascending and descending on a wooden ladder; and one ladder on which our ministering angels may go up to their heavenly studies, is such a material sustenance as will make it unnecessary for them to grovel in the earth.

So if our candidates for the ministry be held down by cares in regard to their daily bread, they will not rise to communion with celestial thought. It has been said of one man, that he spent all his time at a Theological Seminary in getting up early in the morning. It may be said of more than one man, that he sacrificed his education to the means of obtaining it; he spent his study hours in earning money for his board. Many a young man will shrink from entering the sacred office, if, while preparing for it, he must neglect his mind in providing for his body; and if, when in office, he must perform the duties of a pastor to the people, and also the duties of a people to the pastor, breaking to them the bread of life, and getting for himself the bread which they ought to give him. Some young men will persevere through such obstacles, and will break down their constitutions in combining hard work of the body with hard work of the mind; spending their fresh energies on their books, and seeking their only recreation in sawing wood or carrying on a trade. The most promising scholar whom I ever knew, lost his health and his life by attempting to pay his debts while he was pursuing his studies. It he could have obtained a few hundred dollars from benevolent men, they might have preserved to the church an ornament more precious than silver and gold.—*Prof. E. A. Park, D. D.*

Several years ago, a Scotch pastor, being asked by a merchant, "What is the amount of your ministerial work?" replied: "In the first place, I write every year what, if printed, would fill two octavo volumes as large as any man who devotes himself to authorship would think of composing in the same time; secondly, I speak as much every year as a lawyer in good practice speaks at the bar; thirdly, I spend as many hours in making and receiving professional visits as are spent by

an ordinary physician." The merchant answered, "None of us would do half your work for four times your pay." A minister does not preach for the sake of getting pay; neither does a bird fly in the air for the sake of getting wings; still a minister must have money or he cannot live to preach, as a bird must have wings, or it cannot mount the air. The greatest things depend on the smallest. Milton's Paradise Lost could not have been written without food.

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## MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE.

### BURMAH.

An interesting account is forwarded by Mr. Brayton, of Rangoon, in regard to a Karen village which he visited six years ago, but found not the slightest encouragement for the gospel. The village has since heard a good deal of preaching, without any apparent fruit, till about six months since, when two women from the place came to the mission-house and begged that a preacher might be sent to them. The call seemed to be from God; and arrangements were immediately made to meet their request.

In January last Mr. Brayton visited a new and dark region, accompanied by several Karen preachers. They had worship morning and evening, and spent the greater part of the day in visiting from house to house. Some listened; some scoffed; some were indifferent. Three days later a Karen pastor, with other preachers, joined the company, and all labored with great zeal. As the result, seven converts requested to be baptized, who, after due examination, were received. Their character and standing are such as to awaken the hope that they will be very useful Christians. This is a new light kindled amid thick darkness.

A recent visit to Karen settlements south of Maulmain, several days' journey distant,