

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Poetry.

### All things earnest.

Time is earnest,  
Passing by;  
Death is earnest,  
Drawing nigh.  
Sinner! wilt thou trifling be?  
Time and death appeal to thee.

Life is earnest;  
When 'tis o'er,  
Thou returnest  
Nevermore.  
Soon to meet eternity,  
Wilt thou never serious be?

Heaven is earnest;  
Solemnly  
Float its voices  
Down to thee.  
O! thou mortal, art thou gay.  
Sporting through thine earthly day?

Hell is earnest;  
Fiercely roll  
Burning billows  
Near thy soul.  
Woe for thee, if thou abide.  
Unredeemed, unsanctified!

God is earnest;  
Kneel and pray  
Ere thy reason  
Pass away;  
Ere he set his judgment throne,  
Vengeance ready, mercy gone!

Christ is earnest,  
Bids thee "come!"  
Paid thy spirit's  
Priceless sum.  
Wilt thou spurn thy Saviour's love,  
Pleading with thee from above?

Thou refusest,  
Wretched one!  
Thou despisest  
God's dear Son!  
Madness! dying sinner, turn!  
Lest His wrath within thee burn.

When thy pleasures  
All depart,  
What will soothe thy  
Fainting heart?  
Friendless, desolate, alone,  
Entering a world unknown!

O, be earnest!  
Loitering  
Thou wilt perish;  
Lingering  
Be no longer—rise and flee;  
Lo! thy Saviour waits for thee!

—Independent.

## Religious.

### COMMUNION.

BY DR. HOVEY.

#### Fifth Article.

#### THE INSTITUTION OF THE SUPPER.

Finally, we come to the institution of the supper by our Saviour himself. Many were the persons in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, who had believed in Christ and had been baptized. We read of "above five hundred brethren" by whom he was seen at once after his resurrection. Many of these brethren were doubtless in Jerusalem at the passover when the eucharist was instituted. But they were in no proper sense a church, a distinct responsible body, called out from the rest of the nation, and acting together as the servants of Christ. "For the Greek word *ecclesia*, which expresses the idea of evoking, calling out, also suggests that of convoking, calling together, and is therefore most appropriate to the Christian church as a selected, organized body, called out by divine choice from the mass of men, and called together by divine authority as a spiritual corporation." But, on the other hand, the little band of disciples, to whom the supper was first administered, were essentially such a body. They had been summoned to his side by the Saviour's voice; they were his recognized and constant followers; they were under his instruction, and stood forth the champions of his cause; they had a common purse and a faithful treasurer; they were

united in belief and in action; in a word, they were in all important respects a Christian church, a responsible community separate from the world and associated in the service of Christ.

The other notice of the Lord's supper in the New Testament confirms, rather than weakens, the evidence afforded by Paul's language to the Corinthians, that this ordinance was intended for the churches, as such, and was administered in apostolic times to none but members of Christian churches in good standing. "When we read of the baptism of single individuals, as of Paul and the Ethiopian eunuch, there is never any intimation that the administration of the Lord's supper followed. Even when whole households are baptized, as in the case of Lydia, the Philippian jailor, and Crispus at Corinth, the same silence is observed. But when great numbers were baptized, as on the day of Pentecost, we find them soon after joining in the celebration of the Lord's supper. And in all these instances of "breaking bread," there are good reasons for supposing the presence and action of a Christian church.

It may also be remarked that this ordinance appears to have been restricted uniformly by the early Christians to church members. "This food," says Justin Martyr, "is called among us *eucharistia*; of which no one is allowed to partake who does not believe that what we teach is true, and has not been baptized in the bath for the remission of sins and unto regeneration, and does not live as Christ has enjoined." Three prerequisites are here laid down; namely, faith, baptism, and an orderly walk; and, with few exceptions, Christians of every name, from the apostolic age to the present, have agreed in this matter with the contemporaries of Justin.

It seems to us, therefore unnecessary to say more in support of our third position. In view of the qualification last named, an orderly church walk, the Baptists of this country do not for the most part feel themselves at liberty to invite to the Lord's table those members of other churches whom they look upon as unbaptized. As the Lord's supper is a church ordinance, they hold that none but members of the church observing it are strictly entitled to partake, and that none can properly be invited to join with them in the service, who could not be welcomed, without change of views, to full membership. They also hold that those who are giving, and pledged to give, the weight of their influence against what is believed by a church to be essential in doctrine and practice, cannot properly be received into its fellowship. If admitted, they would sow the seeds of dissension. By receiving them the church would pull down with one hand what it is holding up with the other. Thus those members of Pedobaptist churches to whom we now refer, do steadily affirm and teach by their ecclesiastical position that infant sprinkling is in effect Christian baptism, or else that baptism is not prerequisite to full membership and an orderly walk in a Christian church. In either case they throw the whole weight of their example against the doctrine of believers' baptism, a doctrine which in the judgment of Baptists is essential to Christian obedience as well as to the perfect organization and highest purity of the church. How, then, can their church walk be endorsed by the latter as orderly? Is it believed to be so? Were the members of any Baptist church to act as decisively in some other way, against this doctrine, would they not be esteemed by their brethren subverters of the truth and originators of division? And, the church being right in its doctrine, ought it not to withdraw its fellowship from them as walking disorderly and not after the gospel? "Now I beseech you brethren," says Paul to Romans, "mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." But if a Baptist church ought to withdraw the hand of fellowship from those who set themselves firmly against the duty of obeying what it deems a plain command of Christ, has it a right to offer his hand to the same persons as soon as they are united with another church, or to any persons who assail persistently the duty in question? But one reply is possible. If communion at the Lord's table were a sign of Christian fellowship merely, the case would be entirely different;

Baptists would then gladly invite all who give evidence of faith to partake with them. But such a sign it can never be while, besides faith, baptism and an orderly church walk are the scriptural terms of admission to the Lord's supper.

From what has been said it appears that the principles which require Baptist churches to limit their invitation to the Lord's supper to Christians of their own faith and order, are identical with those which determine the action of other evangelical churches in this matter. Hence we cannot perceive the fitness of calling their practice "close communion." In principle it is as open as that of most orthodox churches; as open as the New Testament allows them to make it. We freely admit that it is "restricted; and so it must continue to be while the example of apostolic Christians and the authority of inspired men retain their hold on the conscience; but we see no good reason for pronouncing it "close."

In reality, the great question between other denominations and the one for which we have endeavored to speak, relates to the subjects and the rite of baptism. A more careful examination of this question may, perhaps, in time, by the blessing of God, bring together those who now differ; and if it does, whether by a change of belief on the part of Baptists, or by a change on the part of Pedobaptists, the former will be relieved of a duty, the performance of which occasions them far more sorrow than it does others,—the duty of restricting their invitation to the Lord's supper to members of Baptist churches. Such a consummation is devoutly to be wished. May God hasten it by revealing his truth to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ! Then shall we rejoice, not only in Christian fellowship, but also in sacramental fellowship.

For the Christian Messenger.

### "God is faithful."

"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

It was a dull time in the church at S.; the love of many had waxed cold, and the love of the world was abounding. God's few faithful ones had been praying long, but the cloud like a man's hand had not yet appeared, and nine years had passed without an addition to their numbers. Death too had been among them and removed the pillars of the Church. The pious and faithful had gone to their reward, and the broken ranks remaining seemed ill prepared to battle with the foe; but there were those, faint yet pursuing still, who could trust the promises, and the language of whose hearts was, "We will not let thee go except thou bless us." In an outstation of the church where gospel privileges were infrequent, and a peculiar stibargy seemed to have overtaken the entire community, two young men were found, whose hearts the Lord had touched, and who mourned in secret over the desolations of Zion. It seemed a hopeless task, that of awaking any religious interest there, and the doubting words of Ezekiel alone seemed applicable to the case. "Can these dry bones live?"

The difficulties seemed insurmountable. A proposal to try to start an evening prayer-meeting was discussed and abandoned. No one would take part in it but themselves; curiosity might lead a few to attend for a while, but the probabilities were all against them, and they shrank from the endeavor in very hopelessness. Preach, they could not; though their hearts might burn within them, it needed more courage than either possessed to face an audience of critics and scoffers; besides in their christian childhood they felt rather like learning the alphabet of Christianity from the humblest of their Master's disciples, than teaching it to his foes. But there was one source of help yet remaining:—one weapon though not untried yet untried still. Two evenings of the week were set apart for special and united prayer, and though often separated by hundreds of miles they faithfully kept the solemn engagement, and at the hour appointed, whatever the circumstances of each, their mingled supplications ascended to the throne of God. Months passed, but still no blessing came. It seemed as if God had almost forgotten to be gracious; but two had

agreed on earth to plead his promise of mercy and they were determined still to labor, and to wait. They met generally with the disheartening report, "There is nothing," but no less constantly parted with the injunction, "Go again seven times."

But the day dawned at last. An unaccountable solemnity and spirit of inquiry was gaining ground. The opportunity was seized, and an evening meeting for prayer established. Numbers flocked together, and the Spirit of God was present. The tear of penitence—the broken hearted cry for mercy—the happy assurance of the consciousness of pardoned sin, made their hearts glad, and testified to the faithfulness of a covenant God. One by one their nearest and dearest were gathered into the church of the Redeemer, and as on each successive occasion they stood around the baptismal waters, their faith received new strength, and a firmer trust was given in the great and precious promises.

Nor was the mercy confined to them alone, but far off from church to church the blessed influence spread and sinners flocked "as clouds, and as doves to their windows." The whole region was aroused, and satan trembled for his empire. The fruits of that revival season remain to-day. Some are faithfully serving the Master on earth and some have entered into rest.

The two friends are far away now from the scene of their prayers and their victory, but often as their thoughts revert to the proofs of God's faithfulness witnessed there, all doubts must vanish, and unbelief be scattered to the winds.

Pray on then, Brethren! Surely there is enough proof of our Father's faithfulness, everywhere, you can scarcely look over your own experience without meeting with some signal answer to prayer, and why should you go so often, doubting, to the mercy-seat? Where is the mountain-removing faith that our early brethren possessed? "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done."

For the Christian Messenger.

### Egotism.

"Let another man praise thee and not thine own mouth, a stranger and not thine own lips," are the words of holy writ. But how different is the case in these days. Men love praise, and when they cannot get it they will praise themselves. They imagine that they have done some good deed, and people must know it; we live in an enlightened age, and must let our light shine and boast of our good works before men. We are self-made men; self-taught, model men, and the world must know it. We must laud it to the skies. Our long prayers and much fasting, deeds of charity and giving of alms must be made known for the benefit of coming generations! But what hast thou that thou didst not receive; or what hast thou done that is new under the sun? Where then is boasting? Is it not vain? Where is the hidden principle that emanates from love, wisdom, virtue, and humility, that prompts to acts of benevolence and deeds of justice, and performs without boasting or exaggeration? If we have done anything worth doing, will not others know it? Then why tell it ourselves as though we feared it would never be known. Boast not at all, especially of thyself, neither in little matters nor great ones, neither in the substance nor in the circumstance, neither in word nor deed, that is, pretend not what is false, nor cover that which is true. For if we have done evil sin lieth at the door, and if we have done good a reward is promised that our works shall speak when we are dead.

A. SUBSCRIBER.

To extract from the Bible the doctrines of election, the agency of the Spirit, and salvation by grace, would be like taking from a human body, its skeleton, its head, and its heart.

To deprive a Christian of the Bible, would be like taking from a living man, his food, his blood, and his breath.

CORNWAY PARSON.