

Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XIII. No. 33.

HALIFAX, N. S., WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 1868.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXXII. No. 33.

Poetry.

Willie's Signal for Jesus.

BY REV. THERON BROWN.

At twilight in old hospital St. Luke,
The smiling eyes that watched grew wet with crying,
And kind lips kissed away with loves rebuke,
The cruel anguish of the sick and dying.

In the fourth ward a boy with broken bones,
Lay dreading what the morrow should betide him,
And sobbed and talked by turns, in faltering tones,
With little Susie in the cot beside him.

For he had borne the knife that day, and strain,
On his weak limbs of surgeon's cord and splinter,
Till he had fainted with the weight of pain,
Too great for one just through the seventh winter.

And O, to wait the rest—'twas worse, he said,
To lie and tremble at the doctor's warning,
"I think 'twere better Susie, to be dead,
Than bear the hurt that's coming in the morning."

They say that every night the loving Lord,
Comes here for some of us, in watch or slumber,
And I have prayed that when he walks our ward,
To-night, he'll take me, too, among his number.

I hope he'll know I want him—and I've planned,
For fear I may be dreaming when He sees us,
Above the bed-clothes—so—to prop my hand,
And hold it there, to be my sign for Jesus."

At midnight, in old hospital St. Luke,
While lamps burned low o'er lives yet lower burning
And angel sleep, aloof at pain's rebuke,
Tempted pale eyelids, going and returning.

Who saw the Son of God, with countenance bland,
In pity sweet His glory all concealing,
Come at the beck'ning of that lifted hand,
And smile His answer to its mute appealing.

The arm grew weak that held it.—Faith's good-will
Stayed up the tiny sign of supplication
Full long; and when it quivered, and grew still,
It pointed them from sorrow to salvation.

'Tis morn at last. The nurses come again,
And see that child-like token where it lingers
Erect and cold, above the counterpane,
With resignation in its helpless fingers.

From sight of fear and sound of parting hope,
And curses wrung from sufferers unforgiven,
The soul of wounded Willie had gone up,
Led by that little lifted hand to heaven.

Why wait for death, O Spirit sick with sin,
Faith now may imitate the child's behaviour,
And from the wounds of penitence within,
Stretch forth her signal to the healing Saviour.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

True love to the Church; its manifestations and grounds.

THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ANNUAL SERMON
PREACHED AT PUGWASH, BEFORE THE EASTERN
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION ON MONDAY MORNING,
JULY 6TH, 1868, BY THE REV. T. H. PORTER,
JR., AND PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE
BODY.

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand
forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let
my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I
pride not Jerusalem above my chief joy."—Psalm
cxxxvii. 5, 6.

It is not certainly known who composed
this Psalm. Some suppose it to have been
Jeremiah, others David. Be that as it may,
it most beautifully and touchingly
describes the condition and feelings of
Israel in Babylonish captivity. The con-
trast between the past and present, already
extorting unbidden tears, is rendered more
manifest by the demand of their captors—
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion." To such
a requirement they can only respond—"How
shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange
land?" And then in the language of our
text, "If I forget thee," &c.

This is the spirit of true patriotism, the
spirit which impelled Nehemiah, whose his-
tory affords a most graphic illustration of our
subject, to exclaim, "Why should not my
countenance be sad, when the city, the place
of my fathers' sepulchres lieth waste?" and
which every real lover of his country will

possess. And it was something more. As in
the case of Nehemiah, doubtless the temple
and its worship, the rites and services of the
religion which they loved, greatly increased
their ardor.

But Jerusalem was emblematic of the gos-
pel church. The Apostle in his Epistle to the
Galatians speaks of the "Jerusalem which is
above, * * * the mother of us all."—
So, in his letter to the Hebrews he says, "Ye
are come unto Mount Zion * * * the city
of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem." In
the Revelation we read repeatedly of the
holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from
God out of heaven." And numerous allu-
sions in the Psalms and prophets point con-
clusively in the same direction.

It is not then doing violence to the text to
announce as our subject—*True love to the
Church, its manifestations and grounds.* And
our object in this selection is not so much to
present the most important of subjects, as to
direct attention to one too little considered.

I. First then, let us inquire, *What is the
nature of genuine love for the church of
Christ?*

1. In very general terms it is *sincere af-
fection for the entire brotherhood of believers.*
Some good people seem to suppose that out-
side of their own denomination there is no
church, and little, if any Christianity. But
the true Christian patriot, overlooking minor
differences, or dwelling rather upon points of
agreement than of divergence, remembering
how much more numerous, and I think I may
add, important, are those that unite than
separate, sees the prayer of the Saviour al-
ready answered in the oneness in experience,
practice, and even doctrine, of all "who love
our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." With
the Apostles John and Paul he can exclaim,
"Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ
is come in the flesh, is of God;" "No man
can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the
Holy Ghost;" "For in Christ Jesus neither
circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircum-
cision, but a new creature. And as many as
walk according to this rule, peace be on them,
and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." Or
with the devout king of Israel he prays,
"The good Lord pardon every one that pre-
pareth his heart to seek God, * * * though
he be not cleansed according to the purifica-
tion of thy sanctuary."

2. But while this is true, we must not for-
get that a strong feeling of *Denominational-
ism* is also essential. And this, not because
accidentally, or, if you please, Provisionally,
we have become connected with the particu-
lar body whose name we may bear. Not
because ancestors and friends, or the great and
good have belonged to it, or, under its influ-
ence we were converted to God. This is not
the foundation on which this sentiment should
rest. On the contrary, the affection we are
describing impels us to love our own denom-
ination best because we firmly and intelli-
gently believe it to be more Scriptural in doc-
trine and practice than any other, while at the
same time we may see in it much of imperfec-
tion, and as much to admire in others. Where
this is not the position of those especially who
call themselves Baptists, it may be seriously
questioned whether they have not mis-
taken their place.

3. But it is our main design to speak of
love to the church in its application to *the
society with which we stand connected by cov-
enant bonds, the "particular visible church"*
of which we are individual members. It is
respecting it especially that our heart's lan-
guage should be—

"For her my tears shall fall;
For her my prayers ascend,
To her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end."

And here we need to be distinctly understood
It is not the place where the church assem-
bles, the particular name given to it, nor
even the individuals merely of whom it may
be composed, that we are thus to love, but
the united body, engaging in the duties, and
participating in the privileges of the Church
of Christ,—walking in the "Commandments
and ordinances" of the gospel. While we
should love our neighbours, and indeed all
mankind, our own families demand the larg-
est share in our affections. And no human
relationship is more strong and tender than
the tie of church fellowship. However light-

ly some may regard it, as our eyes turn to-
ward, and our thoughts dwell upon that sacred
body of which we are individual members,
we should feel impelled to cry,—*"If I forget
thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget
her cunning, &c."*

II. Not dwelling here, let us proceed in
the second place, to notice some of the *man-
ifestations of such attachment.* And to this
we would invite particular attention, since
practical results are our chief aim.

1. And the first we shall mention is *re-
membrance.* "If I forget thee" and "re-
member thee not." What we love we recol-
lect. This is true of all the relations of life.
So if we truly love the church, we will not,
we cannot forget her. We may be separated
from her Associations, but, like the Apostle,
"absent in body," we will be "present in
spirit," and from our hearts be able to say
"God is my record, how greatly I long after
you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ."

2. Love to the church will influence us to
repose confidence in her. This will manifest
itself by ardent attachment to her doctrines,
and especially those which separate us from
other Christians. And while not ashamed to
acknowledge them, it will also be our aim to
diffuse them as widely as possible. When
this is not the case, separation is scarcely ne-
cessary or justifiable. It will also influence
us instead of dwelling upon her faults and
failings to depreciate them, and magnify her
excellencies.

3. Another of the manifestations of this
affection is *heartfelt sympathy.* Some mem-
bers seem neither to know nor care anything
about the church. If prosperous they rejoice
not, if in adversity they shed no tear, feel no
sorrow. This is never the ejaculation,
"Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity
within thy palaces." But when the proper
feeling exists, though enemies may exult, and
professed friends be silent or utterly forsake,
this sympathy will impel to prompt defence,
and efficient aid.

4. Again this disposition will influence us
to *participate in her services.* First, from a
sense of duty, which will prompt us to seek
to understand more and more fully the rela-
tion we sustain to her, and the obligations
arising therefrom. This will produce a deep
and abiding realization of individual respon-
sibility. Our connection will not be a mere
thing of convenience. On the contrary, the
service for which we are fitted, and to which
she calls, we will regard as the business of our
lives, and to it make everything else bend,
however great the self-denial or effort it may
require. And having well learned this lesson
instead of reversing the true order by making
the obligations of feeling precede those of
principle, it will not be long before duty will
become privilege and Jerusalem be prepared
above our chief joy.

5. Possessing this love, we must neces-
sarily *identify her interests with our own.*—
This will impel us to contribute, labor, pray,
employ all our resources and influence, and,
by every possible means, endeavour to pro-
mote her prosperity.

"My soul shall pray for Zion still,
While life or breath remains."

It will also influence us to seek her eleva-
tion and growth. On this account as
well as for the individual good, we should re-
gard faithful scriptural discipline as a person-
al and indispensable duty. In a word, our
true position is at least suggestive of a sound
interpretation and an actual fulfilment of the
prophetic declaration, "As a young man
marrieth a virgin, so shall shall thy sons marry
thee."

6. Such affection will prompt us to *labor
through and by means of the church,* that is,
in close connection with the members, and
immediately under her direction, both from a
sense of duty and privilege. Many good
Christians seem fond of independent effort, or
else appear to have forgotten for what pur-
pose the church was constituted. If a Sab-
bath School is to be organized, they will al-
most go out of their way to conduct it with-
out the aid or interference of the church. If
they wish to save men from intemperance
they will choose to unite with the world in
human and consequently imperfect organiza-
tions, even at the risk of violating the Divine
command—"Be ye not unequally yoked to-
gether with unbelievers." Respecting reli-

gious or moral work which cannot be per-
formed through the agency of the church, and
from the stand-point of religion, is it not an
appropriate inquiry to address to God's peo-
ple—"who hath required this at your hands?"
And if it is objected that the church is not in a
position to labor efficiently, is not the first
duty of her members to endeavour to fit her
for the service to which they feel themselves
called?

7. Lastly, in this connection, it is our
duty to manifest our attachment to the church
by a *proper recognition of her lawful au-
thority.* The idea with many seems to be
that the church has no authority, or that they
have at least as much right to direct and
control her as she them. But let it not be
forgotten that when we connect ourselves with
the church, we merge the rights and privi-
leges, if not the interests of the individual in
those of the body. And we virtually, by our
voluntary union, bind ourselves to comply
with the requirements duly expressed by a fair
and constitutional majority, except only when
they manifestly conflict with the Divine law.
In such a case we are bound to resist, even
though separation from her membership should
be the result. Of course, it is the duty of
the church to see that she does not exceed
her proper bounds, and that she only speak
when, what and to whom she is authorized.—
It is also the duty of the individual to use all
proper influence to direct and control her ac-
tion in accordance with his views and opin-
ions; but when once her voice has been heard
and her deliberate utterances understood, op-
position must cease "the minority must sub-
mit to the majority," and should do it cheer-
fully. In no other way can harmony be se-
cured and efficient service rendered. And
this is especially true of independent churches
constituted on the congregational principle, as
are ours, from whose decisions we know of no
appeal but to the court of Heaven.

III. Let us now briefly inquire into *the
grounds of such attachment.* Why should
the Christian love the church more than all
the world beside?

1. On account of *the relation which God
and all the good sustain to it.* It is charac-
teristic of the renewed heart to love what
God loves. And when we remember that He
"so loved" His people as to purpose from
eternity their salvation, through the suffering
and death of His Son, that "Christ also loved
the church, and gave himself for it," and that
it is through the agency of the Holy Spirit
in connection with the constant supervision of
Divine Providence in the use of means, that
He ultimately presents "it to Himself a glo-
rious church," what other object should en-
gage our affections? And when, in addition
to all this, we remember that angels are its
"ministering spirits," and good men of all
ages have entered into the closest alliance
with it, would it not be surprising if we were
not impelled to exclaim, "If I forget thee, O
Jerusalem, &c."

2. A *recollection of our own connection
with it* should intensify our love for the
church. It is our spiritual birth-place, "Of
Zion it shall be said, This and that man was
born in her." There we have had blessed
experiences, learned precious truths, partici-
pated in sacred services, and formed hallowed
friendships.

"Here my best friends my kindred dwell,
Here God my Saviour reigns."

3. But we should love the church on ac-
count of *the purpose which she is designed to
accomplish.* How important is the work God
has committed to her:—to proclaim and propa-
gate His truth, advance His cause, glorify
His name, bless and save mankind. She is
"the light of the world," "the salt of the
earth," "the pillar and ground of the truth."
What has she not already accomplished? What
wonders is she now performing, what a
future of service and success lies before her,
what glory awaits her. "Glorious things are
spoken of thee, O city of God." "Beautiful
for situation the joy of the whole earth, is
Mount Zion." "Walk about Zion, and go
round about her: tell the towers thereof.
mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her pal-
aces." This "is she that looketh forth as
the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the
sun, and terrible as an army with banners."
Well might all exclaim, "If I forget thee
O Jerusalem let my right hand forget her
cunning," &c.