

Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit!"

NEW SERIES.
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Poetry.

"FATHER, TAKE MY HAND."

The way is dark, my Father! Cloud on cloud
Is gathering thickly o'er my head, and loud,
The thunders roar above me. See, I stand
Like one bewildered! Father take my hand,
And through the gloom
Lead safely home
Thy child!

The day goes fast, My Father! and the night
Is drawing darkly down. My faithless sight
Sees ghostly visions. Fears, a spectral band,
Encompass me. O Father! take my hand,
And from the night
Lead up to light
Thy child!

The way is long, my Father! and my soul
Longs for the rest and quiet of the goal;
While yet I journey through this weary land
Keep me from wandering. Father, take my hand;
Quickly and straight
Lead to heaven's gate
Thy child!

The path is nigh, my Father! Many a thorn
Has pierced me; and my weary feet, all torn
And bleeding, mark the way. Yet thy command
Bids me press forward. Father, take my hand;
Then safe and blest
Lead up to rest
Thy child!

The throng is great, my Father! Many a doubt
And fear and danger compass me about;
But foes oppress me sore, I cannot stand
Or go alone. O Father! take my hand,
And through the throng
Lead safe along
Thy child!

The cross is heavy, Father! I have borne
It long, and still do bear it. Let my worn
And fainting spirit rise to that blest land
Where crowns are given. Father take my hand;
And reaching down
Lead to the crown
Thy child!

THE GRACIOUS ANSWER.

The way is dark, my child! but leads to light
I would not have thee always walk by sight,
My dealings now thou canst not understand,
I meant it so; but I will take thy hand,
And through the gloom
Lead safely home
My child.

The day goes fast, my child! But is the night
Darker to me than day? In me is light!
Keep close to me, and every spectral band
Of fears shall vanish. I will take thy hand,
And through the night
Lead up to light
Thy child.

The way is long, my child! But it shall be
Not one step longer than is best for thee
And thou shalt know at last, when thou shalt stand
Safe at the goal, how I shall take thy hand,
And quick and straight
Lead to heaven's gate
My child!

The path is rough, my child! but oh! how sweet
Will be the rest for weary pilgrims meet,
When thou shalt reach the borders of that land
To which I lead thee, as I take thy hand,
And safe and blest
With me shalt rest
My child.

The throng is great, my child! But at thy side
Thy Father walks, then be not terrified;
For I am with thee; will thy foes command
To let thee freely pass; will take thy hand
And through the throng
Lead safe along
My child.

The cross is heavy, child! Yet there was one
Who bore a heavier for thee; my son,
My well-beloved. For him bear thine; and stand
With him at last; and, from thy Father's hand,
The cross laid down,
Receive a crown,
My child.

Benefit your friends, that they may love
you still more dearly; benefit your enemies
that they may become your friends.

The intercession of Christ is as a wall of
fire around his people; they are kept as by
an impregnable garrison.—*Hervey.*

Religious.

QUAKER WORSHIP, 1868.

Our usual place of worship was closed for repairs; in our consequent vagrancy we passed a new and rather handsome Friends' chapel; and we felt moved to join with the comparatively few who were quitting the main road to seek their First-day rest and refreshment in the mode which is now a tradition from the once living enthusiasm of George Fox. A tradition, we confess, but one retained with a great deal of its primeval sentiment; a tradition wholly different, in this respect, from those traditions which, just now, as soulless imitations of middle-age ceremonies are, in the opposite direction, converting our parish churches into Sunday theatres. The front, ornamented with different coloured bricks, and arched in the lower half to provide a convenient portico along its whole length—almost a cloister—was approached from the road by a garden pleasantly laid out; and a second vestibule, the whole length also of the front, secured perfect quiet for the interior, when the side road shall become, what it must soon be, a street of respectable houses. Over these two entrances there is a large room used for committees and other purposes. The chapel proper had "all its sides equal, and all its angles right angles." The same description applies to each of the nine segments into which the ceiling is divided by timbers which cross each other. The benches were very comfortably sloped, the upper rail being unusually broad and easy to the shoulders.—Two or three of them rose at the upper end of the place, facing the congregation; one of these next the wall was separated from the front two in a pew-like panel-work, and over it was a projecting kind of shelf, perhaps a yard deep, which a friend informed us was of ancient origin; he supposed intended either as a sound board, or to keep off the descending drafts. On the upper of the two open front seats sat four ministers, two males and two females; all in Friends' costume. The congregation in front of them numbered about sixty; a small majority of them women. We were surprised to see how completely the latter have availed themselves of modern license. There was one, and only one, Quaker bonnet among them all. To be sure that was Quakerish enough to atone for the deficiencies of many others, but its wearer seemed in years, to belong to another generation. For the rest there were all varieties of colour; and though we observed no feathers or flowers, chignons were abundant, and some of them as absurdly large as those of ordinary worldly-minded lasses; the bonnets themselves were those little ludicrous substitutes for what used to bear that name, which threaten plenty of neuralgia and toothache, as well as deafness and colds, for our wives and daughters as soon as these Christmas winds from the Gulf Stream give place to those of the new year from the Polar regions. Even the older ladies, whose Quakerism is now satisfied with black, wore *minimum* bonnets of that colour. Of course the women were separated from the men; rather singular this for a sect which acknowledges fully women's rights on the ministerial benches. We were rather struck with the remarkable stillness, even to retention of one position, of eight Quaker boys, apparently of about ten or twelve years of age; discipline is effectual early. Of course, quietness of demeanour was marked in the adults, though, perhaps from the unusual stillness, we remarked the apparent unrestrainedness of the coughing. It seemed almost as if it were indulged as a relief from silent fixity. The men, though we entered a little before the hour of service, were all uncovered and some that came in afterwards only kept their hats on till they sat down.—Amongst the hats, too, we noticed no thoroughgoing broadbrims, though many were a kind of compromise. Such were our impressions in regard to the externals of a Friends' meeting-house and assembly for worship.

We come to the more important part.—The worship consisted of silence, prayer, and speaking. The silence, most probably because of the comparative novelty diverted our attention, was not to us that deep silence which Charles Lamb so strikingly and beautifully describes—it was hardly "a loneliness to be felt," a "sympathetic solitude." Practice would, no doubt, make it so; as it was, we did not find it easy to banish the ever-recurring thought—will any one break this silence? It occurred to us that we could have enjoyed and profited by the worship of silence more had we been quite sure that it would not have been interrupted. Trained Friends, of course, do not feel this. Then in meeting for worship there seemed almost a need for some common object of thought, to make silent worship sympathetic worship. When, for instance, some wise Christians, in presiding at the Lord's Supper, instead of uttering their own thoughts, leave the communicants to meditate for a time in silence, we have always found it by far the best stimulus to devout and suitable sentiments—but in such cases all have one common topic for meditation; all feel that all are meditating on the Last Night, the Crucifixion, and the Second Advent.

After, perhaps, a quarter of an hour's silence one of the female ministers knelt down to pray. All rose. Her prayer consisted largely of passages of Scripture, and dwelt much on the mediation of Christ, His divinity and atonement. Indeed, her prayer, and the two addresses which followed, suggested to us that the minds of the Friends had possibly been stirred up recently by the Rationalism which has spread among them, to dwell emphatically on evangelical views of our Lord and His redeeming work. After another long interval of silence a brother, who sat on the lowest ministerial bench, arose, and advertising to the passage, "Before Abraham was I am," spoke briefly on the Deity of our Lord, quoting appropriate passages, and exhorting to soundness in the faith. He sat down, somewhat abruptly, without any apparently natural conclusion. Both in his speaking, and in that which followed, also in the prayer, it struck us that the successive sentences seemed to be suggested, very seldom by any necessity of reasoning, or attempt to give coherence to the thought, but chiefly by some word in the preceding sentence. Paul often starts off thus at a word,—but then Paul returns to his subject. Our Friends seemed, on the contrary only led on by the new text or expression to some other, which again was only verbally related. Friends think it wrong to prepare discourses beforehand. They conscientiously rely on what the Spirit of God shall teach them at the time. This is distinctly stated in an excellent small and neat circular given us at the door on leaving. Still they will allow certain sympathizing outsiders to entertain a doubt whether the difference between their ministers in general is not this, that in such speaking, literally *extempore*, with the reasoning faculties intentionally repressed, the mind follows suggestions of the lighter kind just mentioned while in prepared discourses it pursues trains of logically consistent thought. Friends, as we understand, speak, waiting for a spiritual illapse of ideas and language; is it not possible that what comes so easily—with no effort to connect it with a starting point and terminus—as these verbal suggestions, may be mistakenly regarded as supernatural communications? Of course it is quite open to our brethren to reply that the latter is the course of the Divine Spirit's operation. After the brother had sat down, a long silence again followed, when the female who had prayed at the commencement arose and said, "It is written in the Scriptures of truth, there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, &c." She dwelt on each of these, so far making a kind of a little sermon. Baptism she explained as Peter does 1 iii. 21, and dwelt emphatically on the necessity of faith and repentance. After another prolonged silence, one of the ministers arose announced an "intention of M. and N. to marry," requesting that any objection might be notified at once, and, after another notice or two, declared the meeting

adjourned. All arose, the men put on their hats, which they had not worn at all during the service, and our small assembly were soon in the open air. It was long since we had joined in worship with one of the assemblies which date their origin from the once despised, now venerated, George Fox. We felt a touch of regret that even his followers have had in many minor things to follow the stream. Had he been present on First-day, 20th of 12th month, 1868 where we were, we fear he would have felt much "concern," and perhaps would have "testified loudly." Quakerism, like a ruin will not bear modernizing. Yet Friends seemed to have no alternative but to modernize or die out with this generation. In regard to the worship itself, we must commend their preference for perfect simplicity and plainness, combined with attention to comfort which mark their places of worship. It is impossible for a candid critic not to confess that the Friends' meeting house which we have met in is far more accordant with the idea of worshipping Him who is "a Spirit, in spirit and in truth" than our elaborately ornamented churches, and our chapels which imitate them. The praying and speaking seemed, we thought, not equal to the silence. They seemed the result of a constant effort to repress consciousness, to speak without control of human reason, and to utter only what might be supposed to be the suggestions of the Divine Spirit. This attempt, however, to renounce the human in the service of God at least suggested to the auditor that the speaker was desirous to keep us in his presence only.—*London Freeman.*

For the Christian Messenger.

THE MICMAC MISSION.

Dear Brother Selden,—

I can comprise in a few lines the substance of what it may be proper for the friends of the Micmac Mission to know respecting our operations during the past year.

1st. The Book of Exodus has been for some time ready to be published. Arrangements had been made some time ago with one of the Halifax printers to do the work. After waiting a very long time for him to procure the extra types necessary, which he did not succeed in doing, the agreement by mutual consent was cancelled and a new one made with another man. Advantage was taken of this delay to revise the whole work anew, and re-copy a portion of it.—We expect the work will be completed during the present winter, at the expense of the B. and F. B. Society.

2nd. In addition to the above, I translated into Micmac and have carefully copied out, the Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, and also the Gospel of John in Maliseet. It may be proper to mention that the work of copying out these languages for the press, is necessarily slow and laborious. Every letter must be distinctly formed in a round "copy hand," as the printer, since he does not understand the language, and cannot even pronounce the words when written ever so fairly, can have no guide in setting up the types except the distinctness of each letter. There can be no guess work, as in English, where the context, and the dots and crosses and a letter or two plainly written will often give a tolerable clue to the scrawls and scratches that make up the rest of the word—"Copy" in a foreign tongue must be fairly written.

3rd. Direct missionary labor has been continued as heretofore. No great or striking results can be mentioned. Faith and patience continue to be sorely tried, although one who has carefully watched the work for years cannot but be impressed with the many and marked indications of the divine approbation and blessing, which are to be seen in all directions. Prejudice and direct opposition to our labors, and even indifference, more trying if possible than opposition, is giving way on all hands, and instead of shrinking from the "Anakims" and the "cities walled up to heaven," the language of Caleb, who "followed the Lord fully," is more in accordance with duty and