

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XVII, No. 47.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, November 20, 1872.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXXVI, No. 47.

Poetry.

SLANDER.

'Twas but a breath—
And yet a woman's fair fame wiled,
And friends at once grew cold and altered,
And life was worse than death.

One venom'd word
That struck 'tis coward, poisoned blow
In craven whips lashed and low—
And yet the wide world heard.

'Twas but one whisper—one—
That muttered low, for very shame,
The thing the slanderer dare not name,
And yet its work was done.

A hint so slight,
And yet so mighty in its power—
A human soul in one short hour
Lies crushed beneath its blight.

THE WEAVER.

BY WM. H. BURLEIGH.

Ceaselessly, the weaver, Time,
Sitting at his mystic loom,
Keeps his arrow shuttle flying—
Every thread aneers our dying;
And with melancholy chime,
Very low and sad withal,
Sings his solemn madrigal,
As he weaves our thread of doom.

"Mortals!" thus he weaving sings,
"Bright or dark the web shall be
As ye will it; all the tissues
Blending in harmonious issues,
Or discordant colorings;
Time the shuttle drives, but you
Give to every thread its hue,
And elect your destiny.

"God bestows the shining warp;
Fill it with as bright a woof,
And the whole shall glow divine,
As if wrought by angels' feet,
To the music of the harp;
And the blended colors be
Like perfect harmony,
Keeping evil things aloof.

"Envy, malice, pride, and hate,
Foulest progeny of sin,
Let not these the web entangle
With their blind and furious wrangle,
Marring your diviner fate;
But with love and deeds of good
Be the web throughout imbued,
And the perfect shall ye win."

Thus he singeth very low,
Sitting at his mystic loom,
And his shuttle still is flying—
Thread by thread aneers our dying,
Grows our shroud with every throw;
And the hues of Hell or Heaven
To each thread by us are given,
As he weaves our web of doom.

Religious.

CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM.

Whatever analogy may be traced between circumcision and baptism ensures to the opponents of infant baptism. How plain is this! Abraham's natural seed were circumcised because they had a birthright interest in the covenant God made with Abraham. Christians are Abraham's spiritual seed. They become so by faith in Christ, and are beneficiaries of the new covenant, the provisions of which are eminently spiritual. There is in baptism a recognition of their interest in the blessings of this covenant. It was proper to circumcise Abraham's natural seed, and it is proper to baptize his spiritual seed. But who are his spiritual seed? Believers in Christ, and believers alone. Infants, therefore, have no right baptism, because they are not Abraham's spiritual seed. Jewish infants were fit subjects for circumcision because they were Abraham's natural seed; but neither Jewish nor Gentile infants can (on account of their incapacity to exercise faith) be his spiritual seed, and therefore should not be baptized. I insist, then, that correct analogical reasoning from circumcision to baptism saps the very foundation of Pedobaptism, and furnishes Baptists with an argument, of the strength of which they have never fully availed themselves.—*Ex. & Chron.*

BROTHER HARKLISS; OR CHANGING PLACES.

A LESSON FOR PULPIT OR PEW.

An aged negro, most of whose life had been spent in bondage, but who was now rejoicing in liberty, appeared one day at the study of an eminent minister and introduced himself as "Brother Harkliss Jones, from South Caliny."

The good minister shivered at the thought of another clerical beggar for church money, to be spent, as so much of it usually is, in the travelling expenses of the applicant. "Well Brother Harkliss," he asked with patient kindness, "what can I do for you?"

"You can listen to me brudder," replied Harkliss, with a princely air. "I'll do that if you'll be short; but my time is very precious brother," answered the pastor.

"So is mine, brudder!" exclaimed the visitor with a dignity which almost startled the minister. "You and I's both servants of de King, and His business always 'quires haste."

"Yes; and your church wants a little help, I suppose, after the war. Well, I'm glad they sent a sensible man for it."

"No, sir. My Church is de Church Universal, and dat has got de Mighty One of Jacob for her help, and needn't go beggin' of no body! I come to give and not to ax, sir."

"Then you've got some money for my church, I suppose," said the minister, smiling.

"No sir; what I've got to give will come closer home to you than to your church."

"Well, what have you to give me then?"

"A little advice and a heap of comfort. I come up from my old home 'cause my chill'n and gran'-chill'n was bound for to come. I was as near de Lord on de banks of de Great Pedee as I ever 'pects to be up here; and dere was as many souls to save down dere, as dere is up here. But young folks, you know is sanguinary in dere views, and mighty stroublous in carryin' on 'em out. Dey got a notion—poor things—that every foot ob land up north was sanctified by Mr. Lincoln's spirit, and that de arth yielded like it did afore de curse fell on it—without labor or sweat! Dey thought de North was a little heaven whar no man had to say to his neighbor, 'Love ye de Lord,' kase dey all loved Him a'ready. I told 'em dere was work and poverty and sin up here, like dere was down home; for I've seen Northern folks plenty in my young days, and mighty hard ones dey was too! But my chill'n dey 'poo'd' at me, and said 'mong demsels, 'he's 'hind de times. If we goes he'll soon foller. Now dey was right dere, for nex' to de Lord, I loves my chill'n and gran'-chill'n. When I see dey was comin', I packed up my bundle and come too. It 'peared like I saw a great shinin' finger in de dark clout one night pointin' due north. 'Den,' says I, 'dats my pillar o' fire, and wher I'm sent I'll go, and de Lord will have my work all laid out ready for me.' So here I be, sir."

"And you want me to set you to work?"

"Not a bit of it, sir; on de con'try, I wants to set you to work! Dat's what I'm comed here for dis mornin'."

The cool composure of the sable guest fairly astonished the gentleman used to so much deference and respect; and he asked in a tone of surprise, "What do you mean brother?"

"Well, I've been to hear you preach two Sundays, and I've made up my mind dat you're off de track! You talks like it was a chance anyhow, whether we saints get to heaven after all. Dere was too many 'ifs' in your sarmons. De master hadn't no 'ifs' in his preachin'. His gospel is 'Him dat believes shall be saved.' Him dat comes I will in no wise cast out." "Come unto me, you dat is tired and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Dere is no condemnation to dem dat are in Christ Jesus." "Whar I am dere shall

my people be also.' 'I give eternal life unto you as my Father give me, and none shall pluck dem out of My hands.' Isn't dat good gospel, sir?"

"Yes, and I believe every word of it," replied the minister.

"Is dere any chance, think you, for Satan to slip in by a trick and upset de great work of redemption?"

"No."

"Den why don't you tell de people so? One sarmon o' your'n was tellin' all 'bout de doubts Satan pushes into de hearts of de Lord's people. Why dat sarmon was mor'n half 'devil,' all through! And another was tellin' de saints dat dey must do dis and dat and t'other, to get peace and comfort here and heaven beyond. If you believes dat Christ died and rose again, and dat 'kase He lives we shall live also, why don't you comfort God's people wid dese words? Let de devil alone for awhile in your preachin' (you'll get 'nuff o' him widout makin' so much on him), and just preach Christ, Christ."

"Pears like I don't want to hear nothin' else but just only dat dear name, while I stops here in de flesh. I rises every mornin' in Christ, and I walks and talks wid Him all day. When night comes I lies down and sleeps wid Him, like it was my last sleep, and I mought wake next mornin' wid Him in glory!"

"I'm black and poor and old to de eyes of de world; but I'm fair and rich and fresh in His sight," kase I'm in Him. All dat He has got is mine, and dere ain't a king on 'arth dat old Harkliss would change places wid. No, no, no!"

"But while you never doubt God's power to save, you sometimes have doubts of your acceptance with Him, haven't you?" asked the minister, who was, by this time, seated meekly taking his lesson.

"No, never; why should I? Dere was a night once long time ago, when my soul was 'ceeding sorrowful, like de Master's, when he was in de garden. I felt like I was helpless for dis life, and I had no light on de world beyond. I hated my hard massa, and I most hated God too, for not giving me a better lot. I was out in de cane-brake all alone, a mile away from any livin' cretur. I felt like I wanted to kill myself, 'kase my massa he done and gone and sold my wife and baby! Dat ar night I got a hint in my soul what hell was; and as I sat dere a thought came into me and I spoke it out. 'Dere isn't no God,' says I. And dem words skeart me so't I sprung right of de ground whar I was lyin! I was bewildered, I reckons; for all of a sudden I see a great white hand sweep back de dark night, and a light shined all 'round 'bout me. I didn't see no body, but I felt strong arms about me, and in a minute my poor aching head was leanin' on somebody's breast, and, oh, what a place dat was to rest on! Den I knowed dere was a God, and dat it was de voice of His Son in my soul. I've been a new man since dat night; but half de time I been only a common sort of a Christian like you risin' and fallin', hopin' and doubtin'; such a Christian as puzzles de world to know whether dere is any good in 'ligion or not."

"I was a waiter in dem days, and was a good deal wid de white folks, and it was fash'nable 'mong dem for to doubt, and mourn, and whine, when dey talked 'ligion; and I used to forget dat night in de cane brake, and fell into de fashion of de gran' folks. But it didn't work with me, and I got into darkness. Den I'd try to fight my own way out of de swamp; but de more I tried de faster I stuck. Den I would try to hire de Lord to lift me out of de horrible pit and de miry clay, by good works, hopin' de weak field hands, or givin' away my pocket money. But we never made a bargain—de Lord and me! He always 'brung me low till I was glad to get peace free; and to take away all chance o' bragging from me, He generally brought de peace when I was asleep and doin' no good works. Den I would wake wid glory in my soul, and I would run on mighty peart for a spell. I didn't

know what Christ was den. He was in me; but dere was plenty else in me besides Him."

"Come here and sit in this large chair, brother; it is more comfortable than that one," said the minister in a subdued voice, as if addressing a superior. "I want to hear how you got clear of de tempter, and filled with Christ at last."

"Oh well, it isn't no great story, but here it is:—Dere was an old col'd sister dey used to call Gimsey, a sort of a preacher like 'mong de field hands. Well when she come down to her death-bed, she done call all massa's people and de neighborin' black folks 'round her 'kase she said she'd been in heaven a whole hour and come back to give us a word of comfort. We gathered 'bout her, and she lift up her two hands and pray dis way: 'Lor' Jesus, answer dis one pra'er of mine, for dy own name sake. It is old Gimsey's last pra'er; de next word wid me will be praise and hallelujahs. Bring dese poor chill'n into de light, like You bring me into de light fifty year ago. Don't let Bruder Harkliss cast contempt no longer on dy blessed name by doubtin' of dy word which is truth. Humble proud Jenny, and in massy punish drunk Dose, and comfort lone Polly, and cure sick Abe, and bring all de rest to dy feet here, and to dy house up dere by an'-by!—Den she open her eyes and begun for to preach, and she give each one a separate little sarmon all to hisself. She den call me. 'Come here, Bruder Harkliss, and take my cold hand in yours.' I went and she said, 'Oh, Harkliss, Harkliss! you's worse den an onprofitable sarvant! You's half de time barin' false witness agin de Lord dat thought you, and tellin' de world dat His word ain't to be trusted—dat He don't always speak truth!'"

"'No, no,' says I 'auntie, I never done dat; I trust Him wid all my heart."

"'Mebby you do right here on de verge o' heaven; but quick's you get out you'll say 'Dere's no tellin' whether I'll ever reach heaven or not.' Harkliss, says she, 'do you believe de Lord has writ yer name on de palms of His hands, and His name on your forehead?'"

"I bowed down my head in shame, for I see my sin. And den de truth of God shone out like a great sun, as I never see it afore. My soul was full of glory, such like as de world never sees, and I says, 'Yes, 'auntie, He has told me time and again dat he is mine and dat I am his.' Do you believe He speak de truth Harkliss?' says she. Yes 'auntie, says I, 'I know He does. I see his word like fire.' 'Den you quit a doubtin' afore de world,' says she. Harkliss, if you'd been as dis-respectful to your owner as you've been to de great Master, and if you'd gone round saying, he's promised me such and such, but I doubt he'll not keep his word—he'd sold you into de rice swamps a-hundred times in dese years! Better out off yer right hand and pluck out yer right eye dan to doubt de truth of His word. You is His, for He bought you wid His own precious blood; and as sure as He's in heaven you shall go dere too! I'm tired chill'n and must go to sleep. Good night."

"Dere, sir, dem was old Gimsey's last words on earth; de next one she spoke was 'Glory' fore de throne."

"Well, dere was a great light all through my soul den, dat has never gave out since. 'Pears like de Lord is in de midst of it, wher I can feel His presence, and when de 'ifs and 'may-bes' come round trying to break my peace, I shouts out, no matter who hears me, 'De Lord says dat I am His, and dat whar He am, dere shall I be also; and his word endureth for ever.' Den de 'ifs all fly off like they were unclean birds, and leaves me in de light! Why, sir, I's got de world so under my feet dat nothin' in it can worry me, only de sin I sees; and dat will be cleared off some day. De Lord's chill'n got a good right to glory; and nobody—no, not de devil, dat you

make such 'count on—can't take it 'way from 'em! Now my errant's done here. You stick to de gospel—Christ, Christ—and you'll see de glory come down on yer people, and soon see them trampin' on de world. Good by, sir."

The minister rose and took the hand of his guest, kindly saying, "Let me write your name down, brother; for I want to see you again and to know you better. How do you spell Harkliss?"

"Her-o-less—I don't guess I can member it, for its nigh unto forty years since I larnt to spell it from young master. He said I was named after one of dem heathen goddishes dat dey use to make believe dey had in old times. He's 'mong dat nonsense dey teaches in college. He's de fellow dat killed lions and monsters and such-like wid his club. You's been to college, so you must know 'bout him, de strongest goddish of all—Harkliss?"

"I know him," replied the minister. "Well, brother Hercules, come and see me again very soon. Good by."

When the old negro had closed de door behind him, de minister read over de few pages he had already written of his next Sunday's sermon. It was cold and lifeless—there was no Christ in it. He tore de sheet into atoms, and sat down before de fire to meditate on de words of his poor visitor. He never thought so little of himself before. Taking up his hat, he went out to visit some of de poor hidden ones of his flock whom he knew to be great in de kingdom of heaven.—*Mrs. Chaplin.*

HINTS FOR THE PRAYER MEETINGS.

"Lord, teach us how to pray" was the petition of the disciples, and the Lord gave them a model, which shows the propriety of having method in our prayers.

1. If you propose to pray or speak in the meeting, where it is left to the brethren, you need not wait for others because you are younger, or esteem yourself less qualified. It will not be considered any want of modesty in you if you should be first. This is one of the occasions when the least may be first, and the older and more experienced may properly wait.

2. Let your prayer be short, especially if there be a number to take a part.

3. And definite. You do not come to pray for everything at this time. "If two of you agree as touching any thing, it shall be done." Observe the singleness of that prayer of the disciples: "Thou, Lord, which knowest de hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen." The subject may be appointed for the occasion, as at de monthly concert; or some object may be suggested; or the portion of Scripture read may lead de mind to some point.

4. Worship has its natural order. If you pray first, you will naturally seek de promised presence of de Lord Jesus; and de closing prayer is somewhat summary. Both of these may be short. Do not indulge in much repetition.

5. It is not necessary that either of the prayers should be brought to a close with any considerable formula, referring to de finishing of our work on earth, de close of life, de end of de world, and de eternal future.

6. Do not pray for yourselves principally. The spirit of grace and supplication is poured out on those who pray for others. It may be that de prevalence of prayer at de Fulton Street prayer meeting is due to their praying their definitely for others, rather than for themselves.

7. You may direct your prayers often to de Lord Jesus. His sympathy will warm your heart. And he said of dere Comforter, "I will send Him unto you."

8. Let de voice be natural, except that de tone of it will be modified by solemn and tender emotion.

9. Remember that de great qualifi-