

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XVII., No. 19.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, May 8, 1872.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXVI., No. 19.

Poetry.

IS IT WELL WITH THE CHILD?

Surely 'tis well these tender feet, beneath the
scorching ray
Of life's fierce sun, shall never toil along the
dusty way;
Yet oh! for the little twinkling feet which sped
so fast and free,
Across the dewy lawn at eve so oft to welcome
me.
Surely 'tis well that never in life's labyrinthine
ways
That little hand shall risk to lose the thread
amid the maze;
Yet oh! for the tiny hand in mine with its
pressure soft and warm,
Reminding me it was my charge to shield my
child from harm.
Surely 'tis well that never shall her spirit be
perplexed
With doubt and questionings, whereby the
souls of all are vexed;
Yet oh! for the whispered questionings so
strangely deep and wise,
Too wise, we thought, for childish lips, of
things beyond the skies.
Surely 'tis well that never now sore-wounded
in the fray,
The soul shall need with sigh and sob to weep
its woes away;
Yet oh! for but one look, though sad, of the
loving wistful eyes,
Which closed a while ago on earth, to walk in
Paradise.
Surely 'tis well for her who rests; nor ill for
us who stay
To bear for some short space the heat and
burden of the day;
For we hear a still soft voice which calls from
out the grassy mound,
And we see a tiny hand which leads where
only rest is found.

Religious.

"THE MUTUAL RELATION OF BAPTISM AND THE COMMUNION."

From the first portion of the article in the *Baptist Quarterly*, under the above caption, we have seen that the two Christian ordinances are equal in rank and perpetuity. The same writer next proceeds to show that the one in its nature and design necessarily precedes the other. We copy another portion in a somewhat condensed form:—

2. They are related to each other as antecedent and consequent—Baptism the antecedent, and the Communion the consequent. Perhaps it may seem that, as here stated, this position also is to every Christian self-evident, and hence needs neither proof nor development. And since the ordinances, as ordinances, are just what the Lord ordained them to be—one thing, and not anything different—if they are once in nature antecedent and consequent, they are and must be, as respects nature, ever and everywhere antecedent and consequent. If they were such when and where Christ instituted them, they are and must be such universally and infallibly. They have each three independent yet distinct characters and uses. Each is at once an act of faith, an exhibition of truth, and a component of church organization. In the first particular it is a deed, in the second a word, in the third a thing. The first element is purely personal, the second general, the third ecclesiastical—the first transactional, the second declarative, the third constitutive. In the first something is done, in the second something is shown, in the third something is formed. Let us take up these three characters successively, and see whether in every part, from first to last, they stand as antecedent and consequent.

As a personal transaction, Baptism is in Scripture comprehensively denominated "putting on Christ." Gal. iii. 27. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, put on Christ." This is first done as a purely spiritual act in the first spiritual reception of Christ by faith; it is done in word by the spoken confession of this faith; it

is done sacramentally, or in the way of ordinance, in Baptism, and only in Baptism. The purely spiritual act, embodies itself in the appointed outward act, and therein completes itself. The Communion, on the other hand, is comprehensively denominated the communion of the body and of the blood of Christ. But communion with the Lord, in the sphere of the purely spiritual, is the act of a soul that has put on the Lord—it is the continuous act by which the divine life, already originated in the new birth, is sustained, nourished, and perfected. The Communion is, in the sphere of the activities and instrumentalities involved in the transition, and completion. We come to Christ before we commune with Christ. If regeneration is the antecedent of sanctification, Baptism is the antecedent of Communion. As the soul comes once, and only once, into union with Christ, as in fact it never does dissolve this union, and, on God's word, could not be renewed again to repentance if it were to dissolve it, in no man's case is there a foundation in experience for baptism after the Communion.

If the complex personal acts of baptism and communion were each analyzed, the same relation of their constituents would be seen to exist. Baptism is a separation, a first separation, from a previous life of sin, from a godless world, from a state of condemnation; it is a washing away of sins once and forever, an act unto pardon. Communion, on the other hand, is an act of one who has been separated, who is separate, to whom separation is an accomplished fact, a permanent condition, an acknowledged characteristic of one who has been pardoned. Thus the act of death to sin, of renunciation of the world, the whole active voluntary separation from the evil, which has its prominent place in baptism, is presupposed in the Communion. Baptism, again, fronting towards Christ, is a consecration to him, an accepting of him, an identification with him, with his people, with his cause; it is taking for the first time, and once for all, the Christ-side instead of the world-side, the Christ-life instead of the world-life. But what is Communion? It is from first to last, in all its elements, the act of a friend with a friend. It presupposes the completion of the union, the stability of the union, and within this union it wholly moves. This is why, in Baptism, we have none of the festive element, while the Communion is predominantly festive. There is all the difference that exists between a birth and a feast.

Take them next as exhibitions of truth. Here they are memorials, declarations, symbols, and prophecies. First as memorials. Each brings to view facts of history. The baptismal water immediately reminds of Jordan, and the baptism itself of the scene at Jordan, when Jesus went down into the waters and was there buried and again rose. This was the formal, solemn, ordained separation and consecration of himself to his work of Saviour—his identification of himself with his people. There in ordinance he took upon himself our sins, as in ordinance we, by baptism, take upon ourselves his righteousness.

The Communion, on the other hand, reminds us of a fact later in Christian history—of the evening of the betrayal. In the elements we see, too, the body and the blood. We see Jesus after his sacrifice has been completed—after his death.

Next as declarations. We have already viewed the ordinances as the acts of a believer with reference to himself. As declarations they show to others what is the actor's condition. Baptism declares him to have come into Christ. Communion declares him to be abiding in Christ. They declare the subject to be in these two successive states. The Saviour designed them for signs, and for true signs in respect to the one receiving them. The declarations, true or false, stand related as the acts, and these we have seen are as first and second.

Again, as symbols they have the same relation. A symbol proper is a visible natural object or fact which represents or images an invisible spiritual reality. It is alike impossible and needless here to go minutely into the symbolism of the ordinances. Enough that we know that Baptism symbolizes, with singular clearness and fulness, the central spiritual realities pertaining to the origination of a holy life. It sets forth the nature of the two states, sin and holiness. It shows on what principles provision has been made for a transition from the former to the latter state. It reveals also the nature of the activities and instrumentalities involved in the transition. And standing up, solitary and alone, it proclaims also the nature of that electing love and preserving care which keeps forever the child that has once become a child. Baptism speaks of origination, only of origination. The Communion, on the other hand, symbolizes, with a like clearness and fulness, the central verities pertaining to the perpetuation of the Christian life. Though itself not a sacrifice, it shows life to be forever rooted in sacrifice. It appears as a ceaseless communication of divine love, through Jesus Christ, to the heart of man, received and appropriated by a living faith. It strikingly presents the oneness of the believer with the Lord, which is yet a oneness of absolute and ceaseless dependence. But it has nothing to say of origination. It tells us not how we come to be in Christ. It supposes that to have been already told. It takes up the story where Baptism lays it down. Thus as a symbol it follows Baptism.

Finally, they are prophecies. We seize upon the central prophecy of each. In Baptism it is the believer's glorious resurrection. This is to be at the Lord's second coming, in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels, for the punishment of the wicked, for the world's renovation, for the completion of the mediatorial work in the introduction of the whole family of the redeemed into their state of completed, final, eternal glory, when death itself shall have been destroyed, and "God shall be all in all." The Communion is a prophecy of the glorious fellowship into which that advent of Christ and the redemption of our bodies are to introduce us. And thus we find the relation belonging to them as memorials.

In gathering the testimony borne by the nature of the ordinances, we have still to consider them as pertaining to church organization. Among both Protestants and Papists there is a general agreement that one of the prime signs of a true church is the proper administration of these two ordinances. It is hardly too much to say that they are the organization of the church—that all else is subsidiary or incidental. We do not, indeed, forget the place which the gospel, as the word of God, is to have; but the gospel spoken is the interpretation of the gospel embodied in ordinances. Gospel and ordinances are the same thing in two forms—in the form of words and in the form of deeds.

The favorite representation of the whole church is "the body of Christ." And as each local church is to realize, in its measure, the ideal of the one church, every church is the body of Christ. And how does Baptism stand with reference to this body? Is it not its very origination? This question is settled by Paul when he writes to the Corinthians: "For in one Spirit we all were baptized into one body." 1 Cor. xii. 13. With this we take the expression, "baptized into Christ," and find in it the same doctrine. We are baptized into him so as to become his members, and members in just the sphere that the baptism can constitute us such, in his visible body. This idea that entrance into Christ's church is by virtue of a vote of the church, and that Baptism is a detached fact, in no vital, necessary, constitutive relation to the body, merely a preliminary qualification, is as untrue to the harmonies of Chris-

tian truth as to the direct word of revelation. The vote, or, rather, the consent, of the church, is contained in the baptism. The ordinance is not to be administered without the consent. The consent or vote is merely the decision of a body whether a given person may become, by and in baptism, a member. But it is the baptism that makes the membership. Acceptance of members from other churches is not properly the creation of membership; it is more of the nature of a recognition. The command to be baptized is addressed to the believers, but this contemplates the co-operation of another party, and that party is the church. The church baptizes, and the vote is merely the decision, which is carried to completion in the act, and thus the union is consummated.

As to the Communion, its place in the church is fixed by fixing that of Baptism, as also by its own nature. Paul, too, makes the one loaf to represent the one body—a body, therefore, not coming to be, but already existing. Hence the Christians came together to partake of the Communion. It was not merely remembrance of Christ, it was a remembrance in communion. We have, therefore, in the ecclesiastical character of the ordinances, the same relation of antecedent and consequent that we had already discovered in them as acts of faith and exhibitions of truth. This completes the evidence from their nature.

ENOCH COMPARED WITH MODERN SAINTS.

Bishop Simpson, in the course of a sermon preached in Philadelphia, upon the text, "Enoch walked with God," discussed as follows on his privileges and their improvement as compared with the people of God in our age:

But now that I have drawn these lines of Enoch's character, let us make a little comparison, if we can, between him and ourselves, to see whether there may be this walking with God on our part; whether we have the same facilities, and may attain the same holiness and grandeur of life. I have noticed the instructions of Enoch. Have we the same facilities of instruction he had? Now there are some that he had which we cannot have. I have sometimes fancied I saw him when a boy. Adam had not yet left the earth; he was a little over six hundred years old when Enoch was born, and lived more than three hundred years after. I have thought that probably the aged Adam used to take little Enoch by the hand and walk with him. Enoch was anxious to learn, and when a child is anxious to learn and listen, ago loves to talk with childhood; and Enoch, seeking for training, ready to be instructed, oh! what lessons did Adam give. Methinks he told him of how the earth looked when he first opened his eyes; of Eden, in all its glory; how the heavens beamed in brightness, and the flowers sent forth their sweet perfume; how the birds sang beautiful melodies, and the angels came down to walk in the garden, and God Himself was there. Methinks he told Enoch the whole story,—how God gave him Eve, and her beauty and loveliness; then of the Fall, and his sorrow, and his turning away from Eden, and the cherubim that guarded the gate that man might never enter there; and then the promise of a Saviour; and then about Abel and Cain. And what a host of questions would young Enoch ask! Then, too, all the inventors of earth were there, and Enoch could talk with them. And yet with all the opportunities Enoch had—and they were great—how much greater are ours! Had he the story of the creation and the fall? We have it. Had he a knowledge of science and its conquests? We have all he had, and for six thousand years the world has been moving on in its triumph of mind over matter; mat. rials have been gathered, and we can learn as Enoch never could, because there are materials on which he could not lay his hand. Did angels walk on earth? We have the record. Did he trust in

a Savior to come? The Savior has come. Enoch knew nothing of the Babe of Bethlehem. His eye had not gazed on the star seen in the East as ours can. He had not gone with the wise men with his gifts to the infant Jesus as we can go. He had no story of Gethsemane, and the fearful struggle, and the victory. He had no story of Calvary. He had not heard the voice saying, "It is finished!" There had been no ascension from Olivet, no preaching of Jesus through the world until empires gave way and thrones crumbled and false systems vanished; and yet standing where we do, we have the lessons Enoch had, the lessons Moses had; and we have listened to the thoughts that made David tune his harp, have had visions that fired the imagination of Ezekiel and Daniel, have had the teaching of Jesus when on earth, and, oh! the songs that have been rolling, that angels started from heaven, rolling on to fill this world! Had he instruction? We have much more. And if because he was instructed he was able to walk with God, we stand on higher ground, and ought to be able to walk with God.

We may not have that same firmness of purpose he had; and I fear many of us fail just here. You, as well as I, may have set out in early youth to be religious; but, oh! how often you have turned aside; how frequently have we erred; what sad mistakes we have made; and how often have we lost our firmness of purpose. It seems to me there is a ladder, like that which Jacob saw set up from earth to heaven, and while Enoch would have been away up yonder on those higher rounds, almost ready to pass into the invisible, we linger yet on the lower rounds of the ladder, not having ascended, having traveled a little step up and then a step down; and there are some of us, I am afraid, today no higher in our ascent toward glory than we were twenty years ago, when all heaven has been inviting, and all possible helps have been given us.

My dear brother, to-day, in the sight of God, are you better than you were twenty years ago? Are you more like Jesus than you were twenty years ago? Have you more of the enjoyments of religion? Is the image of Christ more perfectly stamped on your heart than it was twenty years ago? What have you been living for? God has graciously spared you and given you His word and Spirit and all needful helps, and yet no better all the twenty years! Oh! Oh! how sad it is for us. We have been hearing and traveling, many of us, and if we keep on in this way, oh! what is the prospect before us.

Put there are others who, I trust, have been gaining. You look back to your early experience, and it is sweeter now to pray than then; heaven is more attractive now than then; Jesus is nearer now than then; it is easier to lean on His arm; it is sweeter to lean on His bosom; it is more delightful to think of death and triumph and glory. The angels seem to be lovelier. They gather around us, and sometimes the veil seems to grow so thin that the whole family in heaven and earth seem to surround us—Jesus, the great Head, and all brothers through Jesus Christ. If such is the case, you are ripening for glory—walking, to some extent, with God.

"I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE."

In these words the English language fails to give the full meaning of the Greek. It implies, "Never, no, never; no, nor ever!"

This word is a word of "leaving, parting, separation, failure and disappointment." Think of finding something that will never leave nor fail. Grasp this promise, "I will never leave thee," and store it in your heart; you will want it some day. The hour will come when you will find nothing so comforting or cheering as a sense of God's companionship. Stick to that