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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

A TRIBUTE TO MY FATHER.

BY A YOUNG LADY ON LEAVING HER HOME IN ENGLAND FOR A RESIDENCE IN NOVA SCOTIA.

Thy help I crave most gracious Muse,
Oh grant me inward light;
Let words best suited to my theme,
This eager pen indite.
Come Thou thought swiftest messenger,
Sweep o'er my untaught lyre;
'Tis useless, silent, until touched,
With burning, living fire.

Wake sweetest strains to lure my soul,
In choice of worthy lays;
Most fitting to the tribute pure,
A child's affection pays.
How close the bond how sweet the ties,
(Ah! who can fully tell?)
That link thee father to my heart,
'Tis only I know well.

Here Love the purest, deepest, lives,
Nor can time e'er erase;
From Memory's gems that treasure dear,
Its image e'er efface.
In infancy my feeling's dawn,
Arose and greeted Thee;
None were so godlike in my eyes,
Nor could so valued be.

What rose in childhood as the sun,
Upon a summer's day;
Now only gathers heat and power,
Like noontide's warmest ray.
As on Time rolls and ever on,
It's climbing higher still;
Nothing impedes its onward course,
Nothing its beams shall chill.

My love shall shine o'er all thy path,
Yea when the end is near;
E'en then 'twill cheer thy tired steps,
To see it shining clear.
Oh, think not father dear, my love,
As flesh decays, shall die;
'Tis thine for ever, though we dwell,
One here and one on high.

Whichever first shall gain the rest
Of yonder blessed home;
Shall watch the wanderer of earth,
Whose steps are sad and lone.
If spirits are permitted then,
The friends who mourn to tend;
What joy to hover nearest those,
Whose souls with ours can blend.

Father—what magic in the word!
My heart throbs madly wild,
Strung every chord, touched every string,
Emotions from thy child.
When near thee how I fondly watch,
Those calm and peaceful eyes;
True index of that Christian soul,
Where richest treasure lies.

Thou art not like the shallow stream,
Whose tossing waters play;
In fierce commotion noisy fuss,
O'er pebbles in its way.
But feelings like the ocean's bed,
Lie all concealed and deep;
The surface smoothly may flow on,
What's hid—must silent keep.

Thou hast the source of untold bliss,
At which I feast my soul;
The thought of thine own placid self,
Brings calm, though storms may roll.
Father, my true protector thou,
My faithful guiding star,
At which I've gazed in darkest night,
When foes my peace would mar.

'Twere poor indeed if one could count,
The value of his store,
In mines of love unfathomed lie,
Rich veins of priceless ore.
Who shall presume to enter there?
Who to its depths descend?
None but they who have known the love,
Of Him, its source, and end.

'Tis those who dwell in God, whose souls
Are knit in holiest bands;
In them exists that virtue blest,
Whose beauty e'er expands,
O happy Oneness, thou art ours,
To hold in sweetest bond;
Religion thou dost kindly cause,
Our heart-chords to respond.

I offer thee this tiny gift,
Upon thy birthday morn;
Take it from her who ever would,
Thy brow with grace adorn.
No not one cloud, and not one grief,
Should ever throw its shade;
Had I the power to shelter thee,
Troubles should ne'er invade.

My heart is full, I could write more,
Endearing terms would flow;

But then they would not half describe,
The love I would bestow.
I pray thou may'st be richly blessed,
With ceaseless unmixed joy;
Heaven's brightest smile for aye exclude,
All that would thee annoy.

'Tis at thy shrine thy children all,
In ardent wishes meet;
To pour their offerings of love,
In homage at thy feet.
Hail! to the day we gladly sing,
That gave our parent birth;
Welcome! dear father, mayst thou be
Long, long preserved to earth.
R. CLAY.

July 18th, 1872.

Religious.

CAN ONE BE SAVED WITHOUT BAPTISM?

BY MRS. FANNIE R. FEUDGE.

Perhaps so. Yet I would rather not risk making a mistake which I cannot afterwards rectify. Nor should I like to tell Jesus, when I see him face to face, that I was willing to obey him if my own safety required it; but *not for his glory*, nor in gratitude and love for his unpeepable gift.

Baptists are frequently charged with giving undue prominence to the rite of baptism, with making it "essential to salvation," and putting it in the place of regeneration. Yet our denomination is the only one that requires the evidence of conversion as a prerequisite to baptism. No follower of Jesus ought to think it possible to lay too much stress on any command of such a Saviour; and the spirit that will lead one to obey God's commands only so far as may be needed to gain entrance to heaven but not one whit in gratitude and love to him whose humiliation, agony, and blood opened those pearly gates, is surely *not of the spirit of our Lord*, whose apostle declares, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." A quaint old writer has said, "A yard of ribbon may keep a soul out of heaven," that is, any object or passion which stands between the soul and Christ, or is preferred to him, will bar the gates of heaven against that soul. And he who is the Lord of the kingdom, who "shuteth and no man openeth," says emphatically; "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." These terms,—so few and simple, so plainly laid down, so easily comprehended, who shall gainsay? Faith and baptism, a union holy and divine; what God has joined, shall we put asunder? Shall we, in our ignorance and shortsightedness, affirm that one is "essential" and the other, not?

Several incidents touching this subject have recently occurred in our own church, that illustrate, better than argument or essay, the tendency of obedience or disobedience. Some months ago, while the ordinance of baptism was being administered in the new Eutaw Place Church, an elderly lady sat in the corner of a pew almost immediately in front of the baptismal font. So wrapt was her attention, that it attracted my notice. She leaned forward apparently oblivious of everything but the new and strange sight which she was witnessing for the first time,—a burial with Christ in baptism. Several times I saw her lip tremulous with emotion, and her hand raised to wipe off the unbidden tear. After the service was over, I spoke to her, and she said feelingly: "I never before could see any significance in baptism. It always seemed to me a mere arbitrary command, and my soul rebelled against it as a useless form. Had I not been christened in infancy, by others, I do not suppose I should ever have received the ordinance, for I could see nothing in it promotive of either sanctification or salvation. Now I see plainly what Jesus means by being 'born again'; to be dead,—buried to sin and self and the world, and raised to a new life in him; and I see its perfect type in the ordinance he has commanded. I must seek that new life, that death and resurrection; and I must do as he commanded." Not long after, she found "a peace in

believing" which she had never known before, and was joyfully "buried with Christ in Baptism."

Recently I saw a large, strong man come forward as a candidate for baptism. By the hand he held a fair, delicate little girl of about nine years; and pointing to her, as the tears rolled down her cheeks, he said; "My child showed me the way. I have long known that I was a sinner, and that I needed pardon; I drove the unwelcome thought for me. My pious wife prayed for me, and told me of the danger of delay, but still I put it off. I heard faithful sermons, and my conscience seconded every word, but still I said; 'Not now, not now, go thy way for this time.' But at last my little girl came, and with loving arms about my neck, said, 'Father I love Jesus. He has forgiven all my sins, and I want to be baptised. May I? and would you go to heaven too?' She seemed but a baby yet, and I thought her heart would fail her about going down into the water. So I said, 'Your could never do it, you would be frightened to death,' and she answered quickly, 'Father I would do it, if I were sure I should die that moment, because Jesus has commanded it.' I could say no more so, she went down into the water to obey Jesus; and now I am here to follow her example, as she followed Christ, willing rather to die than not to do as he has commanded."

An intelligent, middle-aged gentleman had been for a long time interested on the subject of religion,—that is, he had been thinking of the subject, and felt a desire to become a Christian. But this matter of baptism was to him "a rock of offence;" all his associations having been with another denomination. He was willing to make any necessary sacrifice, he said; but this surely was not required, since all admitted that there were earnest, zealous, conscientious Christians in other denominations, as well as among Baptists. If they could serve God in other churches, why could not he? Besides, he argued, considerations about baptism, were for him, surely premature; for he was as yet, he well knew, not prepared for membership in any church; and so he sought to put an end to the mental controversy. But it would not do; he felt that he was gaining no ground,—that he was no nearer being a Christian now than he had been years ago. He had no enjoyment in worldly pleasures, yet he could find no rest in Jesus. Sin and sense had lost their power to charm, but "the peace of God" had not taken their place in his soul. Restless and uneasy, he wandered one Sunday night, he scarcely knew why, into the Eutaw Place Church. It was the first time he had been there; he heard from the pastor, Dr. F., not a discussion on baptism, but a solemn, searching appeal, from the words: "To obey is better than sacrifice." He was deeply moved,—conscience making an application of the sermon that the minister did not. For days that searching discourse probed the inmost depths of his being; and at last he found "peace in believing," only when, on his knees before Jesus he could say: "All things, dear Lord, whatsoever thou hast commanded." A few days later, he entered the baptismal waters, rejoicing in the Lord. Would he ever have been pardoned and saved without yielding that mooted point? Could he possibly rejoice in being reconciled to God, while at war with him concerning one particular law that he was not willing to obey. Yet he was not regenerated by baptism; for before he offered himself as a candidate for that ordinance, he was already a new creature; i. e., he was willing to obey Jesus in all things, which at first he certainly was not. Let the thoughtful reader decide whether or not baptism is "essential to salvation"; but let his decision be one that will stand in that solemn day, when "every man's work shall be made manifest."

Oil and truth will get uppermost at the last.

CONDOLENCE VS. CONGRATULATION.

During Dr. Payson's last illness, a friend coming into his room remarked familiarly, "Well, I am sorry to see you lying here on your back."

"Do you know what God puts us on our backs for?" asked Dr. Payson, smiling.

"No," was the answer.

"In order that we may look upward."

His friend said to him, "I am not come to condole, but to rejoice with you, for it seems to me that this is no time for mourning."

"Well, I am glad to hear that," was the reply; "it is not often that I am addressed in such a way. The fact is, I never had less need of condolence, and everybody persists in offering it; whereas, when I was prosperous and well, and a successful preacher, and really needed condolence, they flattered and congratulated me."

COMFORT FOR CLERGYMEN.

They are not all starved, as appears from the tables of longevity. "Good Health" says that a German observer has recently calculated the average longevity attained in different professions. Doctors reach fifty-six years; artists, fifty-seven; lawyers, fifty-eight; but clergymen keep on to sixty-five—physicians of the soul having nine more average years than physicians of the body. Various reasons for this are suggested. But poets are strikingly short-lived. They sing themselves to death—witness Burns, Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Chatterton. (Query: Did not some of them get their death by a shorter route?) Cowper lived to near seventy, but it drove him mad. Wordsworth reached eighty, and might perhaps have gone on to ninety, had not that wonderful Ode of Immortality taken ten years out of him.

The inference would seem to be that sermons—the average sermons—do not take much life out of a man, though the writer of the article does not state a conclusion so uncanonical.—*Religious Magazine.*

SYSTEMATIC GIVING.

A missionary in one of the smaller Sandwich Islands, Molaki, describing his monthly meetings, reports that there were seldom less than a hundred persons present. Most of those who attend, he added, have during the past year been in the habit of contributing for benevolent purposes one stick of wood each per month; and I can assure you it is no uninteresting sight to see men, women, and sometimes children bringing their humble offerings on their shoulders from the distance of one two, or more miles. The men go into the mountains and get the sticks both for themselves and their wives; but the women bring and present their own. Though the people are superlatively poor, yet their contributions in this way will amount to about twenty-five dollars.

A real Christian loves close, pointed, searching preaching, and seeks not the ministry of those who speak enticing words of man's wisdom.

Co-workers in Christ! be content to sow little seeds for Him; be patient to wait a long time for their growing; be strong to endure much opposition; be hopeful, expecting divine fruitage; these are the chief lessons of the parables of the seed and the leaves.

Happy the child who is suffered to be, and content to be, what God meant it to be—a child, while childhood lasts.

There is an essential meanness in the wish to get the better of any one: the only competition worthy a wise man is with himself.

Instead of asking what people will think or say if I do this or so, let the inquiry be, what will be the thought or record which God will make?

For the Christian Messenger.

ONTARIO CORRESPONDENCE.

THE ELECTION STRUGGLE. CONTRACTORS IN GOVERNMENT WORKS IN PARLIAMENT. CANADIAN PREACHERS TEMPTED ABROAD. DISTINGUISHED BAPTIST VISITOR. THE COMING CONVENTIONS. NEW BOOKS PROJECTED, &c.

At length the agony is over in Ontario. The general election, which has been for weeks dragging its slow length along, has reached its end. For the last time we hope, the struggle which should be decided in a single day, as in happy Nova Scotia, has been protracted over weeks of tumult and corruption. In this province, as the readers of the *Messenger* are no doubt well aware, the Government has been left in a decided minority. The issues set before the electors in the different provinces seem, I observe, to have been various and often local. The broadest political principles claimed by the opposition here to be at stake are those affecting the independence and the purity of Parliament. To what extent these are seriously threatened is of course a question to which different answers will be given according to the stand point from which the position is viewed. One of the most plausible and most effective weapons of the "Grits," here, was derived from the failure to exclude contractors in the projected Pacific Railway from seats in Parliament. There may or may not be serious danger in the presence of so powerful a body of men, having such relations to Government in the House, but I have little doubt that many thinking men on both sides of politics would be relieved and glad to see a clause excluding such inserted in the scheme at the next Session. The startling revelations just being made in respect to the Union Pacific will, I dare say, intensify this feeling.

What is to be done to prevent our brethren across the lines from persistently carrying off the most talented preachers from the Dominion? I see occasional complaints from Nova Scotia, and churches in Ontario are suffering from the same cause. Our Presbyterian friends seem of late to be the chief sufferers. But a year or two since, the eloquent Dr. Ormiston was carried off from our midst, to win golden opinions in the great city of the Empire state. A few months since the Rev. Mr. Inglis of Hamilton was prevailed upon to accept a professorship in Knox College, Toronto, and the appointment was hailed with delight. Now comes the announcement of his resignation of the Theological Chair, in order to accept a call to the pastorate of a church in the city of brotherly love, his creature comforts being provided for by a stipend of seven thousand dollars per annum, an extra thousand or two being thrown in in the shape of a rent-free manse, and other perquisites. When such men as those translated to broader fields of labor and thus furnished with opportunities for increased zeal and usefulness in the service of their Master, I suppose all true Christians should rejoice. Nevertheless it is hard for those called upon to relinquish their ablest men.

No better evidence perhaps, can be given of the increased interest in this great colony, which is being awakened in the mother land, than is afforded by the constant increase in the number of distinguished Englishmen, who are constrained to visit us. The Baptists in Montreal and other places are just now enjoying a visit from the Rev. Hugh Stowell Brown. His preaching abroad as at home is said to be powerful and effective.

The time for our annual Conventions is approaching. The Eastern meets at Montreal on the 25th Sept. and the Western in Aylmer on the 15th October. A fine opportunity is thus afforded to visiting brethren from the East or elsewhere, to attend both and at the same time travel through