

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XVIII, No. 29.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, July 16, 1873.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXXVII, No. 29.

Poetry.

MY SONG IN THE NIGHT.

The long dark night has passed,
Heavy with grief and fears,
And streaming up the eastern sky
The blessed light appears.
Thou who hast done so much for me,
What can I do this day for thee?

For I was sick with fear,
Thy billows ran so high;
They washed my feet from off the rock,
They shut out star and sky;
But still the Pilot held my hand,
And drew me safely to the land.

"Now lean on me," he saith,
"And not on broken reeds;
Lean hard, thou art so faint and weak;
I'll care for all thy needs;
I'll bear thy burdens, soothe thy fears,
And wipe away thy falling tears."

I take thee at thy word,
O Lord, my Rock, my Strength!
Away, false fears and anxious cares,
Heaven will be reached at length;
And till I gain that blessed shore,
Help me each day to serve thee more.

Religious.

ABOUT POPES.

When a Pope dies there are some peculiar ceremonies. For instance, as soon as it is known in his palace that he is dead, a man enters the room where his body lies and raps on his head three times with a silver mallet, calling his name three times; then having waited for the reply, which he knew beforehand would not come, he announces formally that the Pope is dead, as if the rapping on his skull were the final proof. Then the great bell of the Capitol is tolled, and everybody knows by that what has taken place; then there is a funeral of nine days in which time the city seems given over to noise and disorder, as if it was without anyone to govern it. Meanwhile, watched day and night by a guard, he lies on a sumptuous bier, with tapers blazing around him; and crowds of people come and kiss the toe of his slipper, and look at him in his splendid robes, and at last he is laid in a vault, and the cardinals begin the struggle for a successor.

The choice is always from their own numbers; consequently everyone aspires to the office; and deep is the scheming as soon as there is a probability that it will become vacant. Each is entitled to cast one vote, and his right can not be taken from him. Even if he is a criminal, he may be taken from prison to vote. The Pope must be an Italian by birth; no man from any other nation has occupied the place for nearly three hundred and fifty years.

At the ceremony of inaugurating a new Pope, one of the customs is to put a bunch of tow on the end of a staff and burn it just before his eyes, and while it is swiftly blazing and vanishing, the voice of the official who holds it says to him, "St. Peter, *sic transit gloria mundi*," to remind him that all things are vain and perishable.

It used to be necessary that the horse, ridden by the Pope on state occasions, should be gray; and when he mounted, it must be from a stool with three steps, and if any royal person were present, he should hold the stirrup and walk beside the horse, leading him.

The first who dared to set himself above sovereigns was Leo III., who was a friend to Charlemagne; and at some grand festival where the French nobility and Roman clergy were present in all their glory, Leo came forward, and to the surprise of everyone placed a magnificent crown on the head of that prince and anointed him.

After this, the Popes took part in politics, made wars and treaties, forbade marriages, and excommunicated whoever displeased them. They meddled in all the affairs of nearly every court in Europe, and made themselves a terror. The excommunication of a

sovereign was felt to be a most dreadful calamity, and no wonder for while he was in this state the church bells were not rung, sacrament was not administered, altars and pictures were covered with black cloth, statues of saints were taken down and laid on beds of cinder and ashes, and there was a general appearance of desolation and mourning.—*Exchange*.

AN ANCIENT BAPTISTERY.

Rev. J. B. Jeter, D. D., of the *Religious Herald*, has been visiting the catacombs in Rome, and describes them in letters to his paper. These subterranean retreats were constructed by the early Christians for security against persecutors and sepulture for their dead. The Doctor says:

"The object of primary interest in this catacomb is the baptistery. It is situated near the end of the passage, and is reached by a descending archway. It is about four feet long, three feet wide, and three or four feet deep, and is supplied with clear, cool, sweet water by a spring. Above the font is a fresco painting of the baptism of Christ by John. The figures are about three feet in length. The Saviour is represented as standing up to his middle in water, and the Baptist with his right hand on the head of Jesus, in the act of bending it gently forward to immerse him in the only manner in which the ordinance could be conveniently performed in a baptistery constructed as this one is. On the right hand an angel is represented as holding the clothes of Jesus. At the bottom of the picture a small hat is painted as drinking the baptismal water, a symbol, it is supposed, of the longing of the believer for baptism. Below this picture and reaching down into the water there is a cross, painted as if adorned with gems and candle-sticks with the Greek letters Alpha and Omega suspended below its two arms. The cross was probably designed to signify that the baptized are crucified unto sin. The wall on one side of the font has the pictures of the martyrs Abdon, Sennen, Miles, and others, rudely painted near them. Of the age of the font and pictures, we have no certain information. The frescos have the appearance of being very old. There are no indications that they have at any time been restored or changed. The baptistery probably dates back to the second century. 'These paintings,' says N. R. H. 'are all of late date, perhaps of the seventh or eighth century; but there is no reason to doubt that the baptistery has been used from the earliest times. We have distinct evidence in the acts of the martyrs that the sacrament was not unfrequently administered in the cemeteries.'"

WANTED, A MINISTER.

Taking a great deal of interest in a religious society in Massachusetts, where the process of *candidating* is about to commence, I listened with interest to the casual observations of the "people," in a hope that I might possibly suggest the man who might suit them. I noted down some of the requisites, and a few of them were these: He must be—1. A man filled with the Spirit of Christ. 2. A profound scholar. 3. An eloquent orator. 4. A man gifted with a brilliant imagination and a pleasing address. 5. A man of tact and judgement in his intercourse with his people. 6. A man who will captivate and win the hearts of the young. 7. A good reader of the Bible and hymns. 8. A well read theologian. 9. He must preach practical sermons. 10. He must not be a sensational preacher. 11. He must attract outsiders, and thus fill our pews and build up our society. 12. He must have a good, powerful, sweet, penetrating, well-modulated voice—so powerful that the old and partially deaf can hear; so sweet and soft that the drums of nobody's ears are jarred; so penetrating that those near the door of entrance

can hear easily and catch every word, but so modulated that the front pews are not startled. 13. He must be a man abreast of all the progressive movements of the day, and yet must not be carried too far by the "isms" of the age. 14. A man cordial and frank in his intercourse with his people, yet dignified, and not sensitive when his people are not demonstrative in their marks of appreciation of his efforts. 15. He must be in robust health, and keep so. 16. Not disheartened at the thin attendance, or drowsy occupants of pews. 17. He must live in good style on \$1500, for that is just what the society has paid for fifteen years and can pay no more, though the expense of living has doubled. 18. He must be a married man, with a wife who sympathizes with him in his theology, will interest herself and lead in the ladies' schemes of benevolence and sociability, be active in the Sunday School, make her husband's home happy, and his spirits cheerful, and keep his expenses within his salary.—*Christian Register*.

LEARN A TRADE.

The prospect for wealth and position to-day is brighter to any young man of ability and ambition, who will learn well and thoroughly a good trade, than for any one who attempts to crowd into the professions. The country is sadly in want of mechanics who combine skill with intelligence. Not a workshop or manufactory can be found to-day where they are not needed. Not a manufacturing or mechanical establishment exists in the country which is not deficient some way or other, in skilled assistance. It is the skillful, intelligent mechanic who is most in demand, and hence none of them are to be found who are not profitably employed. Wealth is rapidly accumulated by such men, who devote themselves to the various mechanical pursuits, or to the production of articles which are regarded in the sense of necessities by the community. The pressing demand of the day is not for mere ornament, but for those who, by the labor of hand and brain combined, are able to make capital productive. Our advice to young men is to earnestly apply themselves to the acquisition of such knowledge as will enable them to supply the ever increasing demand for skilled labor, thereby not only laying the foundations for future personal prosperity, but at the same time rendering a high and permanent benefit to the community.—*Boston Globe*.

SOMETHING WRONG.

The church is not reaching the masses. What is the matter? Jesus went to them; we wait for them to come to us. Religion is kept too much in Sunday clothes. We should take it with us to the marts of trade and shops of industry. It is more at home and more beautifully clothed with the farmer's frock, the carpenter's apron, the coat of toil, than in silks and broadcloth. Many Christians are so grave, pretentious, formal, and precise, that they chill and repel. Some are silent about religion and bring it into contempt. Churches are unsocial, formal, dignified, a terror to the rough and rustic. Saloons are a hundred times more accessible. Pew-rents and fine clothes lock the doors against the masses. How can we correct such evils? We must make our churches more accessible and common; we must seek sinners where they are—go to them, go in love and wisdom get hold of them, help them, save them.—*Baptist Union*.

ARE YOU READY?

Rev. Dr. Kidd was a Scotch minister of some prominence, and very eccentric, and one who had his own way of doing things. One of his parishioners says: "I was busy in my shop, when, in the midst of my work, I stepped the Doctor. 'Did you expect

me?' was his abrupt inquiry, without even waiting for a salutation. 'No,' was my reply. 'What if I had been Death?' he asked, when at once he stepped out as abruptly as he came, and was gone almost before I knew it." What a question! What a thought for every one of us! Does not Death come to most, if not all, as unexpectedly as this? And does not the inquiry impress the lesson from our Saviour's lips, "Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."—*American Messenger*.

A CONGREGATIONALIST VIEW OF THE BAPTISTS.

Said the lamented and distinguished theological professor at Andover, Dr. Leonard Woods, "I have wished that our denomination were as free from erratic speculations, and as well-grounded in the doctrine and experimental principles of the Puritans as the Baptists. It seems to me that they are likely to maintain pure Christianity, and to hold fast to the form of sound words, while many in our denomination are rather loose in their opinions, and are trying to introduce innovations into the system of evangelical doctrine. And I think the Congregationalists generally regard the Baptists much as I do, though it may be that my better acquaintance with them has led me to esteem them more highly than some of my brethren do. I would not urge them to have communion with us in commemorating the death of Christ; and least of all would I reprove them for withholding it."

LOVE MAKES THE DIFFERENCE.

"Oh, it is just as different as can be!" said one of my young friends. "What is it?" I asked. "Why, being a Christian. Everything is so different from what I expected." "What did you expect?" "When you used to talk with me about being a Christian, I used to say to myself, 'No, I can't now, for I shall have to do so many hard things, and I never can do them.'" "What hard things?" "Oh, I used to think, 'Now if I become a Christian, I shall have to walk just so; shall have to go to church and prayer meeting; shall have to pray and read the Bible.' It is so different from what I thought!" "Why, James, what do you mean?" I exclaimed. "You go to church and to prayer meeting; you read the Bible and pray; you do try to walk just right, do you not?" "Oh yes, but then I love to do them. That makes all the difference. I love Jesus, and I love to do as he wishes me to."—*Little Sower*.

AN ARABIC PRAYER.

In the Arabic and Syriac there is a floating tradition of the form of prayer believed to have been used by Noah in the ark. The following is a translation of the prayer: "O, Lord, excellent art thou in the earth, and there is nothing great in comparison with thee. Look upon us with the eye of mercy and compassion, deliver us from the deluge of waters, and set our feet in a large room. By the sorrows of Adam, thy first-made man, by the blood of Abel, thy holy one, by the righteousness of Seth, in whom thou art well pleased, number us not among those who have transgressed thy statutes, but take us into thy merciful care; for thou art our deliverer, and thine is the praise from all the works of thy hands for evermore." And the sons of Noah said, "Amen, Lord."

TOOK RELIGION WITH THEM.

"Oh, dear! There's the bell for prayer-meeting," almost unconsciously sighed Uncle John. "Why, father," said Aunt Jane, "I

thought you loved the sound of that bell, and prayer-meeting's was your life."

"So I do, so I do, Jane, but I'm discouraged. It's warm, and I'm tired haying, and the minister's gone to the sea-side, and Dea. Jones has gone to some mountain or other, and most everybody's gone somewheres, and our meetin's are small enough at the best."

"The two or three will be there, won't they?" said Aunt Jane, looking over her glasses a mild reproof at my desponding uncle.

"True, true," he answered feebly, "but the two or three can't make it interestin' to the two or three dozen who won't say a word. I never felt so before, but I don't know but its best for the prayer-meetin' to take a vacation with all the rest."

"Has the Lord gone on a vacation, John?" said Aunt Jane in the same gentle, reproving voice. I thought you went to prayer-meeting to see him."

Uncle John slowly put down his paper, took his hat and cane, and in no very good mood, I fear, to edify the brethren, went to the little vestry on the hill.

It was a country village, and the church was small, only a few brethren to help, and a sister or two who feebly said a word or a verse. Our minister had gone on his usual August vacation, and several of the church had gone too. The sanctuary was closed, but it was our custom to continue the Wednesday evening prayer-meeting. Uncle John had always contended for keeping it up, but to-night he thought it must go down. He felt no better when he saw the empty settees, and that most of those present were silent partners.

"Oh, dear," sighed Uncle John again after a long chapter had been read and a hymn sung, and Dea. Smith had prayed, "Oh, dear, how shall we get through with this hour!"

The meeting dragged as you have often seen or heard meetings do. Some looked anxiously at the clock, and others at a side settee where two young strangers sat, fearing it was dull for them, and they would never want to go to a prayer-meeting again. "They didn't look like professors," thought my uncle, "and probably come in just to see or while away an hour."

Just then one of them rose quickly to his feet and said,

"My dear friends, I'm glad to be here, glad to see you, glad to be in a prayer-meeting again. My friend and I have been away from our home for several weeks, and have looked in vain for a prayer-meeting. They all seemed to be having vacations, and we were so glad when we heard your bell to-night." (Here Uncle John winced.) And thus the young stranger went on. He talked of Him who went about doing good. His heart was warm. He was in earnest, evidently he had taken his religion with him. His friend followed in the same earnest, loving way. Oh, how they warmed us up.

Almost before he knew it, Uncle John was telling how much he had been like Thomas, but that the dear brethren, no longer strangers, made him ashamed of himself. The first brother prayed; and such a simple, child-like prayer, so fervent that Uncle John, strictly orthodox as he is, could not restrain the loud "Amen."

The clock pointed to the closing hour, but we were in no haste to go. All the meeting shook hands with the young helpers, and Uncle John would make them go "right home to the farm." "It was a shame," he said, "to let any of his kinsfolk stay at the tavern."

Those young Christians knew not half the good they did in our country prayer-meeting, nor will they ever know until the great day, but I think one or two of our young people thought that night, and have proved since, that it is a pleasant and good thing to be an earnest Christian. Several of our thoughtless ones from that evening have been found on the Lord's side, won by the loving, earnest words of two young men from the city who took their religion with them.—*Congregationalist*.