

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, January 30, 1878.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XLII., No. 5.

NEW SERIES.

Vol. XXIII., No. 5.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.
Her last Words.

Friend of the erring and the pure,
Thou glorious Sun, one journey more
Of thine is almost done, my eyes
Shall ne'er again behold thee rise,
'Tis mine no second race to run
On earthly ground; farewell Great Sun.

The dampness gathers on my brow,
O drop the curtain gently now,
The sky, and trees, and flitting birds
Might woo from me a few sad words
I wish to say before I go,
It is, kind friend, no tale of woe,
I pass that by, and only say
Six weary years have passed away
Since I from home and friends was
thrown

Upon the world, despised, alone,
By sin and shame—alas my own!

O happy they whose hearts are pure,
Whose hope is bright, whose heaven is
sure;
I cannot, dare not lift my eyes
In grave assurance to the skies,
I dare not strain my mental sight
To view a God enthroned in light,
Yet can I see, with downcast look,
A portrait in the Holy Book
With human features, calm and sweet,
And weeping woman at his feet.

O, kind dispenser of my fears,
I cannot bathe thy feet with tears,
I cannot wipe them with my hair
Nor press my grateful kisses there;
But could I look on one like thee,
Whose heart might even yearn o'er me,
My lips to holy love would wake
And kiss his feet for thy dear sake.

The past is fading like a dream,
As withered leaves adorn the stream,
Sad memories vanish from my sight;
Around, beyond, how calm, how bright;
O many-mansioned house above,
Sweet home of everlasting love,
Thy vastness crowds immensity;
Great Builder, is there room for me?
S. S.

Religious.

The Simple Gospel.

One of the shams of the age is a professed horror of "doctrine." The cry is often heard, both from "pulpit and pew" that what men need is not doctrine, but the gospel. Give us the simple gospel, for we will have none of your doctrine, is the sentiment of very many.

The simple gospel—what is it? It is not the mere repetition of the gospel history, certainly. No man's ideal of the preaching demanded by the age is that the preacher should read a chapter or two from one of the Gospels, and call this a sermon. Evidently the meaning of the history is to be unfolded, illustrated, applied. But the moment this is done, doctrine makes its appearance. Does the preacher tell the story of Christ's birth, he is forced to confront the doctrine of the incarnation, and to decide for or against it. He cannot speak of the Temptation without touching upon the quality of Christ's nature. The Crucifixion brings him face to face with the Atonement, "Original Sin," and other great questions. If he take up Christ's words, "I am the vine, ye the branches" contains the whole doctrine of the union of the believer with Christ; "The very hairs of your head are all numbered" involves the whole question of God's providence, decrees, etc.

Among the many theories that have been broached to account for the great success of Mr. Moody as a fisher of men, is the theory that men listen to him so willingly because he preaches so little doctrine. The fact is the very opposite. Mr. Moody's sermons are steeped in doctrine. His theology may be erroneous on some points, but every sermon is full of it. It was so with Whitefield and Finney, it is so with Spurgeon—it has been so with every man who has had great power with men. Illustrations might be indefinitely multiplied, but it is unnecessary. It is plain that they who ask for the simple gos-

pel without doctrine, ask for an impossibility. Doctrine must be taught. A sermon without doctrine would be like a man without bones. Consonants have been called "the bones of speech" doctrines may with equal propriety be called the bones of religion.

The question is not, therefore, Shall any doctrine be taught? but, What doctrine shall be taught? The very men who so despise doctrine have a doctrine—a teaching for that is the meaning of the word—which they are never weary of bawling into the unwilling ears of the world. They faithfully obey Paul's injunction to preach "in season, out of season." Here is the amusing inconsistency of these people—an inconsistency of which they seem never to be conscious. They make use of doctrine to decry doctrine. They are anxious, not that no doctrine shall be preached, but that no doctrine shall be preached except their own. Let us have done, then, with this outcry against doctrine, this cant about the simple gospel. Pickpockets sometimes try to avert suspicion from themselves by crying "Stop thief" and joining zealously in the chase; so some men seem trying to distract attention from their own false doctrine by crying out upon all doctrine.—N. Y. Ec.

Coming Late to Church.

What a disturbance and flutter it creates when Mrs. Dilatory, with her nine children, or Miss Fly-away, with her new bonnet, or good old Dr. Heavy, with his creaking shoes, comes marching up the long aisle about the middle of the long prayer. The minister falters, and unless he is used to it, is thrown off the track; curious and inattentive worshippers turn their heads to look at the procession, and every one's devotion is a little shaken. You say that this is wrong, that they ought to be more absorbed in their prayers. True enough; but remember they are human, and true charity, as well as true politeness, should make us desire to withhold all occasions of stumbling from our fellow-descendants of Adam and Eve.

And then look at the other side of the impropriety. Tardiness at church is certainly not very reverent to God. When a man has an engagement with a friend, is it not bad manners to be late in keeping it? Now here is an appointment to meet the Lord in his own house, on a day, set apart for his service, and at a fixed hour. Do you consider it decent or reverent to break that appointment? Do you think that a person who really valued the meeting, and expected to get good from it, would day after day be late coming to it, and so curtail precious moments? The time that we spend with God is little enough, without stealing anything from it by dawdling and idle habits. When the concert or the lecture begins, people are ready in their seats; they are "all present, with ears erect;" they do not lose anything. Now surely, if divine service is a real thing and of any worth whatever, it is infinitely more precious than any worldly entertainment. Does it not cast a doubt upon the sincerity of our devotions that we are so willing to forgo a part of them?

We sing
"Praise waits in Zion, Lord, for thee"
and then keep the Lord waiting in Zion for our praise. A refractory bonnet-string, or a pair of gloves, will detain the longing worshipper from church until the service is half finished. A little delay in the breakfast hour, or an interesting article in the newspaper, will make the servant of the Lord steal thirty of the ninety short minutes that are allotted to public worship. Or, worst of all, that miserable, shiftless, almost incurable habit of being behind time, for no earthly reason and to no possible purpose, will bring people into church, Sunday after Sunday punctually half an hour late. In some unfortunate communities this habit becomes chronic and almost universal. No ringing of first and second bells, no slow torture

by chimes and other ecclesiastical inventions, no appeals from the pulpit, can break it up.

We have in our mind's eye, at this moment, a certain church in the little village of Slow-town, which is afflicted with this plague of tardiness. Slower and more scattering than the slowest psalm-tune ever drawled out in a sleepy prayer-meeting, is the manner in which that congregation drops into morning service. They look as if they had been passing by, and had just stepped in to see what was going on: had nothing else to do, and thought they would come up to church: hardly knew whether they would get there after they started. Even the easy-going old parson has become hardened to it after many years; he strolls up the hill in a desultory manner as his people, and never thinks of beginning the service until Judge Snail is comfortably settled in his seat for the morning's repose.—Presbyterian.

Nine Blacksmiths.

BY MRS. SOPHIE H. ELLIS.

At our neighborhood prayer-meeting last week, I was much interested in a little story told by a good brother, and I repeat it hoping that others may be encouraged by it as I have been.

There are on one of our squares three blacksmith shops in a row, and there are nine men in the three shops. Rough, brawny wicked men they are, swearing at refractory horses, or at one another, singing coarse street songs while working at their anvils, indulging in wild hilarity, and anon disputing and wrangling. A hardened set, hard and grim like their work, despising everything good, and "aiming in evil like water," seemingly a very unpromising field of labor. One would hardly dare cast the precious pearls of divine love and truth into those grimy, sooty shops, among those dark visaged stalwart sinners, lest they should trample them under foot, and turn and rend one. Oh we of little faith, who would gladly walk to heaven along smooth paths bordered by clustering flowers of culture, and refinement, gathering a fragrant garland, of beautiful buds and blossoms a little crooked perhaps, but easily straightened. And if some of the blossoms are marred and the buds mildewed, we will arrange them skillfully with a few fig leaves, and put a silken band about the crooked stems, to keep them straight,—we would fondly believe—alas if it should only serve to hide the crooks. But we don't like to step out of the smooth path and struggle on over mud and mire and stony places; and we fear to scratch our hands, and tear our garments, among the brambles and the thistles of ignorance and vice.

Last spring when rich showers of divine grace were descending upon us, a few drops entered those dark and dismal shops, and one and another of those rugged stern-browed men grew silent and troubled beside their anvils and fires, and were drawn by the Spirit to seek the truth as it is in Jesus, and found salvation, one by one, until six of the nine are rejoicing in their Saviour and earnestly praying and laboring for the conversion of the remaining three. And now all is changed, no more profanity or disputing, no singing of doubtful songs or using coarse language. But instead, they take sweet counsel together, and talk of what God has done for them, and kneeling on the dingy floor join their hearts' yearnings together in fervent prayer.

Now their voices ring out clear and strong, and the passer-by hears our sweet Gospel songs as an anvil chorus. Oh it would be a rare and beautiful sight to see in those three shops side by side, nine strong men working together for Jesus. Pray that their labors may be blessed to the conversion of their companions, that they may all march on together in the army of the Lord, and may we thank God and take courage to "sow beside all waters," trusting that in "due season we shall reap if we faint not."

"Sow in in the morn thy seed,
At eve hold not thy hand;
To doubt and fear give thou no heed;
Broad-cast it o'er the land."

A Free Seat.

He was old and poor, and a stranger
In the great metropolis
As he bent his footsteps thitherward
To a stately edifice.

Outside he inquires, "What Church is this?"
"Church of Christ," he hears them say,
"Ah! just the place I am looking for,
I trust he is in to-day."

He passed thro' the spacious, columned
door
And up the carpeted aisle,
And as he passed, on many a face
He saw surprise and smile.
From pew to pew up one entire side,
And then across the broad front space,
From pew to pew down the other side,
He walked with the same slow pace.

Not a friendly voice had bid him sit
To listen to gospel truth,
Not a sign of deference hath been paid
To the aged one by youth.
No door was open'd by generous hand,
The pews were paid for, rented,
And he was a stranger, old and poor,
Not a heart to him relented.

He paused outside a moment to think,
Then again, passed into the street,
Up to his shoulder lifted a stone,
That lay in the dust at his feet;
And bore it up the broad, grand aisle
In front of the ranks of pews,
Choosing a place to see and to hear,
He made a seat for his use.

Calmly sitting upon the huge stone,
Folding his hands on his knees,
Slowly reviewing the worshippers
A great confusion he sees.
Many a cheek is crimson'd with shame,
Some whisper together low,
And wish they had been more courteous
To the stranger old and poor.

As if by magic some fifty doors
Open instantaneously,
And as many seats, and books and hands
Are proffered hastily.
Changing his stone for a cushioned pew
And wiping a tear away,
He thinks it was mistake after all,
And that Christ came late that day.

The preacher's discourse was eloquent,
The organ in finest tone,
But the most impressive sermon heard,
Was preached by a humble stone.
'Twas a lesson of lowliness and worth
That lodged in many a heart,
And the church preserves the sacred
stone

That the truth may not depart.

Faults in Public Prayer.

Attention needs to be called continually to the importance of conducting with care and propriety the service of public prayer. One method, in which no set forms are used, has its points of peculiar weakness, as well as of strength. The difficulties that exist, too, so far as they concern any particular individual, are not altogether easy to be removed. The person himself may not know what bad habits he has; and no one may like to tell him. If he does know, the knowledge may not always help him. Nothing could be much worse for him than to have his mind much turned to the thought that people are observing him while he prays. And it may be said that the evil of undertaking to make any sort of display, or of endeavoring in any way to cause one's prayers to be noticed by others as good ones, is itself nearly or quite the greatest of all mischiefs that ever arise in this connection. Some persons have a ponderous and imposing manner in prayer which produces a certain effect as of ostentation, though it may not be really meant for show. On the other hand there is a simplicity in prayer that passes easily into lightness and flippancy; and which is most offensive or improper. God is in heaven, and we are on the earth. He is a Father in heaven, and may be trusted and loved; but he is also to be honored and revered.

What is wanted for the correction of their faults, of whichever sort, is not so much any skill or intellectual facility, as for the performance of an exercise of any kind, but rather an established temper of mind appropriate to such a

sacred service. This befitting temper of prayer must be gained with much thoughtfulness, by the turning of the mind upon its necessity and its nature, and especially by the habitual cherishing of a spirit of devoutness and trust. This wisdom is thus first of all from above, and is of the Lord's giving; and he who would know how to pray, must learn by prayer itself.—Congregationalist.

TEMPERANCE.

The Queen and the Peddler.

A great drunkard in the Highlands of Invernesshire was led to attend a lecture on temperance. He was induced to become a member of a temperance society. For months the cravings of his appetite for strong drink was excessive, but true to his resolution, he set his face like a flint against every temptation. The marsh of his heart being thus drained of one poison, he next received the seed of the Word into its soil. It was hid there until quickened by the Sun of Righteousness, and nourished by the rain and dew of the Spirit, when it brought forth fruit in Christian life and character. Having no settled occupation, he yet could not be idle, and having by the help of a few friends managed to stock a little box with trinkets and other cheap ware, he set out as a peddler.

In the course of his peregrinations he found himself at Balmoral, and thinking that if he could get the patronage of the Queen it would help him greatly, he resolved to make the attempt. There was something in his look and manner which at once commended him to the favor of some of the household officials, who had it in their power to put him under the notice of the Earl of Carlisle, then attending the court as a minister of state. The noble earl sympathized with Donald, and promised to recommend his case to the Queen. When her Majesty came to know it, Donald was commanded to appear in the royal presence, and met with a most gracious reception. Not only did the Queen purchase of his wares, but gave him permission to wear the royal arms as the Queen's Peddler, and sent Donald away with a lighter heart and a heavier purse than he had when he entered the royal chamber.

On leaving her Majesty the Earl of Carlisle took Donald to his room, and there presented him with a glass of wine with which to drink the Queen's health. Looking at it, he felt at first a kind of trembling; but then lifting his heart in prayer for divine aid, he said, "Your lordship will excuse me: I cannot drink the Queen's health in wine, but I will drink it in water." The noble earl asked his reasons. "My lord," said Donald, "I was a drunkard. I became an abstinence, and I trust by God's grace I have become a Christian; but I know that if I were to taste intoxicating drink, it would at once revive an appetite which is not dead but dying, and I should most likely go the whole length of the drunkard again. God has only promised to support me in the path of duty, and that path, in my case, is plainly to abstain." The noble lord at once commended Donald for his frankness and honesty, and, in taking leave, assured him that it would afford her Majesty the highest satisfaction to know that she had amongst her loyal and devoted subjects one who, in the midst of such strong temptations, could maintain his principles with integrity and honor. Donald left rejoicing to think he had been enabled to drink to the "glory" of God.—Methodist Temperance Magazine.

A gentleman writing to a Unitarian journal says: "I do not think any unprejudiced person could meet Mr. Moody, as I have, in his own home, and amongst his early companions, without feeling not only respect, but regard for him as a strong, unselfish, good man. And I wish to add that, so far as I can learn, and from appearances judge, he is fortunate in having a wife eminently fitted to aid and strengthen him in every good work."