

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XXIII., No. 8.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, February 20, 1878.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XLII., No. 8.

Poetry.

The Leper and the Sinner.

BY MISS S. O. CURTIS.

As Jesus walked the city street,
A loathsome leper sought his feet.
"Dear Lord," he cried with anguished
mien,
"I know that thou canst make me clean."

That cry of faith was wasted not;
A gentle touch the healing wrought.
The Master bade him joyful go,
And with fit gifts the cleansing show.

More vile than leper could have been,
Defiled through all my soul with sin,
I mourned, until one gracious hour,
I read of Jesus' wondrous power.

With earnest faith, but lowly face,
I begged he would forgive and bless.
My trembling heart could only dare
To pray the leper's humble prayer.

"All power is thine, Lord, if thou wilt,
I know that thou canst cleanse my
guilt."

"I will; be clean my Saviour said,
With hands of blessing on my head.

"O joy! O Christ, how shall I prove
My own great gratitude and love?
No priest my offering awaits
Of bird or beast at temple gate."

He sweetly said, "Child, dost thou love
Thy Saviour all things else above?
Then bring the only gift I prize—
Thyself a living sacrifice."

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

Notes on the Lord's Commission.

BY AN OLD SOLDIER.

In the days of his earthly life the Lord Jesus repeatedly sent disciples on missionary journeys, directing them what to say to the people, and empowering them to confirm their message by miraculous works. The twelve were employed on one occasion, and they appear to have gone a great way through the country, preaching everywhere that men should repent. At another time the Saviour sent a larger company, seventy in number, who, like the early disciples, "went everywhere." The third occasion was during his last journey through Samaria to Jerusalem. He was passing through a rough population, and there were indications of unruliness; the saying, that "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans," was thoroughly understood, and in full force, so the Lord "sent messengers before his face," to bespeak the hospitality of the people, and prepare them to receive his teaching. They appear to have succeeded, except in one village, where the people did not receive him, "because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem." James and John would have called down fire from heaven to consume the ungrateful ones; but the Lord rebuked them: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village. O for more of the spirit of Jesus!

The Lord's work was always before him, and his plans wisely and fully laid. He knew how he should die—and when—and all the results. The disciples were not yet prepared for the great enterprise in which they were to spend their lives. They needed much enlightenment, God's methods of working were to be spread out before them; and when the redemption was understood, and they entered into the spirit of it, they were to go among the nations and carry the proclamation of love and mercy in every direction. But first they must be educated and trained. The Apostolic College was fixed in Galilee. There were no "storied halls," no ceiled roofs. The grass was their floor, the sky their canopy, and there did the Saviour sit in the centre—the disciples clustering around him, and listening to the "precious words" that proceeded from his lips. The Session of that Divine Institute lasted forty

days. What classes were those! What themes were unfolded to them! Did not their hearts burn within them, as before, in the case of the two on that memorable walk to Emmaus when he "talked with them by the way, and while he opened to them the scriptures"?

On an appointed day there was a great assembly. Notice had been given before the Lord's death, and a mountain fixed on, where, secluded from the world's gaze, the Head of the Church condescended to meet his "brethren," and give them his further instructions. More than five hundred persons met on that occasion, and there was not a drowsy eye or a dull ear among them. As the Lord spoke, they hung upon his lips, resolved not to lose a single word. The substance of that sublime address was, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, teach all nations."

Another interview was vouchsafed to them in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. It was short. Few words were spoken. They knew that their Lord was about to leave them, and they stood in awe-struck silence and received his final blessing. "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven, where he assumed the seat of government, ruling and providing for the Church, controlling the affairs of the world, adored and obeyed by angels, while his disciples addressed themselves to their first duty, which was to "tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until they were endued with power from on high." They could not open the commission till then.

The nations of the world lay "in wickedness" before them, and they were to go among them all, East and West, North and South, speaking their several tongues, as "the Spirit gave them utterance."

And what were they to speak? They were to teach all nations—to enrol them in the list of discipleship by baptism, that they might form "an army of the Living God"—fighting with un-earthly weapons, and casting down imaginations." This was to be effected by the preaching of the gospel. The love of God in Christ was to be published, and it was to sway and penetrate the hearts of men, bringing every thought into the obedience of Christ, and changing the bond-slaves of Satan into holy and happy servants of the Lord Jesus. "Thanks be to God!" we hear one of them exclaiming—one of the Commissioners—"who causeth us always to triumph in Christ!"

And now a question arises—To whom was the Commission given?

Some say to the Apostles—the eleven. The direction to meet the Saviour on a mountain in Galilee, was originally given to them; but the news circulated, other disciples heard of the appointment, and when the day arrived, they flocked to the place from all quarters, till more than "five hundred brethren" were found to be assembled. The narrative is very brief, and the blanks cannot be filled up. We gather from other parts of the account that the forty days were spent in discussing about the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, such as, the truths which were to be inculcated, the modes of worship and service to be rendered, and the methods of spiritual labour. We are not to imagine that the details were minute or numerous, for that would not have comported with the spiritual nature and design of the new dispensation. Involved articles of faith and complicated ceremonies would have been entirely out of place in the Church of the Apostolic age. All was plain, pure and profitable. The assembled disciples on that Galilean mountain received from the Lord himself the knowledge of the great salvation (that was their Theology)—direction how to walk so as to please God and benefit man (that was their morality):—and then, what they had received; they were to communicate—"Freely ye have received, freely give,"—that was their daily policy—the policy of

them all. Christianity is receiving and giving. The Commission is in the hands of the Church.

Some prefer to translate the clause—"disciple all nations," or "make disciples of all nations." Be it so, although it is not so English: But how can a man be made a disciple except by being taught? A disciple of Darwin, or any other man, is one who receives Darwin's theory. Our Peodobaptist friends, it is true, have invented a mode of membership by which tens of thousands are said to belong to churches for years before they have begun to think or reason; but the proxy-system receives no sanction from the New Testament; the "disciples" spoken of there were personal believers.

On the day of Pentecost the Spirit descended, and the Commission was publicly opened. The "number of the names" was about one hundred and twenty; these "all continued in prayer and supplication," and were so engaged when the Spirit came down, and they were visibly set apart for the work; not the eleven, but all the "hundred and twenty"—the then existing Church, received the blessing, and to them, on that wonderful day, the Lord said, "Go—teach."

It is useless to inquire into the amount of teaching required to entitle a person to be regarded as a disciple. When we have said that a disciple must be a sincere believer in the Lord Jesus, and prepared to obey his laws and live to his glory, we have said enough. Circumstances differ; qualifications vary; a convert in Phrygia or Galatia and a convert at Jerusalem or Rome, might not understand each other, and yet might exhibit equally the effects of divine grace. Some people are very exacting. One man demands that you repeat the Apostles' Creed; another that you recite the Assembly's Catechism, proofs and all; while a third will ask no end of questions respecting free-will, election, and sovereignty forgetting that a babe in godliness who can only talk lispingly, ought not to be treated as a full grown man. He must have time to grow, and he should have skillful nurses. In many churches the babes are not nursed at all. They are left to themselves, and some of them become lame and deformed.

The Lord said, "Go—teach—baptize." As his death and resurrection were the chief events of his earthly history, so those events were to be represented in the initiatory service of the Christian Church. Believers were to die—be buried—rise again—in a figure. Tyndale the martyr thus states it:—"The plunging into the water signifieth that we die, and are buried with Christ, as concerning the old life of sin, which is Adam. And the pulling out again signifieth that we rise again with Christ in a new life, full of the Holy Ghost, which shall teach us and guide us, and work the will of God in us." It is said that God predestinated believers to be conformed to the image of his Son," (Romans viii. 29); and it was his will that the conformity should visibly appear, and be impressed on the heart of the convert while it was presented before his eyes; so that baptism was to be not only a symbol but also an act of profession or dedication, wherein the candidate gave himself to God, to obey and glorify him to his utmost power. Dr. Watts, embodied the theology of the ordinance in one of his hymns:—

Do we not know that solemn word,
That we are buried with the Lord:
Baptized into his death, and then
Put off the body of our sin?

Our souls receive diviner breath,
Rais'd from corruption, guilt, and death;
So from the grave did Christ arise,
And live to God above the skies,
No more let sin or Satan reign
Over our mortal flesh again:
The various lusts we served before
Shall have dominion now no more."

Many of our readers have often sung that hymn on baptis-mal occasions with hearty zest.

Our version reads—"baptizing them

in the name of the Father," &c., and that has come to be generally considered the form of baptism. Two prepositions are used in the New Testament. One signifies *in*—the other *into*. When Peter said to the lame man, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up," he used *in*—and the meaning was, by the authority and prayer of Jesus Christ." But in the Commission the preposition is *into*: so it is rendered by Dean Alford, and, in the Revised English Version—"baptizing them *into* the name of the Father, &c."

What is called the doctrine of the Trinity was not clearly revealed under the Jewish dispensation. "The Lord our God, is one Lord." We read of "God," and "the Spirit of God"—"His Spirit" It is not till we come to the New Testament that language is found indicating distinct existence and personal acts—and the Holy Spirit is presented as "guiding," "teaching," and as being "grieved." In apostolic theology God is spoken of as FATHER, giving his Son to die for the Church;—as SON, becoming incarnate, and dying for the lost;—as Holy Spirit, teaching, sanctifying, saving;—or, in the words of the Benediction—"the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the fellowship of the Holy Ghost;—Such is the blessing of the God of Salvation—into whom we are baptized. That baptism is an act of adhesion to God.

(To be continued.)

Education is not finished when the standards are all passed. The youth who has gone through their complete course without a failure from one end to the other may know very little, and be almost unawakened to the life intellectual. The dullard, on the other hand, may develop into a genius when once he has entered on the arena of public life. School training is not immediate in its operation. All seeds are not ripened with equal speed, nor are brains matured with unvarying regularity. Dean Stanley has recently been pointing out this fact. At a meeting the other day, in the course of one of his common-sense addresses, he told the following little story with a moral:—"There was a small school near Liverpool, at which Mr. Gladstone was educated before proceeding to Eton. Some years after his departure a young man who had also been a pupil at the school, called upon the head master, and said to him, 'There is one thing in which I have never in the least degree improved since I was at the school, and that is in casting up figures.' 'Well,' the master said, 'it is very extraordinary that it should be so, because certainly no one could be more incapable than you were at school in your arithmetic. But I will tell you a curious thing. When Mr. Gladstone was at school, he was just as incapable in casting up figures, in subtraction, in practice, as you were, and now you see what he has become—what a great arithmetician and financier!' In that story lay a very cheerful encouragement to those who were dull at school not to despair, but to think that some sleeping faculty might be awakened in their mind, and that they might become able to do things which when they were twelve, thirteen, or fourteen they considered beyond their power."—*The Schoolmaster.*

Be Courteous.

What a model gentleman the great Apostle to the Gentiles was! Just think of Paul being discourteous! Witness his delicacy and tact, seen pre-eminently in advice and reproof:—"I praise you not,"—this is his euphemism for "I blame you." "I partly believe it," when told of the divisions among his children. Mark his delicate tact with Festus, Agrippa and Felix. Note his dignity and sweetness in receiving the gift from the Philippian Church, the grace with which he rejoices that "your care of me had flourished again;" then the anxious guarding against hurting their feelings, and his hopefulness as he adds:

"Wherein ye are also careful, but ye lacked opportunity."

Coleridge, it was who pronounced religion to be in its essence, "The most gentlemanly thing in the world." Alas for the those Christians who exhibit only the spirit of the churl and the manners of the boor! It was a minister we regret to say who put forth the doctrine that ministers have no more to do with being a gentleman than with being dancing masters, but it was the Lord Christ who said, "I have called you friends"—a text which applies to Christian in his dealing with his brethren in an infinitely stronger degree than to Him who was our Lord and Master, and whose calling us brethren was not of nature but out of the condescension of His infinite love.

While infidelity regards man as a mere animal, to be dissolved at death into ashes and air, and vice changes man into a brute or devil, Mammon enslaves him. She makes him a serf, and condemns him to be a gold-digger for life in the mines. She puts her collar on his neck, and locks it; and bending his head to the soil, and bathing his brow in sweat, she says, Toil, Toil, Toil; as if this creature, originally made in the image of God, this dethroned and exiled monarch, to save whom the Son of God descended from the skies and bled on Calvary, were a living machine, constructed of sinew, bone, and muscle, and made for no higher end than to work to live, and live to work.—*Guthrie.*

A Universalist was once trying to prove to the untutored mind of a negro woman that such a place as Hell was a simple absurdity. "Aunt, do you believe that all the people who go to the bad place are burned in a lake of brimstone?" Certain I does," promptly replied the tinted theologian. "Well, now, don't you see, Aunt, there isn't brimstone enough down there to keep the fire going all the while?" This seemed to be a poser for a little while. She had never entered into a calculation of the amount of combustible material necessary for the progress. Her countenance soon brightened, however, and she replied: "Why, honey, don't you know that everybody who goes there carries his own brimstone with him?"

After Many Days.

The words of truth are never lost. Like long-buried seed, they will bloom forth at last. A youth of fifteen once heard the celebrated Flavel preach a plain, powerful sermon, from which he received no immediate impressions. Soon after he came to America, where he lived to be a hundred years of age—a thoughtless, careless old man. One day, while sitting alone under a tree, his past life came vividly before him, and over the hill of memory, clear as the blue above him, rose the days of his youth, and with them the Sabbath morning when he heard the great, solemn Flavel. The sermon's thrilling words came back to him like an alarm-bell over the silent sea of years, awakening every sleeping sin. Startled and stung by conscience, he was led at last from a deep sense of guilt to a forgiving Judge and a loving Saviour. He joined a neighboring church, and for sixteen years lived to be a consistent follower of Christ, and then Luke Short died, at the age of a hundred and sixteen years, in the glorious hope of a blessed immortality.

Little thought Flavel that his living words should echo over the sea of time, across the ocean between the Old and the New World, awaking a sleeping soul to everlasting glory.

The seed of truth has wondrous resurrection power. Sown in one heart, planted and transplanted, it lives and grows from year to year, from century to century. Binney sat alone and wrote his book of Christian experience—full of thoughts born in prayer and baptized in tears. One of its printed copies some careless hand had torn and