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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

The New Year.

Ring out, bells, to the wild sky,
The flying, the frosty light;
The year that is dying in the night—
Ring out, bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new—
Ring the bells, across the snow;
The year that is going, let him go;
Ring out the old, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in the love of all mankind.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring out the forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out the old, ring in the new,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out the pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out the shapes of foul disease,
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The large heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land—
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

Religious.

COMMUNION.

BY DR. HOYER.

Third Article.

Only baptized believers are entitled to a place at the Lord's table, and such only can properly be invited to partake. To justify this statement we shall consider:

1. The relation of the two ordinances to each other as symbols. It is generally admitted, we suppose, that baptism symbolizes the beginning of the new life, and the Lord's supper its furtherance. The former speaks of change from one spiritual condition to another, from moral pollution to moral purity,—putting off the old, putting on the new, dying and rising again in fellowship with Christ, and so taking a new position under the government of God,—while the latter speaks of growth, progress, power, in a present condition. The one represents a single event, a sudden transition, a consecration of its subject to a new service and master, while the other represents an ever-recurring duty, refreshment, and joy. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." The life of faith must be originated before it can be nourished; and an ordinance which represents the inception of this life must naturally precede one which represents its existence and support. In baptism a sinner publicly renounces the service of Satan and declares his allegiance to Christ; at the Lord's table he takes his place among the acknowledged friends of Jesus and receives from him the tokens of love and favor. Can there be any doubt as to the order in which these sacred rites should be observed? Shall a rebel appear at the king's table and recline in his bosom before he has publicly adjured his wickedness and avowed his future loyalty? Shall he be formally recognized as a citizen before he is formally qualified for citizenship? It is plain to us that the import of baptism makes it prerequisite to the communion, that one who neglects or refuses to observe the initiatory ordinance has no right to observe the subsequent ordinance. Salvation, indeed, depends upon neither of them; *salus integra securus est de salute*; yet an orderly observance of these rites is a solemn duty, and a neglect of them grievous disobedience. To justify our statement we may consider:

2. The practice of Christian churches in the apostolic age. Beginning with the inspired record at the day of Pentecost, and tracing the history of Christians until that record closes, we find no hint of the presence of unbaptized persons at the Lord's table, no intimation that they were ever invited to commune. But we do find that baptism is treated as the first great duty to be performed after exercising faith in Christ, and that the Lord's supper, if noticed at all, is assigned to a later period. When the multitude cried out on the day of Pentecost: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter replied: "Repent and be baptized every one of you;" and "they that gladly received his word were baptized." After this they continued steadfast in the apostle's doctrine and in fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayers." So, too, the people of Samaria, "when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, were baptized, both men and women." With equal promptness were the eunuch, and Saul, and Cornelius, Lydia and her household, the jailor and all his, baptized when they had believed. It is said that "many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized." If, then, the history of apostolic labor, given in the Acts puts any point beyond the reach of controversy, it is this: that baptism followed the exercise of faith as its primary and authorized expression. In no case is the Lord's supper put before baptism; in no case does the narrative recognize any interval between faith and baptism to be filled by the Lord's supper; in no case are believers brought into the church and afterwards baptized. The order appears to have been one and the same in every instance, and baptism always preceded the communion. On this point the testimony of the scriptures is univocal; and, if apostolic precedent can be relied upon as a guide to duty, we may be sure that baptism is prerequisite to communion at the Lord's table. It is to be considered,

3. That Christians of every name, from the apostolic age to the present, with hardly a dissentient voice have declared baptism to be a prerequisite to the Lord's supper. It would be easy to produce ample proof of this statement, but we deem it unnecessary. The only protest worthy of note has been made by a portion of the English Baptists. Moved by a desire to receive all whom Christ has received, they have overlooked the marks of distinction between visible churches on earth and "the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven," and have assumed that all who belong to the latter should be welcomed to the highest privileges of the former. Forgetting that Christ nowhere identified the terms of admission to his favor with the terms of admission to a local church, they have closed their eyes to the example of apostolic believers, and have marred the order and symmetry of the Lord's house. However able their spirit and purpose, they have placed themselves in a solitary and false position which we think they will ere long abandon, and resume their place with the great body of believers, who maintain that baptism is prerequisite to the Lord's supper.

Our second statement, then, is justified by the symbolical meaning of the two ordinances, by the uniform example of the primitive church, and by the common judgment of Christians. But if it is correct, the duty of Baptist churches is obvious. They must welcome to the Lord's table only those whom they suppose to have been baptized. For if it is evident that no man should expect to be saved, unless he believes that he has complied with the terms of salvation, and that no church should endorse and encourage his expectation, unless it shares his belief, or, in other words, is satisfied of his compliance with those terms; it is equally evident that no Christian should deem himself entitled to the communion until he believes that he has complied with the scriptural terms of admission to this ordinance, and that no church should invite him to commune unless it shares his belief, or is satisfied that he has complied with those terms. Hence Baptist churches do not invite those only who have been immersed in water on profession of their faith, to partake of the Lord's supper. Should they welcome to this sacred rite those who were sprinkled on profession of their faith, or those who were merely christened in infancy, they

would deliberately trample on what they hold to be the law of Christ; for, while they look upon such persons as still unbaptized, they believe baptism a prerequisite to communion. But it is well known that all other evangelical churches not only make use of sprinkling or pouring instead of immersion, but also administer the rite to infants; it is therefore impossible for Baptists to invite the members of these churches, as such, to the Lord's table. However heartily they may accord to them faith in Christ, the first qualification for communion,—and most heartily, we are confident, they do this,—they are compelled to pronounce them destitute of the second, which is baptism; and, therefore mindful of the paramount claims of Christ, they refuse to modify or disturb the order of his house. Such is their true position; and the readers of this article will doubtless recognize it as identical in principle with their own. Yet an opinion prevails to some extent among those who have not duly considered the point, that the act of partaking together of the Lord's supper is a proper sign and test of Christian fellowship, so that the faith of one who is not invited to partake is called in question. This act would indeed be such a test, if faith were recognized as the sole qualification; but not otherwise. If baptism is understood to be also prerequisite, then obviously uniting at the Lord's table is a sign of fellowship in the matter of baptism as well as of faith. The ritual qualification is endorsed no less distinctly than the spiritual. Hence members of the denomination for which we now speak, honor the faith of multitudes whom they cannot invite to the Lord's supper, and utterly disclaim the use of this ordinance as a sign or test of simply Christian fellowship. Might not this act be more distinctly acknowledged than it is by some of their assailants?

Christ all and in all.

As individual Christians, it becomes us always to test our hopes and assurances by the blessed truth, that Christ is ready to be to each of us a loving Friend, an ever present help, a never-failing Counsellor. Our religion is not to be something external, whether this consist in multitudinous forms or in reliance and appliances which are purely human and ignore the direct means of our salvation, the forgiveness and gracious assistance of the Saviour of our souls. The natural tendency of the human heart, even when it is not unimpressed by divine truth, is always to rest in something outward, to deceive itself by confounding proprieties of conduct and correctness of belief with inward graces and a fulfilment of the whole duty of a Christian. Religion touches too much only on the outside of the life of the spirit. It is so often not a self-conscious experience, a positive and immediate perception of the livingness of the of the Saviour's presence, a steady enjoyment of his love and care, a life of confidential communion with him. The reality and the blessedness of Christ's religion consist in its personalness. No one can reckon himself to be a Christian who has not had a personal experience of Christ's pardoning grace; and there can be none of that deep, abounding joy, that never-waning light and peace which there might and should be in the life of every follower of Jesus, if he is not felt to be an ever present Saviour. It is this that the church and its members need to feel more fully, because it is a most blessed and important truth, because it will lead them on to a more sanctified life, because it will fill them with a more whole-hearted devotion to his cause. Christ for us and in us, Christ as the ruler of our minds and wills, the inspirer of our conduct, the guide of our activity, Christ all and in all, nothing less than this, may be and should be the staple of our religious endeavours and of our daily life.—*The Moravian.*

Centenary of Methodism in America.

A Convention of New-England Methodists will be held in May, 1866, at which the following topics, suggested by the committee of arrangements, will be discussed:

1. The importance of more systematic efforts to strengthen the weak places in our

Zion, and to extend the gospel into new fields among us.

2. Would not a return to the circuit system in some portions of the work be beneficial to both the temporal and spiritual interests of the Church?

3. How can the social power of the Church be more fully developed, and by organization or otherwise so directed as to subserve the interests of our cause?

4. Home and Sunday-school instruction in the doctrines and usages of the Church.

5. The education and support of the ministry.

6. Would a more extensive system of ministerial transfers subserve the interests of the Church?

7. The importance of prompt and systematic management of church finances.

8. The endowment and patronage of our literary institutions.

9. The duty of New-England Methodism to the South.

10. What ought New-England to do in the Centenary movement?

11. How can the old connectional spirit of Methodism be revived and perpetuated?

12. The necessity of spirituality to the preservation and growth of Methodism.—*Methodist.*

Revivals:

ARE THEY ONLY TEMPORARY?

It is often made an objection to revivals of religion that they are "mere temporary excitements." True enough; the actual scenes of the revival may be transient. So is an April rain transient; but the earth feels it for the whole season. *Pentecost* lasted one day. But that one day changed the moral face of the globe. Luther's Reformation work was comprised within a few years; Europe and the world feel it to this hour. The memorable revival of 1857 began with a few praying hearts in New-York—it culminated in a few weeks; its outward phenomena ceased in a twelve-month. The influence spread across the seas, and around the globe. Did the results end with the end of the excitement? Have its converts all gone back to unbelief and ungodliness? No! That revival has its enduring monuments in nearly every church on this continent. Its history will blaze on one of the brightest pages of God's record-books, which shall "be opened" on the day of judgment.

No Orator.

Meeting a friend I asked him how his pastor, a young man recently settled was getting on. "Well, pretty well," he said, "but he's no orator, he's no orator, he's from —, and you know those men have no oratory."

I did not know any such thing, but I was mortified to think that such an impression was abroad, and that any man could say "you know it," as if it was well understood. I know men from the Seminary who are real live speakers, earnest, powerful orators, and I wish there were more of them. It is my belief that it turns out as many orators, as any other theological seminary. But it is a lamentable fact that our theological seminaries, as a general thing, do not train men to be good speakers. Oratory is not their forte. But oratory is essential to the highest usefulness in the ministry. To preach the word is the minister's great work. To learn this art he goes to the seminary. With a basis of piety and learning he must be able to speak well, or he cannot fulfil his mission.

The great difference among ministers consists in their ability to speak. To preach, to deliver orally the message of God. This is a solemn and important truth. It ought to take a deep hold of the heart of every student and every preacher.

Every pulpit ought to have in it a man who preaches with earnestness and power.—*New York Observer.*

ASSURANCE OF FAITH.—Assurance is glory in the bud; it is the suburbs of paradise; it is a cluster of the land of promise; it is a spark of God; it is the joy and crown of a Christian.