

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XII. No. 39.

HALIFAX, N. S., WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1867.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXXI. No. 39.

Religious.

Our Female Prayer-meeting.

"I have been thinking for some time past whether we could not get up a female prayer-meeting if we tried—don't you think it would be a very good thing?"

This remark was made to me by our deacon's wife, one Sunday morning in the early part of last year, as we were walking home together.

"A most important thing," I replied, "I think every Christian woman ought to be able to pray with others. May she not be called upon at any moment to pray by the bedside of a sick or dying friend? But how shall we set about it; our sisters will be sure to be afraid of the sound of their own voices at first?"

"Well, I have asked half-a-dozen to come to our house next Monday evening—you'll come, won't you? I know we may venture to call upon three, the others I hope will soon gain courage."

Monday evening found us assembled at our deacon's house. We commenced the service with a hymn, a chapter was then read, and one sister offered prayer; another hymn, followed by another prayer, and then another and another, until all, except one, had prayed. Oh, those prayers, the first woman's prayers I had ever heard, how simple, how earnest, how real! We felt as we parted that we had indeed been with God.

Our church is a very, very small one.—When we began our prayer-meeting our circumstances were most depressing—ever since they have been brightening. We believe God answers prayer.

After a short time we resolved to meet in the "upper room," where we worship on Sunday. This bold step brought an increased attendance; in fact every meeting has been most encouraging.

Perhaps one of my lady readers has never been at a female prayer-meeting. My dear sister, let me introduce you now to ours. May I tell you a little about some of those present this evening. You see that widow, sitting under the window there. "A widow indeed" she has lost her earthly all, but her large, loving nature has concentrated all its affection on its Saviour and his Church.

"Mrs. T., will you pray?" Let us kneel. After a few moments' "speaking silence" Mrs. T. begins. Hers is no cold repetition of ready-made phrases; she pours out her heart "like water before the Lord." "Oh, my God! I will ask Thee yet for this thing, oh, for Jesus sake, make us kinder Christians, give us, oh, such loving hearts." That is the burden of her prayer for us to-night. Now she is praying for the unconverted, for the sick, the destitute. My dear sister, don't check that tear—let it come. Perhaps you are learning a little how "to weep with them that weep"—perhaps you never realized before the grand poetry of a woman's prayer. But she has finished. You notice we sing our next hymn with far more feeling than we sang the opening one.

"Miss D., will you pray?" Miss D. is that slight girl you heard cough just now; her tremulous voice is speaking, although you can scarcely hear it yet—it will be firmer soon. Listen well, for that voice will not sound in this world much longer—you can catch the words, "the great white throne, with Jesus, heaven." She prays we may all meet there, "tis as if an angel shook his wings."

Another hymn, "Mary J., won't you try this evening?" Mary is a servant girl, she has never prayed with us before. She begins very slowly, and with great difficulty—now she is gaining confidence, she is praying for us as a church, she knows our wants well, and is telling God all about them. She said to me last Sunday, "I can't always come to the prayer-meeting, but I never forget it." She has pleaded our cause many a time in secret before, God bless her.

That is Mrs. M. who is praying so timidly for help to bring up her little ones for the Lord. Do you think that is the reason her children are so remarkably well behaved?—Now two sisters follow, remembering special cases—we have had similar prayers answered before now. But I am at last asked, Oh, let me pray for those who are seeking Christ, may

they soon join us, and be as happy as we are. And now—"May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all." Amen.

As we return, let me tell you that, if you have been at all profited by this meeting, and should wish to commence one among your own friends, you only require—

- 1st. One hour a fortnight.
- 2nd. Two or three Christian women.
- 3rd. "Lord, teach us how to pray."
- 4th. You will find the advantages to be—
 - 1st. An increase of Christian love and sympathy.
 - 2nd. A decrease of scandal.
 - 3rd. Greater consistency of life among those who attend, and
 - 4th. Who can say what God will not do in answer to prayer.—Baptist Messenger.

The Living Disciple.

BY REV. JOHN BATES.

A dead father is of no use to his family, and a dead Christian is of no use to the church of Christ. We need living Christians to work in the vineyard of our Lord. The dead professor must be quickened by the Spirit, and have a living faith in a living Saviour before he can perform any acceptable work to God. Without Jesus in the heart there can be no spiritual life. In this way and in no other, can the dead professor become a living disciple. If he only touches the hem of the Saviour's garment in faith, eternal life will immediately flow into his soul. As all light dwells in the sun, so all life dwells in Christ. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Outside of Christ there is no blessing. "This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." Jesus is the fountain of all life, and from him every covenant blessing flows into the believer's soul. A living faith is the connecting link between a dead sinner and a living Saviour.

Eternal life, or eternal death depends upon the exercise of faith in Christ. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." The simplicity and decision of this statement is enough to make dead professors tremble. Infidels may scoff, philosophers may argue, devils may tremble, and worldly professors may trick and trim their outside christianity, but it is written, "He that believeth not shall be damned." This is final. The sentence is irreversible. Jesus is immutable, but his immutability relates to principle. The alternative of eternal life, or eternal death, is settled by this text, for ever.

"There is a thing like grace," says J. Bunyan, "now-a-days which is not grace." There is much artificial religion around us in the present day. Every professor is not a living professor. The worldly Christian does really reject Christ, but strives "to make a fair show in the flesh." Such persons "glory in appearance, but not in heart." They have no Christ within, and no living piety flows out. Empty professors spend all their strength in externals. Painted windows, embroidered gowns, candles, and worldly pomp, is all the religion they know, and all the religion they want to have. An unskilful merchant is ruined by the purchase of a false jewel, and an outside profession is ruinous to those who wear it. All false imitations will be condemned in the day of judgment. O ye talking Christians, ye covetous professors, ye temporizing and worldly disciples, who turn this way and that way to make gain of godliness, what will ye do in the end thereof? If your religion changes with your company, and you are trying to carry Christ in one hand, the world in the other, and both in your heart, then I say you have no part or lot in the matter. "Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion, that lie upon beds of ivory, that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointment; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph." A profession like this will not save you. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many (many, not a few, but many dead professors, says Jesus,) will seek to enter in and shall not be able." Oh, what a great disappointment there will be among many empty professors, in the last day, as well as among ungodly sinners!

Whereunto shall I liken the professors of this generation, and what are they like? What folly to clothe our worldly spirit in the garb of Christianity. It is hard to say what a worldly Christian is like. My imagination calls up no picture by way of comparison.—The worldly professor himself with the world in his heart, and Christ in his hand, must draw his own picture, unless he can find it among the "emblems" of Francis Quarles, but his end is thrown upon the canvass by the masterly hand of Bunyan in the death of Demas.

Brethren! Are we living Christians? It not, what are we like? Surely we do not wish to be like Demas, respecting whom Paul says, "He hath forsaken me having loved this present evil world." Shall we imitate the slothful servant who "was cast into outer darkness?" Surely not. If we are covetous like Ananias or Sapphira, we may well tremble at our approaching end, or if our profession is false like that of Hymeneus and Philetus, then our word like theirs, will "eat as doth a canker." Let our character be in harmony with our profession. In one word, the living disciple will walk straight up to the cross, and as he looks at Jesus he will say, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" At the foot of thy cross, I laid myself when I was baptized, and now I come again to thee to give up to thy service my time, my talent, my purse, my all. I myself am thine, "I am bought with a price, and must glorify thee in my body and in my spirit which are thine."

A dead profession is opposed to the living power of the Gospel. Worldly-mindedness contracts the heart, chills the affections, and imprisons the soul among earthly things. It fetters our feet, ties our hands, blinds our eyes and seals up our purse against the cause of God. Oh, for living Christianity and living disciples of Christ, then our churches will unfold an aggressive character upon the ungodly world around them.

Shaping a Soul.

Have you not, in imagination, sometimes stood by the great masters of sculpture, and seen with what exquisite care they chiselled on their forms of loveliness, intent never to leave a shade of beauty undeveloped, or a deformity unnoticed; never to strike a hair's breadth too deep, or to leave a roughness not smoothed away.

And all for what? Simply to exhibit their ideas in the lifeless marble.

But a chisel is put into your hands, and you are bidden to shape a soul. You have the squared block of your native capacities before you. There is a form of divine beauty bidden in it, which you may bring out, or you may hew and hack it into the most dreadful deformity. Chisel you must, and chisel you will; but O, be careful how you cut upon that piece of immortality.

There is but one block given to each man; if he ruins that, he ruins his all. The young begin often with rude thoughtless blows, and chip away their block very fast. Sometimes they soon cut so deep as makes it impossible for them ever to bring a form of beauty out of their stone; sometimes they wildly dash it in pieces, heedless of the wise cautions addressed to them.

But those who know what they are about, who know the worth of their opportunity, work carefully upon the task of their character.

They study well the rules of their art, laid down in a book given them by the same hand which gave them their block and their tools; they look well, too, to their model after which they are to chisel, which is Jesus Christ, the divine man.

They who work thus never fail of producing in due time a form of loveliness of strength and of life.—Christian Banner.

Not Guilty!

The following from the Danville Express is one of many cases in which a clever lawyer has diverted the course of justice, and has been rewarded by the proceeds of the crime:—

We have lately heard a story connected with a prominent lawyer who has distinguished himself in the defence of our criminals, as well as in connection with other trials, having frequently, through his skill, aided hardened

criminals to escape from justice. Some time ago, while he was attending court in an adjoining county, he was applied to by a singular specimen of humanity, charged with grand larceny, to defend him. The lawyer very naturally inquired what crime he was accused of. The man replied that somebody had been mean enough to charge him with stealing \$150 in bank notes, and had got him indicted.

"Are you guilty?" asked the lawyer.

"That's none of your business," replied the accused. "They say that makes no difference with you, whether a man is guilty or not, you will contrive to dig him out in some way. So don't talk any more about guilt till you hear what the jury says."

"Well, what about the pay?" said the lawyer.

"You just hold on till the trial is over, and you'll have no trouble about the pay."

The trial commenced, and proved to be a somewhat protracted and excited one. The district attorney proved that the money in question was composed of two fifty dollar bills on a certain bank, and the remainder of ten dollar bills, all of which were wrapped up in a piece of silk. The jury, after listening to the counsel in the case, and receiving the charge of the judge, retired, and soon returned with a verdict of not guilty.

The accused, who was greatly elated with the result of the trial and effort of his counsel, invited the latter into one of the vacant jury rooms. As soon as they were alone, he slapped his counsel on the shoulder, and exclaimed,—

"Free as water, aint I? What's the use of trying a man for stealing when you're round?" Now I suppose you want your pay."

"Yes; have you got any thing to pay with?" asked the lawyer.

"Lend me your knife and we'll see about that."

The lawyer, slightly startled at such a proposition, rather reluctantly complied. The accused immediately commenced ripping and cutting away at the waistband of his pantaloons and soon produced the roll of bills for the stealing of which he had just been tried, wrapped up in the identical piece of oiled silk described by the witnesses for the prosecution, and throwing it down on the table before the astonished lawyer, exclaimed,—

"There, take your pay out of that; I guess there is enough to pay you tolerably well."

"Why, you villain! you stole that money, after all," said the lawyer. "Do you expect I can take any of that?"

"Stole that money! Why, what are you talking about? Didn't them twelve men up stairs just say I didn't steal it? What's the use of your trying to raise a question of conscience, after twelve respectable men have given their opinion on the subject? Take your pay out of that and ask no questions. Don't be modest in taking; I got it easy enough, and you've worked hard enough for it."

Our informant did not state how much the lawyer took.

The Desert blossoming.

A friend was once speaking of the wonderful improvements of the present age, and the still greater marvels which the next generation will doubtless see. Among them he predicted would be the conversion of the Sahara desert into a fertile cultivated country. Surely no work seemed more improbable, because apparently impossible. Through this vast extent no rain ever falls, and the only fertile spots are those which surrounded the few springs of water scattered here and there throughout the burning wastes. But modern science, as one has said, "laughs at seeming impossibilities." Already the great work has begun of sinking artesian wells along the route of caravan travel, and French engineers are sanguine of the success of the scheme.—In 1860, five of these wells had been sunk, and many thousand palm and fruit trees, were growing with tropical luxuriance about them. Two villages had clustered in this vicinity, and the weary fainting caravans found here a most refreshing resting place. At a depth of about five hundred feet, a large body of water had been struck, either a lake or a