

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XIX., No. 19.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, May 13, 1874.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXXVIII., No. 19.

Poetry.

THE SABBATH.

A bright spot, an oasis
Amid earth's desert drear,
The sweetest bud that blooms
Upon the rose tree of the year.
A miniature of Heaven hung
Upon a chain of days,
Worn on the breast of Father Time,
To cheer his weary ways.

A soothing poem written in
A volume of dull prose,
A waft of soft Spring melody
Heard at the winter's close;
The golden clasp that binds the leaves
Of six days' episode,
That God's own fingers shall unloose
Across the Jordan's flood.

THE LOST SHEEP.

There were ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold;
And one was out on the hill away,
Far off from the gates of gold;
Away on the mountains wild and bare—
Away from the tender Shepherd's care.

"Lord, thou hast here thy ninety and nine;
Are they not enough for thee?"
But the Shepherd made answer, "This of mine
Has wandered away from me;
And although the road be rough and steep,
I go to the desert to find my sheep."

But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord
Passed through.

Ere he found his sheep that was lost.
Out in the desert he heard its cry,
Sick, and helpless, and ready to die.

"Lord, whence are those blood-drops all the way
That mark out the mountain's track?"
"They were shed for one who had gone astray
Ere the Shepherd could bring him back."

"Lord, whence are thy hands so rent and torn?"
"They are pierced to-night by many a thorn."
And all through the mountains, thunder-riven,
And up from the rocky steep,
There rose a cry to the gate of heaven,
"Rejoice! I have found my sheep!"
And the angels echoed around the throne,
Rejoice, for the Lord brings back his own!

Religious.

BAPTISM BY A PEDOBAPTIST.

The Baptistery in the Rev. Mr. Talmage's "Tabernacle" in New York appears likely to be a source of trouble to his Presbyterian friends. Very severe charges are brought against him for violating the laws of the Presbyterian church. A writer in the Brooklyn Eagle says:—

As I cannot enter the Presbytery to which Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage belongs to prefer a charge against him for violating the laws of the Presbyterian Church, I hope you will grant me the privilege of calling the attention of that court to the conduct of that gentleman on last Sabbath. Everybody connected with the Presbyterian Church ought to know her rules, and especially the rule for the administration of baptism. In the "Directory for Worship," the law is laid down, "he" (the officiating minister) "is to baptize * * * with water, by pouring or sprinkling * * * without adding any other ceremony." These words are sufficient to condemn the conduct of Mr. Talmage.

This Presbyterian writer says:—

It is an unseemly sight to see a baptistery in a Presbyterian church, and a Presbyterian minister plunging half a dozen people into it. If Mr. Talmage has the right to do it, then all the other Presbyterians in the city ought to get baptistries, in order to make proselytes of the Baptists. Every honest Baptist will look with disgust upon Talmage's trick to draw water to his own mill. What right has he to create confusion in our Church? He has violated one of our express rules, and for this he should be called to an account.

Mr. Talmage, in order to be all things to all men, has just as good a right to introduce a holy water font into the Tabernacle, as he has to bring in a baptistery. The Roman Catholics could then go to the Tabernacle without any danger, because they could attend to their usual practice when entering the house of worship. Getting the baptistery is a simple trick to in-

duce certain persons to join the church. It is contrary to Scripture, Presbyterian order, and true manliness. Under the name of liberality, or catholicity, or good feeling, this meanness is practised. I cannot call it by any more dignified name. There are Presbyterian ministers in this city, who would no more condescend to do such a thing than they would condescend to steal or lie. I honor men for standing for the principles and practices of the denomination to which they belong, but I lose respect for men who, to use the old Scotch proverb, are "Everybody's body and nobody's bit."

The Editor of the New York Examiner and Chronicle in referring to this matter remarks:—

"We profess no skill in the adjudicated law of the Presbyterian Church, and therefore hold with diffidence any opinion we may form on matters concluded therein. But the above representation corresponds with what we have understood to be the state of the question. The Presbyterian Church does not indeed regard immersion as invalidating baptism, and accordingly receives members from Baptist churches without requiring submission to its own form of the baptismal rite. It has not, we believe, declared the invalidity of Roman Catholic baptism, notwithstanding the 'other ceremonies,' added to the affusion. But for Presbyterian ministers to practise immersion, or to add 'other ceremonies,' seems to be unwarranted."

We have no wish to enjoy a monopoly in the practice of the primitive and Scriptural baptism. In general, we should be glad to see Presbyterian ministers burying in baptism those whom they have won to the Saviour. But only on one condition; that the act shall express a sincere faith and a truly Christian intention. For a man who does not believe in it to administer immersion as baptism merely to keep a convert from joining a Baptist church, is contemptible in principle, and hardly falls short of profaneness. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

MARRIAGE OF A GENEVAN CURÉ.

Mr. Leonard Woolsey Bacon furnishes the Advance an account of the marriage of the Abbe Chavard, the third curé of Geneva. It was solemnized by Father Hyacinthe in the old Church of St. Germain, "the place where the Reformation was first preached in Geneva before the coming of Troment and Favel, by a nameless Franciscan friar." The entire clergy of the Catholic Church of Geneva, he says, came up the aisle in ordinary citizen's dress, escorting their brother and his bride. The most impressive part of the ceremony was the beautiful address made by Father Hyacinthe on the fitness of marriage to the priesthood. Father Hyacinthe said:

"Monsieur and Madame—or rather let me say, my brother and my sister: The day has come to you at last which long seemed impossible. You loved each other; but still more you loved duty, and the church which taught you duty. How was your fidelity to the church to be reconciled with that other fidelity which you would fain cherish to each other? I was far from Geneva at the time, and had no thought that I should ever be called hither. You opened your hearts to me, and bade me read there the secret at which you yourselves were startled and sometimes terrified—a secret of tenderness and purity; of sweetness, and yet of anguish: of hope, and yet despair. You, sir, were a priest. God had given you to this orphan as a guardian in place of the father whom she had lost. You had been the counselor of her inexperience, the support of her weakness, her revered and beloved guide in the paths that lead to God, and that lead, even in this world, to honor and happiness. But, as her character, unfolded under Divine grace, and under your own training, you felt that this young girl was giving you back an hundred fold all that she had received through your care—that you had found in her a friend—that wise, intelligent, courageous friend, of whom no man has so

deep a need as the Catholic priest in his hard and perilous toil.

"And now that you had found this treasure, what should hinder you from keeping it in peace? A law which corresponds, doubtless, to a great and eternal idea—the idea of virginity; but a law which has this one fault, that it is a law. Certainly, we at Geneva are pursuing other reforms not less important than this; but had our work no other result than that of founding the Priest's Family, of restoring to him the liberty of being at the same time happy and honorable, it would, by this fact alone, confer a supreme blessing on the church and on society."

"It is not only a marriage that I am about to bless in this first wedding from the ranks of our clergy—it is an institution, the institution of the priest's family."

"If the family is a holy thing for all men, for the priest it is thrice holy. It is in the priest's family that the grand words of the apostle ought to find their noblest fulfillment: 'As the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wife be subject unto her husband in all things. And ye husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might present it unto himself a glorious church, having no spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing, but holy and unblemished.'"

"Let your love, then, be, above all, an earnest and serious love. The insults of misled or wicked men—these are nothing. Much more to be feared are the thoughtless words of worldly approbation—from these may God shield you! Marriage does not efface the indelible character of the priesthood; on the contrary, in a true and high sense of the word, it confers some share of this character upon the wife, making it to shine out, both in him and in her, more conspicuously than ever, to the shame or to the glory of them both."

"And finally, let your love be unselfish—disinterested to the point of self-sacrifice. For the children of this world, selfishness in both parties is but a weakness—one is almost tempted to say, a virtue. For the minister of the sanctuary it is simply a crime! Ah! you do well to gather close at that blessed hearthstone that is to be the scene of your mutual love, your common sorrows and your common prayers; but do not forget to keep ever with you there the prayers, the sufferings, the joys, the interests of the church Catholic and of all mankind! It is the most plausible reason in favor of enforced celibacy that it is indispensable to the self-devotion of the clergy. It depends on us to give a practical and final refutation of this sophism, or else to give it new force. It will be yours, I doubt not, to refute it."

There are now four married priests at Geneva.

NOT ALL OVER WITH HIM.

A young man was fishing from a raft which was floating in deep water. It happened that one of the logs, which should have been fastened with a staple to the chain that bound them all together, was loose; and as he stepped upon it, it rolled over, opened a passage between the logs, and the slime on their surface caused them to slip from his grasp, and he fell through,—the logs closing above him.

There were but few persons about, but, providentially, one man saw the accident. Seizing the boat-hook, he ran to the raft, wedged the logs apart, and watching when the body should rise, drew out the frightened angler, and placed him in safety. The whole affair had happened so quickly, that little damage was done. After shaking himself, and resting a little, the young fellow was able to walk home without help.

On the following day, feeling far from well, he stayed at home, and then sent a polite note to his preserver, asking that he would visit him at his

house. The man readily went. Shaking hands with him, the young man said, "I have sent for you, Mr.—, to tell you plainly the very great obligation I am under to you, and to beg that you will let me know in what way most agreeable to yourself, I can show my sense of it. You see I do not want to shirk the matter. I am quite sure that but for your prompt help, it would have been all over with me."

"I cannot agree to that," said the other.

"Nonsense; I tell you I should have been a dead man in three minutes more."

"Most likely."

"Well then, my good friend, what do you mean by not agreeing with me?"

"I mean that it would not have been all over with you. After death comes the judgment."

The young man was silent, and turned away his face. At length he said, without looking around,—

"Are you a preacher?"

"Yes, and so are you."

"I? I am anything but that."

"Pardon me; all men preach by their lives and conduct; a good life preaches life, and an evil life preaches death; and thousands who may never hear sermons may be led by the preaching of our lives."

"Ah, that is all very true, of course; but the question now is, what can I do for you let us come to business."

"I am coming to it. I have but one wish in respect to the life I have saved through God's providence—it is that henceforth that life may be given to his service. If you would reward me for the trifling pains I have taken, do so by earnestly seeking your own salvation. Can you promise me that?"

"Well," said the youth, "you are really most unselfish; and I will promise you one thing, at any rate, with all my heart—I will think seriously about it."

"Be it so; I accept that for my reward. Good morning."

"Well," said the youth to himself, when the good man was gone, "since I am pledged to think of this matter seriously, I may as well begin at once." He took down his Bible, and read, and read, and thought day after day. The reading of God's word brought him to his knees.—From praying for repentance and faith, he grew in time to bring forth the fruits of the one, and to do the works of the other; and he lived not only to profess the religion of Christ, but to commend it to others by his example.

MRS. DOE ON PRAYER-MEETING CURIOSITIES.

DEAR DICK:—I have been, for the last few years, much interested in noticing singular phases of mind exhibited in prayer-meetings and prayers. Perhaps you will think that I have no right to notice such things, and indeed, I confess that if I were more devoted in spirit, I might not. Still, all will admit that the states of mind which are indicated by the expressions I have noticed are open to criticism.

It seems sometimes as if the best thing in the world for some churches would be a little smart persecution. Not for the reason which might strike you at first thought, that of blowing away the chaff, but to show some people that they do really love the Lord Jesus, and that they could suffer and die for him if need be. I have been in prayer-meetings that were exquisitely painful. Everybody spoke on this wise: "I hope I love the Lord, but I do not have the evidence that I desire. I really can hardly tell if I ever were a Christian or not." Yet we all knew that these very people were the very salt of the earth, the hardest working Christians in the whole church. I felt an almost irresistible temptation to ask them after meeting if they had not better turn atheists, or some kind of heathen, it would have been so refreshing to see how quickly they would have been convinced of their Christianity. All they wanted was a little opposition. A couple of thumb-screws would have

proved very good arguments, and a turn on the rack would have given them all needful assurance of their love for the Saviour. It is not so with all of us, but some people have such easy Christian lives, nobody troubles them, and they after a while imagine that they are not Christians at all. Why can't they be glad and rejoice in the Lord, when he gives them such "pleasant places," instead of making themselves miserable in that style!

One of the strangest things that we hear in the prayer-meeting is, when some old Christian rises and thanks the Lord that we are yet "on praying ground and interceding terms with God," and gives thanks that "our unprofitable lives have been spared thus far." Such a petition must give unconverted hearers a queer idea of the gospel. What! thank God that we are out of heaven, and absent from the Lord. Thank him that we are yet in the wilderness! Then, "too," where does the man who prays in this fashion expect to be, when he is no longer "on praying ground and interceding terms with God"? Anybody would suppose that he thought that he would go at least to purgatory, when he left the world. I am glad to see that the younger people have dropped this unchristian thanksgiving from their prayers. I hope that it will stay dropped.

The Week of Prayer calls forth curious ideas. Some people seem even to think that there is something holy about the time itself, and although they have hardly been to a prayer-meeting in three months, they come then, and pray in a tremulous way that is very amusing. If at the close of the week there are no conversions, they are apt to be cross, and complain of everybody except themselves. Such people expect to reap without sowing. Where does it say in the Bible that if you stay at home all the rest of the year, you shall reap in the Week of Prayer?

Then how strangely they pray. They ask the Lord to bring them into a state where they can be blessed, to help them to offer prayers that he can hear. Why! if they pray at all God will hear. He may not answer just as they expect, but he will answer in some way. And as for the state of mind; who ever expected to be heard on account of his state of mind? We used to be heard on account of Jesus Christ. If a man does not believe what he is saying, he had better not pray at all, for no amount of work on his part will bring him into a place where God will hear him for his own sake. But perhaps you will say "they know that; but God tells us to pray believing, and believing is a state of mind." Yes, so it is; but Jesus heard those of little faith. "O ye of little faith, wherefore did ye doubt? Bring him hither to me." It does seem as if the best way were to pray for what we want, without spending so much precious time in getting ready. If we want faith, let us ask for it at once; but if we wish for the conversion of others, let us ask for that too. The best way to get faith is to begin to exercise it.

A great many Christians seem to think that it would be great presumption in them to take the cheerful view of their experience. They talk in the most doleful manner of the blessedness they had when first they knew the Lord, and cry, "O, my leanness, my leanness!" Such talks and prayers are a disgrace to Christianity. Especially are they so when made by old Christians. What a comforting prospect is held out to the young people just starting in the race. They seem to hear, "Oh! you will soon give up your joy, and fall into the same black hole where we are." Why! there are men who if they thought that they were growing in grace, would hardly dare say so, for fear of seeming self-righteous. What is the use of calling one's self a Christian, if one does not grow? If the kingdom of God is like a mustard-seed, it is not a mustard-seed cooked before it is planted, that will just lie in the ground and rot. It must grow. And the fruits of the Spirit are