

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XXVI., No. 47.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, November 23, 1881.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XLV., No. 47.

Poetry.

Be Patient.

Has your pathway been darkened, my brother?
Is the radiant sunlight of joy
So eclipsed by the shadows that gather,
That life seems a bitter alloy?
Be patient! One smile of the Master
Will drive all those shadows away;
When he welcomes you home in the morning
Of eternity's beautiful day.

Has your pathway been darkened, my brother?
Has hope risen cloudless and bright,
And, just as it promised fruition,
Gone out in adversity's night?
Be patient. Remember misfortune,
If hallowed by heaven-born love,
Is purchasing riches and honor,
In the home of the spirit above.

Has your pathway been darkened, my brother?
Has pitiless, painful disease
Divested your earthly existence
Of sweetness; of all that can please?
Be patient. The time is approaching,
You know not how soon it will be,
When a City, where pain cannot enter,
Shall open its gateway for thee.

Has your pathway been darkened, my brother?
Has the angel of sorrow drawn near,
And taken, in spite of your pleading,
Some treasure, your heart knows how dear?
Be patient. Look up; and your darling,
From a beautiful home in the skies,
Will tell of a Comforter, Jesus,
Who will wipe all the tears from your eyes.

Then try to be patient, my brother,
Whenever life's pathway shall lead
Through thicket of briars and nettles,
Instead of the rose covered mead.
Remember, its course was determined
By Jesus, your Saviour and Friend;
And leads to the purest enjoyment,
Of pleasure that never shall end.
—Rev. Addison Brainard, in *Christian Secretary*.

Religious.

Imperfect Religion.

Very much of the religion of the day is an easy-minded religion, without conflict and wrestling with self denial and sacrifice—a religion which knows nothing of the pangs of the new birth at its commencement, and nothing of the desperate struggle with the flesh and with the devil, day by day, making us long for resurrection, deliverance, for the Lord's return. It is a second-rate religion—a religion in which there is no largeness, no grandeur, no potency, no noble-mindedness, no all-constraining love. It is a hollow religion, with a fair exterior, but with an aching heart—a heart unsatisfied, a soul not at rest, a conscience not at peace with God; a religion marked, it may be, by activity and excitement, but betraying all the while, the consciousness of a wound hidden and unhealed within, and hence unable to animate to lofty doings, or supply the strength needed for such doing. It is a feeble religion, lacking the sinews and bones of harder times, very different from the indomitable, much-enduring, storm-braving religion not merely of apostolic days, but even of the Reformation. It is an uncertain religion; that is to say, it is not rooted on certainty; it is not the outflowing of a soul assured of pardon, and rejoicing in the filial relationship between itself and God. Hence, there is no liberty of service, for the question of personal acceptance is still an unsettled thing; there is a working for pardon. All is thus bondage, heaviness, irksomeness; there is a speaking for God, but it is with a faltering tongue; there is a laboring for God, but it is with f-ttered hands; there is a movement in the way of His command, but it is with a heavy drag upon our limbs. Hence, the inefficient, un-influential character of our religion. It does not tell on others, for it has not fully told upon ourselves. It tells short of its mark, for the arm that drew the bow is paralyzed.—Rev. Horatius Bonar, D. D.

Saying or Praying.

Then the prayer,—says an exchange,—don't let them repeat it thoughtlessly or mechanically. Children are especially susceptible to the beautiful meaning of the phrase, "Our Father," and a few words of explanation will enable them to comprehend the significance of the fact that they are addressing a Heavenly Father as well, if not better, than growing people do. Take it up with them, clause by clause; show them, so far as possible, its meaning and scope, and rejoice ever after when you hear them, in reverent tones, not repeat but pray it.

Only One.

Somewhere, I cannot tell where, I have heard of a case like this: A deacon was speaking to a visitor about his pastor's want of success. No doubt he had often reminded his pastor of the same with much condolence. "Well," said the visitor, "what is the proof?" "Proof? Why, last year only one person joined the church!" "Sir, who was that one?" "I don't know." "You must know what was his name?" He looks into the church-book, and finds that the name of the man who was the only one added to the church is "Robert Moffat." Then said the other, "Sir, when you added that man to your church, you added generation upon generations; and yet you have been making your pastor's life bitter by the dismal toll of that statistical complaint, 'only one.' Do you know what they once rang the bells of heaven for? It was over the conversion of one sinner—only one; and it was there reckoned to be such a great success, that it made joy in the presence of the angels."—*Watchword*.

Crooked Sticks.

"Lord, I can't make these sticks perfectly straight: I have lost all my strength. Send me to another field." But what is the answer of the Holy Spirit? "You were not sent to that field to take every crook out of those sticks; you can't perfect human nature; that is my work." Now, there is something in every man—ministers included—that is a little gnarly. It is peculiar to the individual—a streak of the old Adam inwrought in his individuality. In one it is stubbornness, in another suspiciousness, in another reserve, in another egotism, in another self-will, in another a disposition to be critical, or fault-finding, or censorious. By whatever name it may be known, it is, in fact, a little twist of depravity, and no human influence, no preacher, can untwist it and straighten it out. It is a peculiar twist of self, inborn, inbred, inwrought. So, when I discover what a man's peculiar twist is, I say, "The Lord only can take that out of him, and I won't touch it if I can help it."

A farmer who had recently listened to an exposition of the text from Isaiah i.: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people doth not consider," was giving food to his stock, when one of his oxen, evidently grateful for his care, fell to licking his bare arm. Instantly, with this simple incident, the Holy Spirit flashed conviction on the farmer's mind. He burst into tears and exclaimed: "Yes, it is all true. How wonderful is God's Word! This poor dumb brute is really more grateful to me than I am to God, and yet I am in debt to him for everything. What a sinner I am!" The lesson had found its way to his heart, and wrought there effectually to lead him to Christ.

A somewhat unusual circumstance took place at a baptismal service, at Bethel, Maesteg, on Wednesday evening, Sept. 28. The preliminary devotions having been gone through, the pastor, Rev. W. Maurice, gave a short practical address upon the Divine origin of the rite of baptism by immersion, after which he announced that a

stranger was present who desired to be baptized, and who would come forward to make a public profession of belief. Rev. B. W. Duxbury, a gentleman well known throughout England as a lecturer under the auspices of the United Kingdom Alliance, and a preacher with the Primitive Methodist body, then came forward. In a voice broken with emotion he stated briefly the struggles and earnest enquiry which had resulted in offering himself as a candidate for what he was compelled to believe the true and primitive mode of baptism. Mr. Duxbury's address had a great impression upon the audience, especially when he alluded to the many and deep-seated ties of brotherhood and affection that he believed duty called upon him to sever. The baptism was then proceeded with by Mr. Maurice, and the benediction closed the proceedings.—*English paper*.

What a Christian Woman can do in the Church.

We do not mean the exceptional woman of rare gifts and culture, of great wealth and abundance of leisure time, but the common woman occupied with the busy cares of the family or the business, with only a common education in a common community. Such women comprise the great majority of our church-membership—women in the middle walks of life, who are the mothers and working girls in society. They have but few spare hours in which to do what is called direct Christian labor. And this fact distresses them, because they are tempted to feel, if they have not time to do direct work for Christ, they are not doing anything for Him. But the most of the best work for humanity is the indirect, the unconscious influence of a good life, making impression and convincing men of truth when we do not realize it. Be assured, when one's indirect influence is not good, their direct attempts to lead men to God will have but little power. Perhaps many not only feel, but some will say, the indirect is the proper and only sphere for women in the church. Let her perform her duties at home, as wife, mother, sister or servant, and that is all that is required of her. In other words, woman is simply to be and to pray. We think differently. Shall these good women, with their warm and true hearts, be excluded from a part in the direct, united, and public work for Christ? They need the inspiration of such copartnership, and the church needs them in it. Without advocating any public and official work, against which, however, in certain directions we see no objections, (but leaving that to the individual conscience of each good woman), there are several ways in which the most humble, modest, busy, and ungifted woman can let her influence be felt in the church, as an organized body of which she is a member.

1. Every Christian woman can constantly cultivate a sense of her church membership—that she is a part of the church, and that its purity, faith, hope, and graces are to be represented by her. She is to be patient, charitable, and lovely, not simply for her own sake, but for the sake of the church, which is the bride of Christ. And when the temptations to impatience or unloveliness come, as doubtless they do come to all, she can remember that she represents the bride of Christ. Thus multitudes of humble women, by the sweetness of their lives, are ornaments to the church, and living illustrations of the spirit of holiness, not because they are naturally amiable, but because an honour rests upon them, and grace has been given to them from the Saviour—illustrated by the words of the young girl who, when asked why she did not retaliate at evil words which were spoken about her, answered: "I did almost, but I remembered I am a member of the church."

2. Every Christian woman can manifest an interest in the public and spiritual plans of the church. Doubtless many women lose their interest in

the church work because they have no public part in it, or because they have an impression that it does not concern them. Every good wife knows what it is to manifest an interest in her husband's trade, farm, or profession, though she has no part of it to perform. And every true sister manifests an interest in her brother's studies or toil, though she does not know how he does them. The Christian woman is to manifest as deep an interest in all that pertains to church work, because it is the work of her Lord. A Christian brother once said that, though his wife had been an invalid for years, his own interest and faithfulness in the church was constantly quickened by the interest she manifested in it. She would never allow him to neglect any church work on her account, but was always so planning her needs as not to interfere with his church privileges. How much by a little thoughtful manifested interest even a woman confined at her home can do to help on the work of the Lord. But how many women make it harder, and not easier, for their husbands and brothers to assist in church life.

3. Christian women can assist the church by their conversation. Woman's life is a social life. In her neighbourhood associations, in her calls, she becomes the medium of all questions of social interest. In other words, woman has the gift of talking up any matter of common interest. Let the sympathies of the women in any community be enlisted in behalf of a poor family, and how they will stir all hearts to help in the good work. So let the Christian sisterhood be as earnest to talk up and say a good, encouraging, and earnest word for the church, and no one can measure the power for good of such. As you meet each other, as you call from house to house, let not the church be the last thing mentioned, or the only subject not mentioned; but let such warm, earnest, hopeful words be spoken to each other as shall create a social enthusiasm; and nothing is more contagious than religious conversation, when every good woman has an earnest, cheerful, helpful word to say about the church and its welfare. But keep far from the professing Christian woman who is finding fault and complaining and criticising the church; such an one helps no one but the evil spirit.

4. Every Christian woman, however humble, can seek to do some positive act for Christ and His church. There is at least some woman or girl or child in your community who does not attend church or Sunday-school or prayer-meeting. You can call upon them, though you are not acquainted with them, or do not move in the same social circle, and kindly invite them to go with you to some of the means of grace. You can show them that Christian women are interested for their salvation. There is at least one such family or person within your acquaintance with whom you can try the experiment of personal effort. Supposing all the Christian women in any community should during some one week each invite one neglecter of the means of grace to attend church. What a commotion it would make! The unsaved would think that some wonderful event was about to take place. I have no doubt but every child in any community now outside of the Sunday-school might be brought into the means of grace by the united social effort of the Christian women in that community. Then there are always more or less of the poor and sick to whom a word of sympathy or a deed of charity is as an angel's visit, preparing the way for the directly spiritual work, and which none are so well adapted to give as the Christian woman. Very frequently, also, men and lads will receive more kindly and be impressed more deeply with a kind word of religious exhortation from a good woman than from anyone else. To those who ask God to lead them there will always open the path to useful and helpful words and deeds.

5. Every Christian sister can throw the weight of her heart and her social influence into all the forms of woman's

organized work in the church. Almost every church has a "ladies' benevolent society," or a "woman's missionary society," or woman's prayer-meeting. Now, it too frequently is the case that Christian women say, "Oh, these things do not concern me. Let Mrs. A. and Mrs. B. take care of them," and I have noticed that the very women who refuse to identify themselves in these good societies and help to maintain them are generally the ones who find most fault with those who do manage them. Of course, it is not possible for every woman to be equally active in all of these societies, where there are several of them in the same church, nor is it possible for every woman to do as much in any one of them as some other women may do. Indeed, there are some women who, because of ill-health, or family cares, or advanced age, may not be able to take any public responsibility in them; but every Christian woman can manifest an interest in them, can speak a kind word for them, and can identify herself with at least one of them, and show that her sympathies are with them. The Christian woman who takes no interest in any of the societies of her church shows not only a lack of public spirit, which every intelligent woman should have, but also a want of consecration to Christ unworthy a sisterhood with Martha and Mary. How some women in the church are missed when they die! Not because they were wealthy, or gifted, or could do more than others. Very likely they were the most humble in social position and means; but their hearts were in every good word and work, and though they had not money they had willing hands; and though they had not culture they had kind words; and though they were as busy as any others, they found time or made time to help in whatever pertained to the interests of the church. None are a greater blessing to the church than her modest, warm-hearted, public-spirited, Christ-loving women, who can be depended upon at all times.

6. Every Christian woman has the power of persistent, believing prayer. It sometimes seems to us that woman's redeemed nature is better suited for prayer than man's. Many a pastor has discovered that the secret of some good work in the church has been the prayers of good women, upon whose hearts the church and all its interests have rested as a sweet burden—women, some of whom could not be at the public means of grace, but who in their closets have lifted their hearts in supplication to God for the preacher and the church. The prayers of such women are as holy incense before God, and they save many a church from spiritual failure. This is the opportunity of every woman; none so young, or old, or ignorant, or poor, or obscure but they can take the church into their hearts, and pray for it as they would pray for an own son or brother. Ah, how can a woman be a Christian and not do this! Yes, this has been and is a woman's most holy office, of entering into the holy of holies, and offering the sacrifices of a broken and contrite spirit for those she loves, and she should love none more than the church of her Lord.

These are a few of the ways in which woman can do something in the church and for the church. Let no sister of Mary, who has been redeemed by our Lord, be contented to be "nobody" in that kingdom in which there is neither male or female; but rather, let every Christian sister be filled with a true, womanly, Christ-like, public-spiritedness, by which her sympathies, her love, and her faith shall unite with the sympathies, love, and faith of her fellow-sisters in a common work for Christ and humanity. There are good women upon whose hearts the church rests, and who unknown to the world are the means of its prosperity. God knows who they are; their names are written in His book, and in His kingdom they shall shine as stars, when multitudes who now live for pleasure or selfish ease shall be forgotten. Nothing is more beautiful in the quiet life of a good woman than spiritual energy.—*Zion's Advocate*.