

The Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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Poetry.

Selected for the Christian Messenger.

On the Loss of a Child in Infancy.

"They only can be said to possess a child forever who have lost one in infancy."

Our beautiful child we laid among the silent dead,
We heaped the earth and spread the turf above its
cherub head;
We turned again to sunny life, to other toils as dear,
And the world has thought us comforted when we have
dried the tear.

And time has rolled his onward tide, and in his ample
range
Has poured along the happiest paths vicissitude and
change.
The flexible forms of infancy their earliest leaves have
shed,
And the tall and stately forest trees are wavering in
their stead.

We guide not now our children's steps as we were
wont before,
For they have sprung to warrior men, they lean on us
no more.
We gaze upon the lofty brow, and time and thought
have cast
A shade through which we seek in vain the memory of
the past.

And do we mourn the utter change which mocks our
memory here?
Oh no! 'tis but the answered wish of many a secret
prayer.
Centre of all our dearest hopes. We live but in their
frame.
But our love as to a little child, how can it be the same.

We still have one, and only one, secure in sacred trust,
It is the lone and loving one that's sleeping in the dust.
We fold it in our arms again, we see it by our side,
In the helplessness of innocence which sin has never
tried.

All earthly trust and mortal years however light they fly,
But darken on the glowing cheek and dim the eagle eye.
But these our bright unwithering flower, our spirit-
hoarded store,
We keep through every chance and change the same
for evermore.

AGNES.

Missionary.

For the Christian Messenger.

History of the Baptist Mission in Rangoon.

[No. 2.]

Judson and his faithful wife, prompted by a deep yearning over the condition of the heathen, had left their native land in search of a mission field. They had met, with courageous hearts, difficulties which were the less endurable, because not anticipated. At length almost wearied by disappointments and tedious wanderings, they arrived at Rangoon. The hand of God seemed to have guided them hitherto, at least this was their belief, and encouraged by it they immediately commenced the work, which they believed their Master had commissioned them to perform. For three years they toiled over the Burman language, the most difficult of any, with the exception of the Chinese. The student of a modern European language finds sufficient labour in learning to speak it readily, though its sounds, its letters, and many of its words resemble their mother tongue, though they are assisted by grammar, dictionary, and a teacher who speaks their own language, and the one which they seek to acquire. But here was a language in itself very difficult to comprehend. There was no grammar, no dictionary, no teacher acquainted with the English and Burmese. We may imagine then something of the toil, the perplexity and the discouragement they en-

dured for these three years, away from Christian Society, cheered only by the consciousness of doing their duty, the prospect of being able to proclaim the gospel in Burmah, and the hope of one day seeing some Christian arise from this putrescent mass of ignorance and superstition. Sustained by these considerations they toiled on. Success rewarded them. Mr. Judson had actually mastered this most difficult of languages.

By 1816 the circumstances of the mission presented a cheering appearance. Mr. Judson was prepared to tell of the true God and eternal life. The viceroy, Mya day men, treated him with uniform kindness. The arrival of Mr. Hough with a printing press from the United States, enabled him to add greatly to the efficacy of his labours, by circulating small portions of the divine revelation from which he had learned the religion which he sought to propagate. Soon some tracts were written and printed, a portion of the New Testament was translated, and placed in the hands of those who had inquired for his sacred books. Encouraged by the number who came to inquire respecting the new religion, he determined to preach the gospel more publicly. A bright prospect cheered him. He knew that "the gospel was the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile." He believed that God would bless the means which he had appointed. The mildness with which he was treated by the governor, the inquiry which he heard from many led him to suppose that soon the means which had been used would be blessed. But a cloud now passes over this prospect, presented in such beautiful colours before him. Hope told a flattering tale.

His ceaseless application in the study of the language, his unwearied labours in translating and conversing, had somewhat shattered his health. In order to recruit, and also to procure the aid of some Arracanese converts, he resolved to visit Chittagong. After his departure circumstances occurred which threatened to overthrow the mission. The situation of the mild and tolerant Mya day men was filled by another viceroy, a cruel, avaricious, bigotted man. Mr. Hough was arrested, and with difficulty escaped from an imprisonment. Now a report was spread that war with the East India Company was impending. The English traders were rapidly leaving Rangoon.

In the meanwhile nothing was heard of Mr. Judson. And now the inquiry arose in the minds of the remaining missionaries, "Would it be prudent to risk their lives, and the property of the mission amidst the tumult of war, exposed to the rage of the people and the ruler? Mr. and Mrs. Hough thought it wise while opportunity offered to make their escape. The last vessel in the harbour was to sail, and still nothing was to be heard of Mr. Judson. Mrs. Judson went on board with her companions, but she could not leave Rangoon, she could not desert the field in which she had laboured, and prayed so long and earnestly, she could not leave Rangoon while there was a possibility that her husband might return. The result proved her pious and affectionate dictation, the wisest course of conduct, for in a few days Mr. Judson arrived after a long and painful voyage of several months. Not long after Mr. and Mrs. Hough (whose vessel had been detained until now) departed for Bengal taking with them the press. As we trace the progress of the mission, we come to another alteration. Again we see the sun with its bright and cheering rays dispersing for a time the threatening cloud.

In 1818 the Missionaries were cheered in their loneliness by the arrival of Messrs.

Coleman and Wheelock with their press. They were both devoted to the work of missions, but their strength was not sufficient for the climate. Within a year Mr. Wheelock died. It was now determined to preach the gospel more publicly. Their public labours had hitherto consisted in conversations and disputations with those whom they were able to attract to their own house. They resolved to build a zayat, in which the people who wished to hear of Jesus might assemble. The building when erected formed a striking contrast with the huge pagodas, but the tabernacle in the wilderness was not the less a place in which Jehovah manifested himself, because it was inferior in architectural magnificence to the Parthenon.

We now come to an interesting period in the history of the mission. "The fishermen had toiled all night, and caught nothing," but their time and toil had not been wasted. Shortly after the opening of the zayat, they were visited by an inquirer. Many came to dispute rather as an amusement, than from a desire to know the truth. Many had come as inquirers to gratify curiosity, rather than the craving of the soul for forgiveness.

Moung Nya the present visitor had come desiring to know the way of salvation for a sinner condemned to misery, with a soul filled with the consciousness of guilt. In a few days he was led by Mr. Judson down into the water and baptised. Whatever may be our view respecting the subject and mode of baptism, we must at least acknowledge this was a beautiful sight. There the Burman who not long since had known nothing of the true God, or His Son Jesus Christ, nothing of his own innate sinfulness, or the way of deliverance from it. Now he professes his faith in Christ. Others notice in him a new moral character. He evidently is influenced in his conduct by new motives. He is let down into the water and as he rises from the baptism is there not symbolized most beautifully the previous baptism of the spirit, the justification of heart through its influence. Does it not form at least a beautiful illustration of the death unto sin, the life unto righteousness which the believer experiences.

Not long after two others were baptized. The same evening the dying love of the Redeemer was communicated in the way which he had appointed by the three converts, and the next week they met and held prayer meeting.

The missionaries might well be encouraged. The soil which they have tilled with so much labour for these six years, was not altogether barren. The seed which they had sown with so much anxiety had not all fallen by the way side.

Here were three ignorant Burmese, they had hitherto known nothing of their Creator, or the way of salvation, they had heard nothing, seen nothing of the transforming influence of the Holy Spirit on the heart of man. While in this state Mr Judson had told them of an eternal God, who made them, and held them responsible for their actions. He had told them how Jesus Christ the Son of God had entered this world and died to save such as they from hell. These teachings though so contrary to their preconceived opinions, so opposed to their pride, yet excited their attention and produced those tempers of mind and heart which the New Testament has told us follows the reception of Christian truth. First there was the sorrow for sin, then the eager thirst for forgiveness, the truth in Christ, the anxious desire to conform to the life to the revealed word, the struggle with sinful habits, the peace of mind, the love for God, and his people.

This change wrought in the minds of these heathens corresponding as it does with what is observed in our own land, and with the teachings of the Scriptures, was well fitted to encourage the missionaries, to make them feel that the work of conversion was in the hands of God, that He could and would bless to this end the preaching of the gospel. The view now before us is bright, and promises much for the future of Burmah, but now again dark clouds interpose.

Among the inquirers or rather visitors, was one whose convictions and arguments proved him to be no ordinary man. He, with many others had become dissatisfied with Buddhism, and had taken up with a scheme of religion still more atheistic. Wisdom was the only God in which he believed. Many and long were the arguments which he had with Mr. Judson, one by one his false notions were removed, and the elements of truth substantiated, until he acknowledged that the Christian religion was true. This acknowledgement however proceeded not from a perception of the fitness of the religion of Christ to satisfy the cravings of the soul for forgiveness of sin, but from the mere force of evidence which was brought to bear in its support. While his mind was in this state, suddenly his visits to the zayat and Mission House ceased. He had been held in great respect by many of the people as a teacher. This notion respecting the divinity of wisdom, being maintained with considerable ingenuity, had now for him much popularity, nor did his difference for the state religion excite any hostility from the authorities. But as soon as it became known that he sought the teacher of Jesus Christ's religion, curiosity was excited, and a complaint was laid before the Viceroy. As soon as Moung Shwa Gnung heard of this, his visits to the missionaries suddenly ceased.

An impression now seemed to be made that it was dangerous to meddle with this new religion. Many were willing to visit the mission house from curiosity, but not when persecution threatened. In consequence of this fear, the zayat was left almost empty. What was now to be done? It was useless to preach when none came to hear. It was to no purpose that tracts were written or printed when no one would receive them. It was a waste of time to sit in the verandah of the mission house when no one came to inquire about Jesus. Would it not be well to proceed to the fountain of authority Ava, and petition the Emperor for religious liberty? Unless he permitted his people to inquire and worship, free from fear of molestation, it was thought that nothing could be done.

On the 22nd December, 1819, Messrs. Judson and Colman left Rangoon for Ava, taking with them a copy of the Bible, as an offering to the Emperor, and more presents for the inferior officers.

They were presented at court, on a day when the proud heart of the monarch, was exulting over some recent victory. Here were two foreigners, professors of an unknown religion. They had come to ask of this lord of life and death, permission to do all in their power to overthrow his own religion and propagate another. The result might have been anticipated. His Majesty refused to notice the present, or receive the petition. The missionaries returned to Rangoon disappointed and disgusted. What was now to be done? Was it prudent or expedient to remain longer in Burmah? The lord of life and death had refused toleration. Could it be expected that those who had manifested no interest in christianity when there was little danger—would now inquire respecting it? Could