

# The Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

### Why should we Mourn?

BY W. H.

Why should we be mournful when nature is gay?  
When all things are pleasing and fair,  
When the sun his glad brightness o'er earth doth display,  
When the soft evening zephyrs around us doth play,  
Then, why should we doubt and despair?

When spring leaves are bursting their long hiding cells  
And wave in the breezes of May;  
When the birds in sweet accents their happiness toll,  
Our bosoms should then with deep gratitude swell,  
And mourn not when others are gay.

When sweet flowers are blooming thro' bright summer hours,  
And shedding their fragrance around;  
When the sun shines resplendent o'er roseate bowers,  
Or we list to the sound of the soft summer showers;  
Then sadness should never abound.

When Autumn her mantle o'er nature shall fling,  
And earth shall look sombre and sad;  
Then nature's own sons should more happily sing:  
And praise to the God of the harvest should ring,  
And man should be happy and glad.

When snow-flakes are scattered o'er hillside and lawn  
And sterile the forests appear  
We think of the joys of the season that's gone,  
And think of the Spring that is shortly to dawn,  
When nature new verdure shall wear.

In childhood, in youth, in manhood, in age,  
Let cheerfulness rest on each brow,  
Let each in a strain of pleasure engage,  
There is joy for each season and climate and stage,  
But do not be sorrowful "now."

When death shall remove the dear friends we love best,  
And we see them laid low 'neath the sod,  
If we think they have flown to the land of the blest,  
Why mourn we, because they enjoy the sweet rest,  
Prepared for the people of God.

The misfortune should blight what we fondly desire  
O'er our troubles we need not repine;  
Let us render true thanks to our infinite sire,  
For his favors forever benign;  
And to wait his good pleasure we each will aspire  
To his will, let us gladly resign.  
Weymouth, April, 1856.

## Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

### PAST and PRESENT.

REPLY TO OMEGA.

Messrs. EDITORS,

A writer over the signature of "Omega" has thought proper to make some strictures on an article of mine on Church Music. He supposes I belong to some ancient time; I might retort and suppose him to be some juvenile critic who wishes to practice a little by parading himself before the public. When he is older I presume he will have modesty enough to speak with more caution. It becomes a critic to study the article he wishes to scrutinize before replying to it, so as to find out if possible the meaning of the writer. Had "Omega" done this he would have saved himself the trouble of making the remarks he did, as well as the necessity of inventing a man of straw for the sake of demolishing him.

In making a few remarks on sundry changes which had occurred within the memory of the writer in the mode of conducting worship in our Baptist churches, I noted several things as a matter of History, making no assault—as Omega states—and scarcely giving my opinion as to whether the changes had been beneficial or otherwise; I may have had an opinion on the subject, and presumed others would have theirs. In the course of my remarks I al-

luded to the change in Church Music, giving no opinion either approving or disapproving, but merely stating occurrences that were well known, and I in no wise exaggerated. But "Omega" makes me say I disapprove of Instrumental Music! Will he turn to my article and show me the place? Had I stated that our churches now burnt gas or fluid in lighting I presume I should be correct. But it need not be inferred that I preferred the old method of candles, neither would it be worth any one's while to quote a string of passages to prove that David had silver lamps in the tabernacle or Solomon golden ones in the temple, all supplied with olive oil. What I did say is this, that formerly in many Baptist congregations, singing was done in the congregations. That singing was practiced at family worship. That singing by a few in the gallery subsequently followed. That Instrumental music was gradually introduced, and that its introduction caused discussion. The choir was formerly led by some pious person, and the singers pious or thoughtful. Now, a person of immoral character may be chosen as chorister, and his assistants need not be pious or thoughtful—(to this the Editors gratuitously appended a note, but I was stating facts; and needed no apologists)—Baptist Christian families formerly at their social gatherings sung spiritual melody; now pianos are introduced, and light airs and dancing tunes are the prevailing music. This is the sum and substance of what I wrote. But I did not say that "Instrumental music was of modern origin"—Omega says that for me—I was not writing of the structure of the Jewish church, or the best model for worship in Christian churches but stated what really did and does exist in some Baptist churches. I did not ask when choirs were formed, but when the choir seated in the gallery was formed; my Dictionary would have told me that any company of singers was a choir, but that they sung in the upper part of the church—the gallery—I presume is, as I said uncertain—does Omega think this was the practice in the time of David? "Omega" says I object to select choirs. I made no such objection. But I might add to "Omega's" select choirs in David's time "that the whole congregation praised God" in conjunction therewith.

I made no objection to instrumental music in Christian families, but to the performances on them. Will "Omega" inform me if David kept singing men and singing women and various instruments, to assist in promoting frivolous music, or to lead in drawing away the christian's thoughts from the spiritual worship of God? But I need proceed no further, as nothing has been said by Omega to disprove the changes I noticed—which are a matter of History—I presume he acknowledges them to exist; pending them I had no censorious object in view and did not suppose my tame article would have effected the risibility of any one; "Omega's" last paragraph will better apply to himself than to the writer—as nearly half a century's acquaintance and intercourse with our Baptist churches gives him confidence in speaking of things within his own observation. But let "Omega" examine more closely the articles of others and he will not fall into the mistakes he has committed.

HINT.

For the Christian Messenger.

### How are we to understand the Commission?

[Continued]

The authoritativeness of the command, "Go ye," &c., next calls for attention. Are we to suppose Christ gives commands merely for the sake of commanding, without caring whether they are obeyed or not?

That would be putting a low estimate on his words, and such as I think we should not entertain. When He commands, the direction must either be obeyed, or the one commanded suffer the lot of the disobedient.—Psalm lxxxix. 30-32. In reference to commanding individuals to preach, as that is our present subject, in the first place it cannot be admitted that an unconverted person would be commanded to go and preach the gospel, for he could not "speak the things he knows and testify to the things he has seen." If such a one engages in the work of the ministry, he goes without being sent by the Great Head of the Church. No marvel if such a one prophesy lies to the people.—Jeremiah xxiii. 25, 26. If they did it in olden times they will do it now, as we are plainly told "there shall be false teachers among us, who shall bring in damnable heresies" &c.—2 Peter xii. 1-3.

The perilous times spoken of in 2 Timothy iii. 1-9 are upon us even to day. A bible was given me by my mother, when I was but 12 years of age. I set great store by it, first for her sake, and secondly because it taught me my duty to God. But how could I keep it lying by, when a man some thirty years of age asked me if I had one to let him have, telling me he never had one in his life. I therefore gave it to him as he told me he had asked his minister for one and could get no satisfaction from him, he having intimated to him, that he knew enough about its contents. Such ministers cannot be converted men, consequently are not sent to preach. Such a person cannot feel the force of the command, "Go ye," &c. How can one value the souls of his fellow creatures before his own soul is saved. Having fled from the brink of the burning pit, and entered the refuge himself, he may then point out the state of the unconverted, and the way of escape. Without this essential qualification, though you give him all the knowledge man is capable of imparting, he at the best is but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

If, then, none are authorised to "go and preach" but converted persons, when the command comes to such an one, it cannot be optional with him whether he obey or not, because he has vowed to be the Lord's servant, and promised to obey him in all things. It only remains for him to be satisfied it is Christ saying, "Go ye," and he feels compelled to go. If like Jonah he tries to hide himself, like him he is exposed and brought back through the depths of sorrow, if not through the depths of the sea. All the waves and billows of God's displeasure "go over him" until he is willing to submit and go as his Master bids him. Like Paul he feels "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

Again the foreknowledge of Christ argues the authoritativeness of his commands. Would he command a man to go whom he knew would not go? or would he say "go ye" to one unless he foresaw he was qualified, or would open a way for his qualification? Let it be remembered there must be a difference between the general calls and invitations of the gospel and the particular call to the ministry,—if in nothing else, they differ in the persons to whom given. The former is held out to those who will submit, the latter to those whose wills are subdued; in whose hearts Christ is enthroned by his spirit; whose delight it is to do his will, and whose grief it is to disobey. The authoritativeness of the command then must be clear.

Again what limitation shall we put to the word go. The Saviour has said, "Go into all the world, and to every creature." If we go only into the pulpit then, and preach, have we fully obeyed the command?

Is every body so in love with the gospel in the neighbourhoods where we labour, that they will come there to hear us preach? Are there none left out in the highways and hedges? none of the halt, maimed and blind who should be compelled to come in? Must we not go out into the streets and lanes of the city, and look after them? If we want to get the gospel to every creature, must we not go to the doors of some, into the domestic circle of others, to the sick and dying beds, and wherever our fellow-creatures can be found? Are we not in imitation of our Master, to go about doing good, and as we go, preach?

Yet another thought starts up and troubles one. How much of the preacher's time does Christ want to accomplish so great a work? Is it to be only on the sabbath; or every day? Some seem to think the commission only embraces the sabbaths, whilst all the week they are dismissed to serve self in some worldly occupation. At least they act thus. If God has ordained that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel, it is a great pity they who preach have not faith enough to believe whatsoever he hath intended will come to pass. If they do not spend their time in his work. He of course, like any other master, will not pay for time not spent in his service. Surely there is work enough to keep those who have received the commission all their time employed in some department. Are they not to "preach the word, to be instant in season and out of season, to warn, reprove, rebuke with all longsuffering and gentleness." "In the morning to sow their seed, and in the evening to withhold not their hand." May not a minister counteract his own labour to a great extent, by not having one grand object in view in all he does. If all the week is occupied in worldly avocations, the short space spent in the sanctuary narrows up his work done for the Saviour into a very small compass, and he will need more than one short life to get to every creature with the gospel even in his own immediate neighborhood. The work to be done pointed out in the great commission, is as extensive as the world, as lasting as time, as minute as preaching to every creature; and as binding as the solemn account of our stewardship, which must be rendered at the coming judgment, can make it. In view of such obligations as these every man, woman, and child, professing godliness, should be daily enquiring, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" The Bible must go to every creature as the preacher's text book, and the foundation whereon to work, in order to accomplish which it must be translated into every language spoken, and then all must be taught to read it in that language. Many are engaged in this great work and many more are wanted. The Lord is opening new doors and the Macedonian cry is heard from many lands, "Come over and help us." But where does this solemn responsibility rest? Exclusively on the preachers, or alike on all Christians? Have not the laity to a fearful extent thrown the greater part of it on the clergy? whilst on themselves depend under God, the very life of the whole affair. Must not every creature be fed in order to keep alive? and ministers too must be fed through the pockets of the laity. Many ministers at the present time are obliged to labour with their hands to supply their own necessities, whilst they are surrounded with many who profess to be self-denying Christians, having abundance of the Lord's money in their possession to supply His ministers' wants. If they but cast into the Lord's treasury as he had prospered them for this purpose, they would untie their hands from the engagements in which they are now occupied;