

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

NEW SERIES,  
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## Poetry.

### The Life Clock.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

THERE is a little mystic clock,  
No human eye hath seen,  
That beateth on—that beateth on,  
From morning until e'en;  
And when the soul is wrapt in sleep,  
And heareth not a sound,  
It ticks and ticks the livelong night,  
And never runneth down.

O wondrous is the work of art,  
Which knells the passing hour;  
But art ne'er formed, nor mind conceived,  
The life-clock's magic power.  
Not set in gold, nor deck'd with gems,  
By pride and wealth possess'd;  
But rich or poor, or high or low,  
Each hears it in his breast.

When life's deep stream, 'mid beds of flowers,  
All still and softly glides,  
Like the wavelet's step, with a gentle beat,  
It warns of passing tides.  
When passion nerves the warrior's arm,  
For deeds of hate and wrong,  
Though heeded not the fearful sound,  
The knell is deep and strong.

When eyes to eyes are gazing soft,  
And tender words are spoken,  
Then fast and wild it rattles on,  
As if with love 'twere broken.  
Such is the clock that measures life,  
Of flesh and spirit blended;  
And thus 'twill run within the breast,  
Till that strange life is ended.

## Baptist History.

For the Christian Messenger.

### A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A YOUNG CHRISTIAN.

LETTER XV.

#### The Revival Period.

From A. D. 1073 to A. D. 1516.

Continued.

#### MY YOUNG FRIEND,

At a synod held in London, in the year 1286, Archbishop Peckham condemned certain metaphysical speculations which had been recently introduced, and which indicated that those who held them were opposed to transubstantiation. The seventh article furnishes a key to the whole. It condemns those who affirm that in such matters they ought not to be bound by the authority of Augustine, or Gregory, or the Popes, but only by "Scripture and necessary reason." (Labbe & Cossart, Tom. xii. p. 1262.) These men, whoever they were, had imbibed right principles. One cannot help thinking that they must have been Baptists, so entirely does the position they maintained harmonise with our own. All honour to those of every age and of every hand who will not bow, in matters of religion, to any other authority than "Scripture and necessary reason!"

There were tens of thousands of such in Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The seed sown by Peter of Bruis, Henry, Peter Waldo, and others had produced a plentiful harvest. In vain did inquisitors rage, and plot, and torture, and burn. They were neither omnipotent nor omnipresent: mighty as they were, they were not omnipotent. If they cursed here, it sprung up there, and when hard pressed found shelter in many an inaccessible mountain or secluded valley. It was only in France that the exterminating policy succeeded, or seemed to succeed. In other parts of the Continent the Reformers, though "cast down," were not "destroyed." They laboured on noiselessly, with good success, and prayed and waited for better times. They abounded in every part of the German empire, and were found as far East as Constantinople. The Pope could not suppress them in Northern Italy. So numerous were they that a member of any of their churches might travel from Cologne to Milan and lodge every night in a brother's house.

A quickening impulse was given in the fifteenth century, which may be traced to England. The absorbing propensities of

the ecclesiastics had excited general disgust, which often ripened into hatred. By operating on the fears of ignorant or seriously disposed persons they had procured, in return for promised masses and for other imaginary benefits, gifts and legacies of property to an immense amount. It was even affirmed that one-half of the freehold estates of the Country was in their possession. Profligacy was connected with wealth, and it was generally believed that none led more licentious lives than those who had taken the vow of celibacy. Besides this, the Mendicant Orders were daily increasing in numbers and strength, and as their popularity grew they became formidable rivals of the parish clergy, whose revenues were proportionably diminished. Hence arose contentions fierce and long. Each party strove to blacken the other, and from the revelations made on both sides the people gained information which would have been otherwise hidden from them; for when rogues fall out knavery is disclosed. These circumstances concurred to create much bitter feeling against the clerical orders. Dislike of their characters and deeds led to doubts respecting their teachings. Who could hope to hear good words from foul mouths? Opinions which had been long current in the church began to be regarded with suspicion, and customs which had become venerable for their antiquity were neglected or submitted to with reluctance, perhaps sneered at.

John de Wycliffe's influence greatly contributed to these results. The insolence and rapacity of the Mendicant Orders first moved his indignation. He lectured against them at Oxford so powerfully that a determination to withstand their encroachments became general among thinking men, who were encouraged in their opposition by a considerable number of the nobility and gentry. Pursuing his inquiries Wycliffe went further than he originally intended, and propounded opinions which were extremely unpalatable to the staunch supporters of Popery. Rome upheld and protected the Mendicants, and stirred up persecution against all who opposed them. Wycliffe himself was in great danger, and would have fallen a victim to papal vengeance, but for the patronage of the Duke of Lancaster and other men of high rank. He was compelled to leave Oxford, however, and to retire to his rectory of Lutterworth, Leicestershire, where he died in peace, Dec. 31, 1384. For many years before his death he had continued to follow the leadings of truth and to yield to conviction. The injustice of the Popes in regard to the Mendicant controversy and their steadfast resolve to uphold all abuses and resist all reforms filled him with disgust. What was the character of the system which cherished such enormities? In answering that question he was led to compare the professed Christianity of the fourteenth century with the New Testament. The contrast shocked him. He saw that the religion of Christ and his Apostles had long been practically abjured. The cunning, crooked policy of the church of Rome, in withholding the scriptures from the people and thus placing them in a state of abject dependence on the priesthood, was contemplated with abhorrence. He devoted himself to the enlightenment of his countrymen. By the publication of short tracts and carefully written treatises he set before them in plain, nervous style, the evils in which they had been involved and the truths which claimed their faith. He exhorted them to think and judge for themselves. He spent the latter years of his life in translating the Scriptures into the English language, and happily accomplished his purpose. For the first time the people of England had the opportunity of reading the word of God in their own tongue. A more precious gift than the English Bible could not have been bestowed upon them.

When the Pope condemned Wycliffe's sentiments he ordered the government of England to deal with him as a heretic; but the Reformer's friends were so numerous and influential that the papal shaft fell harmless. The subject was taken up by the Council of Constance, which met in the

year 1415, and a sentence of condemnation was issued. Wycliffe was out of their reach, but his books were widely circulated and his bones were in his grave at Lutterworth. But books and bones were deemed fit objects of revenge, and orders were given to burn them. The sentence was not executed on his bones till the year 1428, when, by command of Pope Martin 5. the tomb was violated. After a repose of upwards of forty years the remains of the good man were disinterred. The fire reduced them to ashes, and the ashes were cast into the Swift, a small stream that runs through Lutterworth. Thomas Fuller, the quaint church historian says,—“This brook hath conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over.”

After Wycliffe's death the work was carried on by the Lollards, as those who embraced his opinions were called. So great was their success that a Romish writer of those times affirms that one-half of the people had become disaffected to the church. This was an exaggeration; but it is evident, from the strenuous endeavours of the ecclesiastics to procure the adoption of violent measures, that the reforming party had assumed a formidable appearance. The Lollards travelled from place to place, preaching and teaching, as the Waldenses and others did on the Continent. Sometimes they obtained the churches (for many of them belonged to the clergy, and kept their places, as Wycliffe had done before them.) Sometimes they preached in the church yards; they went to the fairs and markets, where the people congregated in great numbers, and often addressed immense assemblies, who heard them with much sympathy and respect. They circulated portions of the scriptures as they had opportunity, and thus there grew up a strong attachment to the word of God. Men would sit up all night to read it or to hear it read by others. Some "would give a load of hay for a few chapters of St. James or St. Paul in English," as John Foxe testifies. The bishops stormed and raved. In the year 1400 they procured the enactment of the statute *de heretico comburendo*, and burned as many as they could lay their hands on. In some instances even children were compelled to set fire to the pile in which their parents were to be consumed. Others "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings." Yet the light of the gospel was not extinguished. When the Reformation broke out there were many thousands in England who were already prepared to side with the friends of truth against Antichrist and his abettors.

From England the movement spread Eastward as far as Bohemia. To what extent the influence of Wycliffe's writings was felt in the intervening countries, I am not able to say, but that they were very popular in Bohemia is matter of history. Anne of Bohemia, Queen of Richard 2. befriended the Reformer, and probably transmitted copies of his works to her own country. John Huss possessed them and studied them attentively. Many others, some of them persons of high rank, were eager to obtain the Englishman's books. When the Council of Constance ordered them to be burned, upwards of two hundred volumes, most of them richly bound and adorned, were thrown into the flames. But many more, we may be sure, were retained by their owners. Wycliffe, though dead, continued to speak and instruct. And Peter of Bruis, with other godly men, lived in their successors. At the close of this period there were vast numbers in every part of Europe who worshipped God in the spirit, rejoiced in Christ Jesus, and had no confidence in the flesh. Councils had thundered forth their curses. Popes had issued their bulls, and inquisitors had exhausted their ingenuity,—but it was all in vain. The church of God still lived.

In my next I shall return to the Baptists, and tell you what they were doing in the times now under review. Strange to say, some ignorant persons affirm that there

were no Baptists before the year 1520. They ought to go to school again and learn the alphabet of church history.

Yours truly,  
MANN.

From my Study,  
March 14, 1857.

For the Christian Messenger.

### Donation Visit at Hantsport.

DEAR BROTHER,

On the evening of the 12th inst., about a hundred friends assembled at the house of our pastor, Rev. W. Burton, to make him what is termed "A Donation Visit." About £30 in cash and valuable articles were presented to his family. The party partook of tea, and after tea an address on behalf of the friends assembled was presented to Bro. Burton, to which he read a reply; both of which I enclose. After which Dr. Harding, who had been called to the chair, addressed the meeting, and several others followed. Singing and prayer were continued for some time, and the meeting closed. I must confess for one I was much pleased with the whole affair. I have been somewhat prejudiced against such gatherings, tea-meetings, and Basars. They have appeared to me somewhat in the same light as that in which your "Vinegar Cruet" friend, with his late sour ironical article, seems to view them; a sort of "good Lord, good devil" affair; an attempt to mingle light and darkness, and to effect an agreement between "Christ and Belial." Such was the impression made on my mind by "Shady Side." But I have now seen the "Bright Side," the "silver lining" of the cloud. My prejudices have given way. I saw nothing that need offend the most puritanical or fastidious.

Accompanied is the Address and Reply.

Yours truly,

PAUL AND SILAS.

Hantsport, March 16th, 1857.

### ADDRESS.

DEAR BROTHER,

We have come to make you a "Donation Visit." To some of us the event is a novel one. We have read and heard much of such gatherings. This is the first one we have witnessed. We have read of them in books, newspapers, and also in the Bible. Their avowed object is to promote the cause of God, to advocate the interests of true religion, to assist in erecting the spiritual temple, to secure and foster the blessings of public worship, by comforting and encouraging the hearts of the ministers of God, by an exhibition of the attachment of the people; by friendly converse, and by voluntary offerings. A Donation visit of this kind took place, by divine direction, in the wilderness, among the Israelites, when the tabernacle worship was about to be established. Moses and Aaron are our precedents. Listen to the inspired account of their Donation Visit. "And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, and brought bracelets and ear-rings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold; and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the Lord. And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun." Read the whole story in Exodus, chap. 35.

And Job had a Donation visit. We need not remind you that he was an eminent minister of God, a priest of Jehovah, who offered sacrifice and interceded for the people before the Lord. His brethren and friends know how welcome they would be to his house, how timely their kindness and sympathy would be, and how acceptable their donations. They determined to express their high esteem for his character, their sympathy with him in his trials, and their real regard, by making him a donation visit. Thus it reads, "Then came there unto him his brethren and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house, and they bemoaned him, (sympathised with him,) and comforted him over all the evil which the Lord had brought upon him. Every man also gave him a piece of money and every one an