

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

"Leave us not."

LORD, leave us not to wander lonely
Through this dark world, unloved by Thee;
All other friends are helpless only,
Though full of love as friends may be.
Dear are the fondest homes around us,
Sad like our hearts, where Thou art far;
When thou hast sought us, heard us, freed us,
How sweet thy consolations are!
Hear us, cheer us,
Lord, and leave us not!

Leave us not when pride and anger
In the heart would dare rebel;
Claim us in our utmost danger,
Calm us at the mouth of hell.
Leave us not till we inherit
Charity that works no ill,
And we hear Thy gentle Spirit
Truly whisper "Peace, be still."
Hear us, cheer us,
Lord, and leave us not.

Leave us not in days of trial;
Let us act at duty's call,
Though it lead to self-denial,
Though we have to give up all.
Raised on high, or humbled lowly,
Praised or scorned from land to land,
Bear us up, our Father holy,
Bear our burdens in thy hand.
Hear us, cheer us,
Lord, and leave us not.

Leave us not when all has left us,
Health and vision, strength and voice;
When of friends death has bereft us,
Let us still in Thee rejoice.
Near us, when in doubt, to guide us;
Near us when we faint, to cheer us;
Near in battle's hour, to hide us;
Nearer ever, and more dear.
Hear us, cheer us,
Lord, and leave us not.

Leave us not when foes come nigher,
Cheer us when the grave looks cold;
Lead us onward, upward, higher,
Forward to the gates of gold.
Leave us not when ailing, failing,
Sore depressed and bending low;
Be Thy love then most availing,
Then to aid us be not slow.
Hear us, cheer us,
Lord, and leave us not.

Leave us not till Thou hast brought us
To the holy, wealthy place,
There to see Thee who hast bought us,
Fought our fight, and won our race;
There to hear no more the shouting
And the thunder of our foes,
Danger past and past all doubting
And the grave's austere repose.
Hear us, cheer us,
Lord, and leave us not.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

Christianity and Popery.

LETTER III.

DEAR SIR,

Let us now compare the two Creeds.

The first thing that strikes one in reading Pope Pius's Creed, is its meagreness. It is wretchedly deficient in the enunciation of evangelical truth. There is no heart in it. The ancient portion, though precise in technical orthodoxy, contains little more than a dry enumeration of the facts of our Saviour's history, with such vague statements of the design of his coming into the world as might be assented to by persons holding opinions diametrically opposed to apostolic announcements. The Pope's additions do not supply the deficiencies. There is nothing about the atoning efficacy of the Redeemer's death; nothing about the regeneration of the soul by the Holy Spirit; nothing about sanctification; nothing about the Lord's day; nothing about the obligations of believers to universal holiness; nothing about obedience to civil rulers; hardly a word about heaven, and nothing about hell.

But if meagreness may be predicated of the Creed in relation to the points just adverted to, there is a significant fulness on other points. That part of the document which treats of matters of ecclesiastical practice is three times the length of the other part. Here, there is minute detail. But alas! the details relate to requirements, services, and

duties, of which there is no mention in the New Testament. How much there is in this Creed which primitive Christians must have been entirely ignorant of! We all know that the sacred volume makes no mention of seven sacraments,—of confession, to the priest,—of prayers to saints,—of paying "due honor" to their relics and images,—of purgatory,—of indulgences,—of extreme unction,—or of communion in one kind. We also know that these things enter largely into Roman Catholic religion, and in some form or other are placed before the Romanists continually. Not a day passes without his being reminded of them. Now, is it not a marvellous thing that such important matters as these, if they really belong to Christianity, should be omitted in the book? Is it not strange that Paul and Peter never adverted to them in their letters? Can it be believed that they knew any thing about them?

This is not all. Certain articles in Pope Pius's Creed are not only not to be found in the New Testament, and therefore extremely suspicious, to say the least, but are also opposed to the fundamental truths of the gospel, and on that account to be rejected. This remark holds good in reference to the particulars already mentioned. They strike at the root of New Testament truth and piety. They divert the attention from Christ and spiritual religion, and fix it on outward forms and priestly interference. The teachings of the Council of Trent on justification, to which the subscriber to Pope Pius's Creed declares his adherence, maintain the merit-ousness of good works, and he who asserts the contrary is anathematized. The doctrine of the mass, as taught by the same Council, and similarly accepted by the subscriber, is a flat contradiction of the apostolic assertion that the sacrifice of Christ has been offered "once for all." In avowing his reception of General Councils, he who signs the Creed sanctions the infamous decrees of the fourth Council of Lateran and the Council of Constance;—the former having condemned all heretics to utter extermination, and the latter having declared that no engagements entered into with such persons are binding, if they are contrary to the interests of the Church,—that is, that promises and oaths may be broken with impunity! I am compelled, then, to come to this conclusion, that Pope Pius's Creed (I refer particularly to those parts of it which are peculiar to Rome) is not a Christian Creed. I cannot sign that creed, and retain New Testament Christianity. One or the other must be given up.

Here, however, the Roman Catholic meets me with the assurance that he can settle the question quite satisfactorily. He avers that the New Testament contains only a part of the divine and apostolic system;—that, in fact, the Saviour did not command his disciples to write any thing;—that their narratives and letters convey but an imperfect view of Christianity;—that they said and did much which was purposely left unrecorded, the Church being expected, as a faithful depositary, to keep that which was committed to her, and to remember accurately all that was said and done;—and that the whole was gradually, and at length fully, embodied in the faith and practice of the "Holy, Catholic, Apostolic" Roman Church, and put into shape in the Creed of Pope Pius the Fourth.

These assertions, and the inferences drawn from them, will be examined in subsequent communications. I shall only trouble you today with a preliminary observation or two.

The theory propounded by Roman Catholic advocates throws us into a state of uncomfortable doubtfulness. We do not know whether we have yet received the whole of Christianity. The unfolding process is still going on, and no one can tell what effect the next discovery will have, or whether it may not rudely pull down some long-cherished notion. When Pope Pius's Creed was published, the Church of Rome had promulgated no decision on what is called the "Immaculate Conception," of the Virgin Mary. It was an open question. The faithful might hold different views on the subject, without incurring censure. But the case is now altered. The present pontiff has placed an additional article in the Creed. Ever since the 8th of December 1857, it has been the duty of every Roman Catholic to profess his belief in the "Immaculate Conception." Here is a further

development. Who can tell how many are yet to come? When will Christianity be perfect? How is it that the Apostles were so ignorant on this subject, and that even the much-vaunted Tradition failed to give clear utterances till the nineteenth century?

Again:—I have always been accustomed to regard the gospel dispensation as the completion of God's announcements to man. The apostle Paul states that it "exceeds in glory" the dispensation of Moses, 2 Cor., iii. 9. Now, special care was taken that the law should be safely preserved. The decalogue was "written and engraven in stones"; the whole institute was "written in a book"; and as successive prophets arose they committed to writing their own messages and predictions, as well as the history of the country. And they refer to other records, evidently under the impression that human confidence would be placed in the written rather than in the traditionary. "Is it not written in the book of Jasher"—or, "in the book of the wars of the Lord?" And with this agrees all experience. Critical judgement separates the true from the doubtful, and awards to the historian the degree of credibility which is due to him; uncertainty rests on all narratives dependent on tradition only, liable as they are to be distorted and corrupted, and the more so in proportion to the length of the period during which they have been transmitted; and it is confessed that genuine history begins with the written page. When the historian appears, the tale-teller withdraws; fable gives place to fact.

So it was with the sacred writings. Nothing was left to the uncertain conveyance of human tradition. The pretended supplements to Moses, consisting of precepts which he was supposed to have given orally without writing them—the "traditions of the elders"—were indignantly rejected by our Lord. The old church relied solely on the written word. It was sufficient for all the purposes of the dispensation.

But if Romanists may be believed, the Christian church is in a far less favourable condition. A part of Christianity only, according to them, was written down. For the remainder we must be dependent on what is called "tradition," the supposed reminiscences of those who in Apostolic times, embodied in the customs and practices of the church of the next ages. These traditions, recollections, or customs, are exceedingly numerous and diversified. Some of them, we are told, have been received and acknowledged; others have not been admitted. Can any of them be depended on? Are we sure that the church has been infallibly guided in the selection? If any of them are doubtful or spurious, are not those who retain them guilty of "will-worship?" And is it to be imagined that the integrity of the gospel institute would be hazarded by such an unsatisfactory mode of transmission, when full provision had been made for the preservation of the law of Moses in an uncorrupted state? Will it not be safer to cleave to the book, about which we are sure, than to receive those traditions, on which uncertainty is clearly stamped?

I will go further. What if we can prove that they are unauthorised additions to the apostolic faith and practice; that they were unknown in the best and purest times; that we can tell when they were not, and when they first began to be; and therefore that they could not have been part of the oral teachings of our Lord and his apostles, but must be regarded as unwarranted and mischievous appendages to the primitive religion? All this may be easily done, as subsequent letters will show.

Yours,
TYNDALE.

Jan. 28th 1860.

For the Christian Messenger.

Letter from Burmah.

My dear Messrs Editors,—From a letter recently received from home, I learn that it is thought by many that I am very chary of my letters to your paper. Now I was rather unprepared to learn that such an impression existed among your readers. For, though my letters directly to yourselves have been few, I find by my letter-book that, during the past twelve months, I have written at least eight letters to Rev. Dr. Tupper, and I think he always sends them to you for publication.

However, I will endeavor, if possible, to write more frequently henceforth. I say, if possible, a saving clause which you will appreciate better as I proceed to tell you how my time is occupied. I am just now making every exertion to give instruction to a class of young men, three of whom are already of the number of assistants or Native Preachers connected with the mission. The fourth will, I hope, before the close of another year, be sufficiently advanced also to be entrusted with an appointment in the same occupation. As you can easily understand, remembering from what gross heathenism those men have only recently been rescued, they need line upon line, precept upon precept, to enable them at last to comprehend satisfactorily many things which are to them perfectly novel. And then it is of the nature of all heathenism to dwarf the intellect, and weaken the reflective powers—and consequently to render the prosecution of even a simple mental process to a logical conclusion, a matter of serious labor. Hence in giving them expositions of any portion of Scripture, I find it necessary, first, myself, to choose, with great care, such forms of expression as will most clearly represent what I wish to say. For it would never answer to give them simply a clue to your meaning, and then hasten on to the next subject. Their minds are not adequate to the unravelling process. Then having committed my thoughts to paper, in Burmese, of course, I read to them slowly while they write down a first rough copy,—and when the exercise is over, they read to me one after the other, what they have written, correct any errors they may have made, and finally copy off into a bound blank volume for future use and reference. We are at present engaged in going through the Gospel of Matthew in this way. We spend from two to four hours a day in this exercise, using the chapel as a lecture-room. To vary the exercises as well as to give them some enlightenment on those subjects, I am taking them through a course of elementary Geography and History, to which I intend to add Natural Philosophy as soon as I can procure the book from the Maulmain press. Some instruction on this last subject is more especially needed on account of the absurdly erroneous views which are everywhere mixed up and intertwined with the teachings of the Bedagat—their sacred book. I should mention, also, that I have translated an Epitome of "Kieth's Evidences of the truth of Christianity derived from the literal fulfilment of Prophecy,"—which I require them to make themselves masters of in the manner above indicated. The effect of these evidences, so clear and indisputable, upon the minds of the native Christians is most satisfactory. It seems to fill them with unbounded joy, not merely that their "hope" is founded upon such an immovable basis, but that they are able to "give to every one that asketh a reason of the hope that is in them." And as their minds take in one after another, the several steps which lead to the grand conclusion, that their religion, that for which they have suffered so much scoffing and reviling, is Divine, is true beyond a shadow of a doubt,—true, with all its rich stores of consolation, its sublime hopes; true, with its solemn but soul-cheering doctrines of Resurrection, Judgment, and everlasting Redemption, Life Eternal, and "things which eye hath not seen,—which God hath prepared for those who love Him."—then they rejoice with joy unspeakable. On Saturday, as I require much time for preparation for Sunday services, we have only a short exercise, consisting, at present, of an exposition, in course, of the book of Genesis. On Sunday I preach at 10 A. M., have a Bible Class (at present in Acts) at which all the Christians meet, at one of the disciples houses, at 2 o'clock, and a prayer-meeting in the evening. Add to this the daily reception of inquirers, preaching and tract-distributing, and you will be able to form a tolerably correct idea of my routine of labor, during the hot months, when travelling means cholera, dysentery, sun-stroke, and finally death, or going home to avoid it.

The first woman baptized after our arrival here died suddenly of cholera the other day. She had always manifested an excellent Christian character from the time of her baptism until her death. This sudden passing away from among them of one who, to within a few