

# 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.

### Midnight Musings.

'Tis midnight; and I'm all alone,  
The stillness is like death;  
Darkness sits on her ebon throne,  
And nature sleeps beneath.  
No sound I hear, save the strange hum,  
That mournful to my ear doth come;  
And though no human form is near,  
I'm not alone, for God is here.

'Tis midnight; how the hours have fled  
Since last eve's shadows fell.  
And soon the night of death will come,  
And life its story tell.

Thus will my moments swiftly fly,  
Like arrows darting through the sky.  
Oh may these moments all be given  
To God, to holiness, and heaven.

'Tis midnight; all around is drear,—  
Fit emblem of a state  
Where sin and death in triumph reign,  
And pain and woe create.  
And where our hearts, though strong and brave,  
But funeral marches to the grave.  
Oh God, while pilgrim here I roam,  
Prepare me for a happier home.

'Tis midnight; 'twas in such an hour,  
On Olive's sacred brow,  
The Son of God, in fervent prayer,  
For guilty man did bow.  
And while a world indifferent slept,  
For them he agonized and wept.  
Trustful, my soul, and grateful be:  
He breathed those earnest cries for thee.

'Tis midnight; type of that dread hour,  
When trembling men will hear  
The angel of the judgment shout,  
Behold the Bridegroom's near.—  
Ye dead arise, ye living come,  
And meet your heaven-appointed doom.  
Oh when I hear the solemn sound,  
May I among the saints be found.

The clock strikes one, the midnight's past,  
And dawn's first gleams of light  
Will soon blaze up the eastern sky,  
And chase away the night.  
So will heaven's bright eternal day  
Soon drive earth's dreary shades away,  
And sin will end, and death and care,  
And there will be no midnight there.

ALPHA.

Yarmouth, Sept. 17th, 1862.

## Selections.

From the Baptist Magazine.

### The Nestorians.

BY CHARLES MARSHALL.

#### CHAPTER I.

An unparalleled Journey.

We trust that an increased interest in the ancient church of the Nestorians may be excited in the minds of British Christians through the singular visits to our shores of a presbyter and deacons from the valleys of Oroomiah. These two men, Mar Johanan (John) the presbyter, and Mar Yiskhiak (Isaac) the deacon, having heard of the wealth and liberality of British Christians, determined to make known to us the need of their brethren, who are not only suffering (as they have long done) from the predations of the fierce Kurd tribes, and from the extortions of the Mohammedans, but also from two or three successive seasons of dearth. With a recommendatory letter in bad English, signed by the well-known reforming bishop Mar Johanan, and by the uncle of the Patriarch, they started from Oroomiah, in Northern Persia, in May 1861. In fifteen days they had walked 300 miles of valleys and hills, and passing by way of Erzeroom, had reached Teflis. Still northwards, and they cross the Caucasian Mountains; then traverse the weary Steppes of Russia, and arrive at Moscow about November, 1861. They had now accomplished a journey of about 1,500 miles, crossing mountains, rivers, valleys, among Kurds, Armenians, Circassians, Cossacks; without money, change of raiment, or friends, and, as Mar Johanan poetically puts it, "without a tongue."  
At Moscow the presbyter was confined to

his bed fifteen days with ague. On his recovery, the two noble men pushed on to St. Petersburg, thence to Hamburg and Konigsberg, and thence to London, where they arrived in May this year. Throughout their long, painful journey they cried ever, "London! London!"—picture of the Christian pressing onward, resting never, crying from his heart, "Heaven! heaven!" Kindly help was administered to them all along their route; and travelling in true apostolic style, "without purse or scrip," and certainly without "two coats," they yet aver they have wanted for nothing. Considering the distance of the journey—3,000 miles—the poor circumstances of the travellers, their lack of a "tongue," the advanced age of Mar Johanan—over sixty—and the cause which prompted them to leave home and country, we think we are right in esteeming this an unparalleled journey, and perhaps the more especially when we reflect upon the probable result of their noble, self-denying effort. Not surprising is it if some think that these two men have engaged in an enterprise absurd, unreasonable, Quixotic, mad; but how often are the weak things of the world, and things which are despised, chosen to accomplish mighty purposes! May this mission of our Eastern brethren be eminently successful! The Nestorians are poor, and suffering, and we trust that pecuniary help may be liberally afforded them; but they may be assisted more effectually still. Security to person and property; relief from the outrageous exactions of their oppressors: these are their great wants, and these, doubtless, would be extended to them, were the sympathy of Protestant churches expressed on their behalf. That they merit such sympathy none will doubt who know how nobly they deserve the name often given them, "the Protestants of Asia."

Before we pass to the startling history of this grand old church, let us note a few further particulars concerning Mar Johanan and his deacon.

#### Their Portraits.

The presbyter is a fine, noble-looking man, of truly patriarchal appearance, with hoary hair and long flowing beard. He is evidently a man of much intelligence, and a happy, devoted Christian. Thus he writes to Mr. Cowper, a gentleman who has taken a most kindly interest in them, and who is able to communicate with them in the Syriac: "My wife is old. The Lord gave us two daughters. Our children God hath taken from us." "All the American apostles [i. e., missionaries, of whom we shall presently speak] know me. The day that God took away Mar Stoddard, I, the presbyter John, was with him that was Mar Stoddard, on the day that he slept the sleep of death. When he, Mar Stoddard, came from America, Mar Perkins, the first apostle of Oroomiah, sent me to Mar Stoddard, who spoke with me of the salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ. He taught me concerning the way of true Christianity in our Lord Jesus Christ. Mar Stoddard instructed me in this way of salvation. God gave me his reward in his kingdom." And thus he speaks of his journey: "I went forth from my house. As God said to Abraham, 'Arise, go forth from thy land, go to another country,' Abraham knew not; I also, presbyter John, went forth from my house, not knowing the way whither I went. The Lord Jesus Christ helped me in the way as he helped Moses when he fled from Egypt; as he helped Jacob when he fled from before Esau; as Joseph in the land of Egypt; thus helped me our Lord Jesus Christ in all my ways. So helpeth the Lord Jesus Christ all Christians. Amen." The following are sentences from a letter addressed to the writer of this notice:—"We came forth from Oroomiah because of the destitution there was among us, unto you, true Christians, believers in our Lord Jesus Messiah. Amen. . . . Two months and fourteen days have we sojourned in London, without a tongue. Our Lord Jesus Messiah has given unto us a tongue. My brother in our Lord, Mar Cowper, he speaketh with you by the letter I write unto thee, making known all the necessity there is unto us. . . . I have written a letter to my brother, Mar Spurgeon, in the Lord. The Lord bless his church and congregation. May his love abound to our Lord, day by day. Amen. . . . My beloved brother in our Lord,

Mar Marshall, we have been many days in London. Our Lord Jesus, the Messiah, bless all the Christians who are in London. The love of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah, be among you, true Christians in our Lord. Amen. My brother, I ask of thee, every time thou prayest a prayer, to remember us in thy prayer. My beloved, in faith thou doest whatever thou doest to the brethren, and especially such as are strangers."

Deacon Isaac has rather the appearance of a Kurd, but appears to be intelligent, and to take kindly care of Mar Johanan, who is much his senior.

#### Early Origin.

The Nestorians trace back their history far beyond the fifth century, when Nestorius lived, and in fact do not like the name by which we distinguish them. Why should they be called after a mere servant of the Lord, however honoured that servant may have been? They would be named after the Master! Syriac or Chaldaic Christians are they.

From the regions in which they dwell many went up to the Jewish feasts, descendants, doubtless, of the tribes carried into captivity. Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia, heard the apostles preach Christ crucified with the irresistible might of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. It cannot be doubted that the new converts on their return told their friends and countrymen of the Saviour whom they had found, "the Desire of all nations." Equally probable is it that Christian churches were immediately formed. Tradition very generally affirms that Thomas, the apostle, himself preached throughout this district, and won multitudes to Christ. 'Twas no fashionable thing then to wear the Saviour's name, no easy thing then to bear the cross; it was still, so to speak, wet with the blood of Calvary; yet these early Christians, animated by a noble faith, embraced eagerly the bloody cross and bore it bravely, and, so heavy though it was, carried it into the far countries of Central Asia, and even into remote China; planted it in the midst of idolatrous nations, content then to die the martyr's death at its base, and spatter it with their own gore. Some 300 years of heroic Christian effort and sublime devotedness rolled away. The churches being constantly thrown into the furnace of fiery trials, were thus kept ever pure; constantly beaten by the flail of Pagan tyrants, and winnowed by the winds of persecution, were thus kept free from chaff. At length, wiser grown, the great enemy changes his tactics, and sows the fields thick with tares. Closer and closer they drew around their troubled hearts the pure comforting doctrines of the Gospel while the stormy winds rage; but when the sun of prosperity arose on them, the churches willingly abandoned their most cherished truths. Sad folly! Vanquished by a smile who could not be overcome by a world in arms!

The Greek and Romish Churches departed gradually from the light of truth into Egyptian darkness. A remarkable providence preserved the Asiatic churches as depositories and missionaries of the truth.

#### Nestorius.

In the fifth century lived a monk of great piety, whose kindly charity and rare eloquence gained him the hearts of the people. He was elevated to the see of Constantinople, but, alas! grew giddy in his high position. Nestorius began to hunt out the Arians and Novatians as hateful heretics, and allowed the natural arrogance of his disposition to usurp the place of the gentle virtues of the minister of Christ. Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, a strong-willed, impetuous, ambitious man, became jealous of the rising influence of Nestorius, and sought opportunity to effect his fall. An occasion was soon found. One Anastasius, a presbyter, and friend of Nestorius, warmly declaimed against the title "Mother of God," which now began to be applied to the Virgin. Nestorius explained and defended the sentiments of Anastasius, insisting that the Virgin should rather be entitled "Mother of Christ," since Deity can neither be born nor die. Cyril seized the opportunity to oppose his rival, even branding him as a heretic, censuring the Egyptian monks who had embraced the reformed opinions, as we may term them, and, having obtained the co-operation of Celestine,

Bishop of Rome, in A. D. 430, assembled a council of Alexandria, and thundered forth no less than twelve anathemas against Nestorius. The injured and resentful Bishop of Constantinople retorted the accusation of heresy on Cyril, charged him with confounding the two natures of Christ, and loaded him with as many anathemas as he had received from him.

The next year, A. D. 431, a general Council was called at Ephesus by Theodosius the Younger, to settle the matter at issue, which had assumed serious proportions. Most unfairly Cyril presided at the Council though he was the party concerned and the avowed enemy of Nestorius. He arrived first with a great train of bishops, who sided with him and insisted on determining the matter forthwith, though John of Antioch and a great number of the eastern bishops had not yet come. Nestorius naturally objected to this unfair arrangement, and refused to appear, but was judged and condemned unheard, deprived of his episcopal dignity and sent into exile, where he ended his days. His party, however, headed by John of Antioch, held a council at Ephesus a little later, and denounced Cyril as heartily as he had Nestorius.

Concerning this disgraceful controversy, the fruit of the spirit of ambition then rising in the churches, Mosheim says: "Among other accusations of less moment, Nestorius was charged with dividing the nature of Christ into two distinct persons, and with having maintained that the Divine nature was super-added to the human nature of Jesus after it was formed, and was no more than an auxiliary support to the man Christ through the whole of his life. Nestorius denied this charge even to the last. . . . The greater number of writers, after a thorough examination of this matter, have positively concluded that the opinions of Nestorius and of the Council which condemned him were the same in effect, and that the difference was in words only."

The grand fact is evidently this: Nestorius made a very vehement protest against the rising spirit of Mariolatry which has helped so largely to ruin the Greek and Latin churches, and from which the churches which sided with Nestorius were thus happily and graciously preserved. Their forced severance from the western churches was a blessing un-mixed: they were the better able to retain uncorrupt the glorious doctrines of the Gospel; and while both the Greek and Latin churches merged into thickest darkness, the Nestorians, fired with the old apostolic zeal, carried blazing aloft the torch of the Gospel, and in an incredibly short space of time illumined the whole of Asia with the light from heaven.

We must reserve the account of their noble missions, their present condition, and an examination of the question, Are they descendants of Israel? for our next.

#### Our future Queen.

It appears to be settled that the heir-apparent to the British throne is to marry Princess Alexandra, of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg. Although the contemplated union has not yet been formally announced to her Majesty's Privy Council, there seems to be little doubt in the matter, judging from semi-official paragraphs in *The Times* and *Morning Post*, as well as from the late movements of the Royal Family. The gossiping Belgian papers of the last few days have been very precise in chronicling the whole of the events connected with the arrival of Queen Victoria and her eldest son at Brussels, and they do not hesitate in the least to couple as bride and bridegroom the names of the Princess Alexandra of Schleswig-Holstein and Prince Albert Edward of Great Britain. We learn that the father of the Princess, Duke Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, together with his whole family, dined with her Gracious Majesty on Wednesday last, at King Leopold's snug chateau of Laeken, "was received with military honors," and went afterwards to Ostend, expecting the Prince of Wales to land there, but hearing of his sudden arrival at Antwerp, flew back in great haste to the capital of Belgium. The next day's news record a great reception