

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.  
Vol. VIII. No. 19.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 1863.

WHOLE SERIES.  
Vol. XXVII. No. 19.

## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

### Spring.

Spring comes! I hear her music  
Low murmuring from the hills,  
And gushing down along the vales  
In myriad blended rills.

Her light steps touch the mountains,  
Then roam amid the vales;  
Her breath unseals the fountains,  
And sooths the boisterous gales;

Her glance beams thro' the curtains  
Of many a reptile's nest,  
And lures to life the sleepers,  
Like morn on mortal's rest.

Her soft hand weaves the network  
With matchless taste and skill,  
Which for earth's emerald mantle  
The Summer weft shall fill.

Her fingers wander over  
The great harp's trembling strings,  
Till nature's full orchestra  
In tuneful cadence sings.

And is it thus from sterile,  
Frost fettered, brumal earth,  
Such charming sounds and scenery  
At Spring's approach take birth?

Oh! what shall be the transports,  
When ransomed hosts shall sing  
Earth's stormy Winter over,  
Hail! Heaven's eternal Spring.

IOA.

## Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

### The Interval between the Old and New Testaments.

BY REV. JOHN MILLER.

From the days of Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, to the advent of Christ is a period of 400 years. This forms a considerable gap in the chain of the inspired records. No part of the sacred oracles was penned in this period, nor does it appear that the Jewish people enjoyed any new revelations. In this particular, these 400 years contrast strikingly, not only with the time in which the Scriptures were committed to writing, but also with the ages that preceded them. Little is said in the Bible of the antediluvian age, but from that little, we learn that men were not left without inspiration. Revelations were made to Adam and to Abel. We read too of Enoch who was favoured in an extraordinary manner. In that age too Noah flourished who is designated "a preacher of righteousness," on account of the inspiration he enjoyed.

The question naturally arises, why was this long succession of ages thus distinguished by the absence of those favoured with Divine inspiration? One reason that may be readily assigned, is, that the time, when the most prominent part of the Revelation of God was to receive its fulfilment, was drawing near. The great theme of prophecy was the advent of Jesus, with all the minutæ of his birth, life, death, ascension, the diffusion of the gospel, the establishment of his kingdom, and the admission of the Gentiles into the church of God; and as it was of the utmost importance to impress the minds of men with the fact, that prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, it was necessary for that end, that the voice of inspiration should be silent for 400 years. It is one of the vile suggestions of the infidel that the predictions of the sacred volume were penned after the events to which they refer had occurred. Had these prophecies been delivered shortly before their fulfilment, this assertion against revelation would undoubtedly have been wielded with far more vigour, and would have assumed a much more specious aspect. But infinite wisdom determined that 400 years should intervene between the last of the prophets and the events which they foretold, that the fact might be glaring to the most cursory observer,

that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God."

Another reason, which may be assigned for this long interim in the chain of revelation, is, that God intended to try the faith of his people. Had a succession of prophets, as formerly, continued to reiterate the promise of the Messiah; the faith of the people of God would have been easily maintained, but the silence of 400 years was fitted to test them. In this manner God has often tried the faith of his people. The accomplishment of the promise of a numerous seed to Abraham, was long deferred; and although even when required to sacrifice his only son Isaac, he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, a very different effect was produced on the mind of Sarah. When the last prophetic intimation of the birth of Isaac was given, her risibility was excited—she could scarcely believe the promise.

In the same manner the promise that they should possess the land of Canaan, was long delayed in its fulfilment; yet the faith of many of the Israelites remained unshaken. Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones. Moses, amidst all the unbelief of his kindred was firm in the persuasion that God would fulfil his promise.

Another interesting subject presented to us in the contemplation of the 400 years under consideration, is the fulfilment of the promise to David, that he would never want a man to sit upon his throne.

After the captivity in Babylon, the royal line of David sunk into poverty with its attendant obscurity; and after the return from captivity, the supreme authority in Judea, for several centuries, under the government of the Babylonians and Persians, and then of the Greeks and Romans was placed in the hands of the high priest who was of the tribe of Levi, and family of Aaron. Shortly before the close of the interim between the Old and New Testaments, Judea was formally regarded as a kingdom, and Herod the Great, an Idumean, placed on the throne. From the time of his death to the destruction of Jerusalem, in the reign of Vespasian, the supreme authority was alternately in the hands of his descendants and governors appointed by the Roman Emperors. From their last dispersion to the present hour, they have had no government of their own, they have been a people scattered and peeled among the natives of the earth.

The question then arises, where is the promise that was made to David? Had it failed? Is there reason to impugn the veracity and faithfulness of God? No, this is impossible—The heavens and the earth, these great and stupendous works of Deity shall pass away, but one jot or tittle of the word of God shall not fail. The promise to David has been fully verified. For ages his descendants in the ordinary manner, sat on this throne. The promise however refers chiefly to the Messiah who should descend from David and of whom it was predicted, that he would sit on the throne of his father, that he would reign over the house of Israel for ever, and of his kingdom there would be no end. It is true, that from the beginning of the Babylonish captivity to the advent of Christ, there is an interregnum of 600 years, which is to be regarded merely as a break in the chain, and not as a failure of the promise. And the great length of the gap in the chain of succession dwindles to insignificance when we consider, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

The words of the dying patriarch, on the same subject, when predicting the future history of the twelve tribes, received their fulfilment to the very letter. Jacob, in addressing Judah in the language of prophecy, said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come." It is true, that from the beginning of the captivity in Babylon, no king of the tribe of Judah reigned over Israel; yet with the exception of the period of the captivity, Judah remained a political body till the time of their final dispersion. Although successful under the government of Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and Romans, yet they had their great Council at Jerusalem, their judges in their respective cities, and all

the minor offices of government were filled by them; so that literally the sceptre did not depart from Judah, not the lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh came.

To be continued.

## Foreign Missions.

**Italy.**—It is but a few years since the Madiai were imprisoned in Florence for reading the Bible; yet in that very city an Evangelical church and college are now established under royal sanction. Every month, as Evangelists offer themselves, new stations are formed; and from remote districts, in Lombardy as well as in Tuscany, where the wayside seed has fallen, applications continue to be received for further instruction.

**France.**—We have some evidence of the progress of Protestantism in France in the fact that twenty new places of worship were opened during the last year. There has recently been much controversy as to the versions of the Scriptures commonly in use among the Reformed Churches. Application has been made to the Bible Society of Paris to add the Geneva version of 1815 to the versions of Martin and Osterwald hitherto circulated.

**Spain.**—It is expected that sentence will be pronounced in the case of the Spanish prisoners towards the close of the present month. An endeavour will be made to arrest even yet, if it be possible, the cruel arm of the law. Matamoras still writes cheerfully, and reports an improvement in his health. "I await" he says, "with the utmost tranquillity the issue of my cause. It is not my liberty, it is not my health, nor the galleys, which trouble me; oh, no! the cause of my Christian anxiety is, how the interest of the holy cause of the Gospel may be best promoted, and the greatest honour and glory red and to the holy name of Jesus. My strength is weak, my power less than nothing, and worth nothing. Whatever I may do is no work of mine, no! it is God who grants me strength in Jesus—in Jesus, who is my life, and even death for His Name's sake is true gain. Let the Divine will of our Heavenly Father be done! To fulfil it faithfully is all my desire."

**India.**—The question of female education is attracting the attention of intelligent natives in India. It begins to be seen that with the advance of civilisation some modifications are necessary in the treatment of women; and that modern usages imperatively demand the remodelling of family customs. How, for instance, can a strict seclusion be maintained in railway travelling? The Baboos of Calcutta have determined to memorialise the Government, praying that covered carriages may be set apart for the use of the native women; but this only partially meets the difficulty, unless it be also provided that on certain days all along the line none but female officials shall be in attendance! Newspapers and lecturers discuss these and kindred questions. In the work of education, hitherto, the Parsees of Bombay have been among the foremost. In the schools established by them there were last year as many as 623 girls. Their example has stimulated the wealthier Hindoos, and they have now five schools instituted for the instruction of the daughters of their poorer neighbours. In Calcutta the two chief institutions for the promotion of female education amongst the higher classes are the Bethune School, which is under the direct patronage of the Government, and Dr. Duff's Institution. The Baptists are now about to establish a ladies' school here, where boarders shall be received on payment of as low a sum as can be fixed for an elementary education, and the more difficult branches taught when desired at extra charges, and where the tone of teaching shall be unequivocally Christian. The native girls in the missionary schools throughout Bengal number at the present time not less than 1,977. The work of zenana visitation and instruction is in various places quietly prosecuted, and with many encouragements. Thus, from Bangalore, in the South, Mrs. Sewell, of the London Society, describes her reception in several households, where the mistresses, who seem to be but children of a larger growth, and need to be treated

with great fortitude and patience as well as affection, yield a willing attention.

A Baptist church has been established at Allahabad, consisting of twenty-five persons, all of whom were formerly united in church fellowship in Agra. The church is in fact a revival of the fellowship formerly existing in Agra, but interrupted by the removal of its members from that city, on the breaking up of the Government establishment.

**Madagascar.**—Mr. Ellis has been instructed to commence the building of the memorial churches in Madagascar. The London Society proposed to send out four additional labourers during the coming summer, to help gather in the harvest that seems ripening over the land. Mr. Ellis reports a steady advancement in the number of converts. "Thirty were received into the church at one of our places of worship last Sunday, and nineteen on the previous Sunday. . . . The Christians in the capital are originating and applying new organisations of usefulness, and the Gospel is spreading rapidly and effectively in moral and elevating influences among the villages far and near."

**Africa.**—The Wesleyan missionaries in Sierra Leone report the opening of a new chapel at Allentown, the inhabitants of which, with few exceptions, are liberated Africans of the Yoruba country. At Freetown, too, a chapel has been set apart for Divine service. At Hastings a revival has been experienced, and at other places there are signs of religious awakening.

From the Gold Coast ministers of the same denomination also write encouragingly. A temporary chapel has been opened at Porto Novo, erected on ground given by the King, the first and only place ever raised there for the worship of the true God. The King, had declared full religious liberty. "He called for all his chiefs, and told me to ask them," says the missionary, "in his presence, whether he had not declared that they were all at liberty to serve God. They could all become Christians; their children could go to school and learn book; he would not hinder them. The chief said all this was true; but they do think the religion of their fathers hard to give up; they cling to their fetishes, and their superstitious customs. One of them gave us to understand that this work must be done gradually; they could not give up all at once; they were in darkness, but now that we had gone to teach them that which is good, they would become wiser and better in time."

From Bathurst, in South Africa, we have accounts of revivals, which have largely influenced both the English and the native population of the district. From Queenstown also numerous conversions are reported.

A new church has been opened in connection with the United Presbyterian Mission at Emgwali, Caffraria. The church was built, and the pulpit is efficiently occupied, by a Caffre.

## Baptism and a good Conscience.

If a man believes that the baptism of Christ and his disciples was an immersion, if he believes that Christ commanded immersion, and if he can for himself be satisfied with nothing less than immersion as his baptism, then he ought not by word or act to countenance anything else as baptism in others. If the subject were a mere matter of opinion, or human choice, the case would be different. But it is not a subject of human option. Christ has laid down definite laws regarding the matter. And if I have no right to change one of those laws myself, I have no right to countenance another person in changing such a law.

Yet there are persons who say that nothing but immersion will do for them, but they do not care if somebody else is satisfied with sprinkling. They will accept that person in every particular and relation just as if he were baptized. They will treat him as a baptized person. This is practical indifference to the law of Christ. It is in fact treating a definite law of Christ as something less than human conscience. It is saying that a word of Christ is subject to the tribunal of human judgment, when in reality it is altogether above it and independent of it, and cannot