

# The Christian Messenger.

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## Poetry.

### GO; LABOR ON.

Go; labor on! spend and be spent,  
Thy joy to do the Father's will;  
It is the way the Master went,  
Should not the servant tread it still?

Go; labor on! 'tis not for nought,  
All earthly loss is heavenly gain!  
Men heed thee not, men praise thee not;  
The Master praises! what are men?

Go; labor on! enough, enough,  
If Jesus praise thee, if he deign  
To notice e'en thy willing mind,  
No toil for him shall be in vain.

Go; labor on, while it is day,  
The long dark night is hastening on;  
Speed, speed thy work, up from thy sloth;  
It is not thus that souls are won!

See thousands dying at your side,  
Your brethren, kindred, friends at home;  
See millions perishing afar,  
Haste, brethren, to the rescue come!

## Religious.

### A LIVING GOD.

The Christian worships and loves a living God, a present help in time of need, willing to hear prayer, prompt to give succor. Such a God the human heart craves, the human conscience confesses, and in him the perplexed soul finds rest.

The atheist denies a divine being, and finds in the universe no proof of a Creator or an intelligent Governor. His perceptions are blunted, and his nature maimed, like the blind man, from whom the beauty of the flower and the grandeur of the heavens are hidden. It is dreary to walk in darkness, and to have no light.

The materialist and the positive school of philosophy in our day have no God beyond the forces of nature. The universe is a cunning organism, self-developed and self-poised, unfolding by inexorable law. No intelligence presided at its birth, no purpose guides it to an appointed end. Life has little value, if it is only the struggle of blind forces tending to no goal.

Nor does Science with its dogma of inexorable law relieve a perplexed inquirer. A universe of law is better than a universe of chance. Law implies intelligence and will. It is not an accidental arrangement, nor a simple order of succession. It implies a connection between cause and effect, between plan and execution. Law, if it be not a word without meaning, denotes an established order, by which an intelligent will secures certain results. There can be no law without a lawgiver, no established order in the universe without an intelligent Creator. Science, therefore, when it speaks of law, ought always to imply the existence of a personal God, of whose will law is the expression.

But while science may admit the creative power of God, it often denies his providential government. It does not adore him as a living God, pervading the universe he has made and controlling its forces. It sees no need of government, for the laws do their work effectively. It denies the possibility of providence, for the laws once established can never be changed or suspended. Prayer is useless, save for its reflex power on the supplicant; sickness cannot be healed, nor peril averted, nor deliverance wrought from any calamity. God is separated from his creatures by a vast domain of law, which is an impassable gulf even for divine sympathy and power.

Such a God is not the God of the Bible whom the Christian adores. His God is omnipotent to save, a present help in every hour of need. His presence pervades the universe. His power underlies all forces. His will gives energy to all law. He hears his people when they cry, and he knows how to help. The Christian may find it impossible to harmonise reason and faith, or to explain the methods by

which providence rules. But he rests in a living God, for in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, he recognizes God incarnate among men. In the miracles of healing he discovers that established law is no hindrance to divine energy. In his experience of answers to prayer, many and varied, he knows that God is present to guide, to comfort, to deliver. He can, without hesitation, commit his way unto the Lord, assured that he will bring it to pass. In the minutest affairs of life he can trust to divine guidance, and in the greatest perils cry for deliverance.

It is well that struggling and desponding men have a living God—that the universe is not greater than the creator, or law mightier than the lawgiver. It is well that men are not shut up to science, but have the Bible to shed light into realms where science cannot reach.—*Christian Era*

### CHRIST MY BROTHER.

How difficult to make real this personal kinship to Christ. We worship him as God, we adore him as our Saviour, we look forward to him as our final Judge; but to feel a personal affection to him as a brother, and to have a constant assurance of his fraternal and personal affection for us, in this how sadly we fail.

In Mark 3: 31-35 he teaches explicitly that one relation he bears to his true disciples is that of a brother. "Whoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother." "He is not ashamed to call them brethren. That this kinship is spiritual, and his personal presence invisible, makes it none the less real. Always he stands waiting for this fraternal affection. How sweet the communion when we attain to the full conception of him as a present, living, loving brother!

If we fail to comply with the conditions of brotherhood, we of course fail to realize its preciousness. If brothers of Christ, we must have the family likeness. The same mind that was in him, must in some measure be in us. If self-denial, zeal, benevolence, love for enemies, forgiveness of injuries, characterized his incarnate life, his brethren cannot be without these graces.

Nor less does the kinship demand a taking care of each other's interests. That he watches over ours, no Christian doubts; and unless we are careful of the interests of his kingdom, we act most unfraternally. Failing to give thought and time and means to the cause of Christ, failing to seek the salvation of the souls whom he died to redeem, we cannot hope to realize the blessedness of personal fellowship in daily communion with him. To feel that he is a living, personal, present brother, I must comply with the essential conditions of brotherhood.—*Am. Messenger.*

### FOR LAYMEN ONLY.

This article is not intended for clergymen; it is for laymen only.

We have more than once, in these columns, urged on our clerical readers the importance of pastoral visitation. Save in a few exceptional cases the power of the minister is and must be personal; it will and must depend on the acquaintance of the pastor with his people, and their confidence in him. He must know their wants to be able to minister to them. He must understand the specific disorders in his congregation or he cannot prescribe.

But we protest against the common injustice which expects of him a kind of parochial omniscience and complains of him because he does not possess it.

If the merchant gets into difficulty and needs legal counsel, he does not wait for the lawyer to find it out by chance or by intuition; he calls on his lawyer for the aid he wants. If any member of the household is sick, the father does not wait for the physician to learn it in a round of regular and formal visits from house to house; the patient sends for his physician

when he wants him. But the clergyman is expected to detect by spiritual intuition the wants of his people, or to go from house to house conducting everywhere an inquisitorial examination, and by his cross-questionings ascertaining where counsel, where comfort, where admonition is wanted. He is expected to exercise the functions of a spiritual board of health. If his intuitions mislead him, if his formal and regular visitations carry him where he is not needed, and leave him in ignorance of the wants of families where he is needed, he is subjected to a cross-fire of criticism from both quarters—alike from the visited and the unvisited of the flock.

The analogy between the clergyman and the physician is not perfect. The sick man generally knows when he needs a physician, but the souls does not always know when it needs Christian counsel. Part of the duty, a very important part of the duty of the minister is to disclose to the soul its own need. We do not, therefore, counsel the clergyman to wait till he is called on. But we do most emphatically counsel the layman not to wait till he is called on. We do most emphatically protest that the latter has no right to shut himself up in a cell and leave his minister to get at him the best way he can.

Grumbling parishioner, we wish we could buttonhole you for five minutes. You complain that your minister has not visited you for six months. When have you visited him? You complain that he rarely speaks to you. How often do you speak to him? You complain that you do not know him. What have you done to make his acquaintance? You complain that he has never had any personal religious conversation with you. Have you ever offered him a chance? You complain that he does not touch your heart in his preaching. Have you ever opened your heart to him?

It will be time enough for you to complain of your minister for not visiting when he does not come after he is called; for not conversing when he does not answer your request for counsel or comfort; for not knowing you when he rejects your advances toward a spiritual acquaintance and communion; for not reaching your heart wants by his instructions when you have told him what they are.

Do you say that it is hard to take the initiative and carry your troubles to the minister. My dear grumbler, did you ever consider whether it could be easy for him to take the initiative and cross-examine you for them? If you think it is easy, try yourself an afternoon of pastoral calling. "Put yourself in his place," and see how you find it.

### RELIGIOUS EXCITEMENT NOT DANGEROUS.

It is said that during revivals of religion men get under great excitement, and do things which they would not do when under the influence of calm reason. That is true. You will notice that nobody is afraid of excitement in politics, though it runs so high that it looks as if at the touch of a spark there would be a universal conflagration. Nobody is afraid of over-excitement in Wall street. It is only when men begin to feel that they are sinners before God and that they need to be born again, and begin to have such a sense of heaven that they cannot bear to lose it; it is only when gross matter begins to die out of sight and ethereal visions come before men, that we hear these men croaking, "Moderation! Moderation! Let your moderation be known to all men." Moderation in combativeness? "Let that fly!" Moderation in acquisitiveness? "No, no; catch and get, catch and get." Moderation in vanity, moderation in pride, moderation in the ten thousand baser compliances of life? No, nobody is distressed about moderation there. But when there is not moderation in sorrow for sin, when there is excitement because

men are dead and lest they shall lose their souls, then men begin to be alarmed, they are so afraid that everybody will suddenly become angelic and tumble off the precipice into heaven! Why, that is not the danger; that is not the direction in which you need to set up marks. What if, on a road with an abyss on one side and a cliff on the other, men should put up all the barriers on the cliff side and leave the precipice open—would it be wise? Are men in danger of too much and too continuous excitement in spiritual directions? Are there not the sounds of life that drown the thunders of eternity in men's ears? Are there not ten thousand boiling cauldrons of passion and feeling underneath them? Is not every great interest of society pulling upon them—the household, the store, the shop, the office, all processes of business and of civil societies? Are not men wrecked with the thousand worldly things that are tending to undermine faith, to blind spiritual vision? And is it not a great grace and mercy when, even if it comes with imperfection—and what man is without it?—there is an excitement that lifts men up out of the slough, lifts them out of all their entanglements? . . .

But then, it is said that when men get under these impetuous influences, these high-toned feelings, it results in deceptions and in spurious conversions. Certainly it does. I do not know any economy that does not bring out those results. Men that attempt to come into the kingdom of God head-first are just as liable to go wrong as those that go heart first; and I think they are more liable to go wrong. The regular church is to revivals what green-houses are to the summer. Green-houses do very well; they make heat, they have their own stove and stoker, all they want is brought into their little space; and when by-and-by the robins and blue-birds come, and the elms begin to bud, and the maples show their tassels, and people say that summer is abroad in the land, the old gardener walks out and says, "Look here, I don't like this summer. There are no toads in my house, but there will be snakes in woods if summer comes. It won't do for me to have this thing all over the land." Summer, if it does bring mosquitoes, is more desirable than are green-houses for vegetation, for fruit, or for anything else.—*H. W. Beecher.*

### DEAD CHURCH MEMBERS.

We have a devoted band of teachers in the school, the most of them doing all that reasonably can be expected of them, some of them much more. Their work could be greatly lightened by the dead members, if they could only be brought to life, and induced by any means to do one half as much as some of our teachers do. Dr. Smyth, in a recent lecture, says that we have live men on this coast, and that when they cease to live we bury them. This is no doubt true, to a certain extent, in business circles, but a great many dead church members are above ground yet. We see some of them who have no money to give to bear the expenses of the Sunday School, no time to engage in its blessed work, not interest enough in spiritual worship to attend a prayer meeting, or partake of communion in a whole year; but we hear of them meeting unexpectedly at the theatre, surprised but comforted by the presence there of those who ought to stand high in the church on account of their long line of Presbyterian ancestors, and we hear of them off in the country, observing the progress of the crops, and breaking the Sabbath all to pieces to get a mouthful of fresh air. Would it not be better, if you must go to the theater on Saturday afternoon, and scour the country in an unlawful manner on the Sabbath, to offset the offence, to some extent, by doing every alternate Sabbath some work in the Master's vineyard in the way of bringing neglected children into the Sabbath School? Try it, and see how the two things

will work together, and choose that part which will give you most peace and comfort when you are called to give an account of your stewardship.—*Interior.*

### IN GOD'S SCHOOL.

"I have been in God's school," said one, on a bright Sunday morning, as she felt health and strength returning after a recent illness, "and may I not forget the lessons he has taught me!"

"In God's school!" echoed a merry bright-eyed child, evidently much amused at the idea of one going to school alone and on a sick-bed, her buoyant spirits never yet having been subdued in either God's or man's school. "Is he kind?"

"To be sure he is," I replied.

"Does he give hard lessons" she continued.

"Yes, very hard sometimes."

"What book do you learn in?" persisted the child, determined to carry out the analogy.

"There are no books," I answered.

"God writes the lessons on our hearts." And she trotted away leaving me to my thoughts.

Truly, none can teach like God, none so gentle, so loving, so patient as he; none so ready to begin all over again if we forget or misunderstand. And then we are such proud, conceited scholars; we have scarcely stumbled through our A B C before we think we know all. Yet he is still the same, ever compassionate and kind.

This Omniscient Teacher brings himself down to the simplest mind, the dullest understanding; ah, how kindly none know but those who have learned of him! Happy, thrice happy, they who thus day by day "learn of him."

### THE RECENT DISTURBANCES AT JERUSALEM.—An "Old Traveller in those Parts" writes to the Times:—

"The contests between the Greeks and Latins in the Holy Land as to the sacred places are a source of regret and humiliation to the simple Christian. The influence and gain sought to be obtained by these religionists upon the pious superstition of their followers are most prominent throughout Palestine, and dishonouring to Christianity. At Jerusalem, upon ascending from the St. Stephen's Gate, and crossing the Kedron, the traveller finds, near the foot of the Mount of Olives, two enclosures close to each other, belonging to the Franciscan monks and the Greek priests. In each is a garden and a chapel, on the very spot, as you are told, where the Saviour endured the bitter agony of Gethsemane. In each chapel is an altar, and if the pious pilgrim recites certain prayers in it he will receive the remission due to his religious service on the very spot where our Lord knelt and prayed. But which of the two is the very spot? Again, at Nazareth, there is a fine Greek church, near the outskirts of the village, belonging to the Greek community. On the right-hand side of the altar a flight of steps leads from the side aisle down to an underground chapel, where, the priests say, the Annunciation occurred! There is the altar, a marble slab covering the spot with a cross in the centre to indicate the precise place, and there are lights and pictures hanging all about like a baby show; and here many pilgrims come to kneel and pray and present their offerings, with the assurance that for this they insure the remission of their sins. About a quarter of a mile off is the handsome church of the Roman Catholics, resembling in its arrangements and decorations that of the Greeks, particularly in the subterranean chapel, approached by a flight of steps, and like it in the altar and marble slab with the cross, but with numerous statues, not allowed in the Greek ritual; and this the Romanists profess to be the very scene of the Annunciation, and prayers at which entitle the worshipper to so many years' remission of purgatorial suffering! Both cannot be true;