

# The Christian Messenger.

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## Poetry.

### "HE KNOWS."

I know not what will befall me! God hangs a mist o'er my eyes;  
And o'er each step of my onward path He makes new scenes to rise,  
And every joy that He sends me, comes as a glad and sweet surprise.

I see not a step before me as I tread the days of the year,  
But the past is still in God's keeping, the future His mercy shall clear,  
And what looks dark in the distance may brighten as I draw near.

For perhaps the dreaded future, has less bitterness than I think;  
The Lord may sweeten the waters, before I stoop to drink,  
Or if Marah must be Marah, He will stand beside its brink.

It may be there is waiting for the coming of my feet,  
Some gift of such rare blessedness, some joy so strangely sweet,  
That my heart will swell with joy and praise before the mercy seat.

O! restful, blissful ignorance, 'tis blessed not to know,  
It keeps me quiet in those arms, that will not let me go,  
And hushes my soul to rest on the bosom that loves me so.

So I go on not knowing, I would not if I might,  
I would rather walk on in the dark with God, than go alone in the light,  
I would rather walk with Him by Faith, than walk alone by sight.

My heart shrinks back from trials which the future may disclose,  
Yet I never had a sorrow but what the dear Lord chose;  
So I send the coming tears back with the whispered word, "He knows."

## Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

### THE TRUE VINE.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

Our Saviour often taught in parables. Many of these were drawn from natural similitudes to convey to the finite mind certain divine truths, relating to the kingdom, the character of his messiahship, and the spiritual relation every believer must bear to him. He was the "Light of the World"; the Saviour of sinners, and only through and by him could a sin-stained and fallen world have redemption. Therefore during his earthly ministrations there never was a proper occasion lost, by comparison or otherwise, that he did not seek to impress this, not with the power of mere logic and magniloquence of man, but with that power and authority of God whose ways are above man's. What a pattern for public ministers! How much more they as well as all others who hope in Jesus, would find their usefulness in his church increased to make him their only pattern in all things appertaining to the teaching of his word!

*I am the vine.* Palestine, in remote ages of the world, as in the time of our Saviour, abounded in a luxuriant growth of vines, commonly cultivated in vineyards, bearing large clusters of grapes—some of a prodigious size. The spies on their arrival at the valley of Eshcol, "Cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff." (Numb. xvi. 23.) Travelers through that country in modern times attest the presence of thrifty vineyards, although it cannot be doubted that partly through neglect, and perhaps mainly as the Land of Israel is resting from the labor of the chosen people of God who once possessed it, the vine does not thrive like it once did. It is very probable that it was when the Saviour and his disciples were going from the paschal supper to the Mount of Olives, in the presence of vines growing in profusion whose branches were crimsoned

with an abundant vintage that our Saviour sought by this comparison to make known the believers' spiritual Union with himself. The similitude is both striking and illustrative. It at once shows our entire dependence upon him; our own inefficiency and his all sufficiency.

The vine supports itself in the earth and rears up entwining itself, sending forth numerous branches and tendrils which it supports and nourishes by its own life and fatness. To Christ is the support, care, and life of all his disciples. All that in them is good or righteous, is from him. "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

*Ye are the branches.*—The branches must partake of the same nature as the vine. They are supported by it and are the sameness of it. They are dependent upon it for growth and yielding fruit, for when severed from the stem they wither and die, not possessing within themselves any self sustaining power, and are gathered up and cast into the fire. So the Christian must be Christ-like. He must have his spirit. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." He must have his spirit of humility, Pride, vanity, and an ambitious spirit for distinction are of the world—of the devil. He who delights to visit the theatre, the ball-room, the grog-shop and places of horse-racing, although he be a nominal christian, how does he in any manner exhibit the nature and Spirit of Christ? "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." (I Cor. x. 21.)

*He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.* To abide in Christ is to abide in his word, to exercise a holy faith in him as the Saviour, and to love and adore him as the Lord. The truly regenerated christian who so lives, trusting and relying upon his Saviour, is never barren. His life is one of usefulness. He may have the contempt of the world, and be hated by those whose hearts are set upon the world, as they did his heavenly Master, but it is because his affections are not set upon the world.

*Without me ye can do nothing.* The words "without me" perhaps would be better rendered *separated from me*. This conveys the idea of our great and continual dependence upon the Saviour. As the branch separated from the parent stem or stock would die and be forever fruitless, so would all christians, including the Apostles, be without any good works abounding in the Lord. What therefore we are, and all that we are, as christians, can only be ascribed to Jesus.

When the sky is clear, and everything serene, we very much admire the soft silvery rays poured down by the moon, giving every thing a lovely appearance; but we must remember her rays are only those reflected by the Sun of day. So when we see pious men abounding in good works, who are zealous for the truth's sake, we very much admire them; but we should much more remember they are only the reflection of the rays of the sun of eternal righteousness which constrain us to love him more and more.

P. L. HAMPTON.

Stone Mountain, Georgia,  
April 23rd, 1873.

### "LAY NOT UP."

One voice speaks to us both from the Teacher sent of God, and from the providences which he appoints, and its burden is, "Lay not up." Floods and flames, storms and tempests, losses and disasters, shipwrecks and earthquakes, moth, rust, mould and rottenness, all these bear one message to man,—*"Lay not up."*

Act in the living present. Let the work of the day be complete. The things of time are for time, and not for eternity. The accomplished act has

\*The writer of this article was burnt out in the great Boston fire.

value; purposes, plans, half-finished undertakings, all these are memorials of folly and presumption; of mis-spent time, and miscalculated ability. A little done is better than much begun. A cottage finished is better than a palace undertaken.

"Finish thy work!" The time for working is passing,—yea, it is almost past. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, no device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." Your plans will die with you. Your thoughts and purposes will perish when you return again to dust. All that you meant to do and hoped to do, and promised to do, and tried to do, and began to do, will be lost and forgotten;—only what you have *done* will remain.

"Lay not up." Presume not on coming days and better opportunities. Finish your work. Fulfill your plans. Execute your own will. Use this world as not abusing it, and use it before it slips forever from your grasp. Speak the kind word to-day. Do the great deed to-day. Stretch out the hand of help before the dark waters close over the helpless and they are gone forever from your sight.

"Lay not up." Nothing on earth is safe. Your hoards will perish, your riches fly away, your works will be consumed, and you yourself will vanish like a dream. Nothing that you have will be retained or remembered then. Only what you have done; only what you have used, will be reckoned in the great account.

"Lay not up." Wheat garnered will spoil—sown, it will die and live again, and multiply and continue. The damp soil preserves corn safer than the best crib. There is no chest nor closet that will keep bread from mould,—cast it on the waters and it will come back sweet and fresh "after many days." Trust your grain in the earth your bread on the waters, and your money with God. Lend to the Lord and you shall live on the interest when the principal is gone. Things done cannot be undone; and that which has been placed in God's hands is safe for all eternity. The rich man may gnash his teeth or tear his hair as he sees his wealth consume, or finds his hoards stolen, his stocks depreciated, and his investments swallowed up; but he who has done his work for God, and invested his surplus in his hands, can smile at fire and flood, and convulsion and bankruptcy, can defy thieves and laugh at robbers, and thank God that so much of his wealth has gone where the Devil can never find it.

Man of earth, remember: man of heaven, born from above, do not forget the Saviour's solemn word:—"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth or rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is there will your heart be also."—Matt. vi. 20, 21.

H. L. HASTINGS.

### Wayside.

### IDOLATRY AND WOMEN IN INDIA.

There has been a great deal said, and a great deal more written, on the above question. As on all other questions, so on this, the writers differ very widely. I do not pretend to speak for all India in this article; only for Hindustan in general, and the Telugu country in particular. Among many others, the idea commonly received is, that idolatry separates man and woman, by sinking her lower, comparatively, in the scale of being than him. But I believe God has so made man that he cannot degrade himself, and his children not sink too; nor can he raise himself and degrade them.

If a man's sons invariably inherited the qualities of the father, and the daughters those of the mother, then such a result might follow: but as the

general tendency appears to be the reverse, both become inseparably linked together.

The uneducated wives and daughters of Brahmins are as far superior to the other castes as the Europeans are to them. Why? Because the father has transmitted his intelligence to his child—to his daughter as well as to his son. True, women are in subjection, and very harsh subjection too, for these people have no refined modes of torture. In our country, if a man and his wife do not agree, they either scold, quarrel, pout, or do some other very disagreeable thing: in this country, the man beats his wife, and the wife runs home to her mother.

There are many customs which a superficial survey would set down to woman's degradation, but which are rather the results of their circumstances, and of the different light in which we and they look at things. Work which in our sight would be a sign of degradation, is to them quite honourable, and vice versa. All work within the caste is honourable to the caste. I have never seen women in India doing what I have not seen men of the same caste doing.

The custom of the wife always following her lord when travelling, is by no means confined to pagan lands, and is partly due to that instinct which gives the foremost place to the stronger and bolder of any animal, intensified by ignorance and by the closeness with which distinctive lines of any kind are drawn in this country. In India this is the place of women; no Hindu, no matter how high his official position, would dream of walking before me, or even walking by my side. If I stand up, he stands; if I sit down, he will not do so until I ask him.

There is no doubt but that a son is preferred to a daughter; but if this is a result of idolatry, I fear there is considerable of the same feeling in professed Christian lands. The fact that property runs almost exclusively in the male line, and the difficulty in getting females married, together with the miserable life of Hindu widows, makes the birth of a daughter to a Hindu rather a doubtful blessing. That idolatry adds much to this cannot be denied; that it is the sole cause is far from the truth.

As a proof of this, it is well known that among no people are women more systematically bound down than among Mahometans, who cannot, certainly, be fairly classed as idolaters.

I have not been able, as yet, to see that the women are physically inferior to the men. I cannot perceive less intelligence, less thrift, less shrewdness, or knowledge of human nature. They are naturally as bright, apt to learn, and have just as clear moral perceptions as the men. In this respect, they are as nearly equal as can be.

The fact of the matter is, that idolatry lays its wide, heavy hand upon all alike, and crushes them down together. It crushes all the manhood out of men, and all the womanhood out of women. It has withered up all the purest and noblest, as well as tenderest, faculties of their nature. The mother loves her child, yet her love is little more than animal instinct. Love between husband and wife is such a rare thing that it is not supposed to exist at all. Care for the aged is more the result of the fear of their spirits after death than inherent filial affection.

The same may be said of hospitality. The Hindu is hospitable, benevolent or philanthropic, in order either to better his position here or obtain merit for the future. All the man, the God-like part of his nature, is burned out. Under idolatry, the devilish and brutal propensities of his nature develop, and reproduce each other in an ever-increasing ratio. Civilization alone does little or nothing for them. It tames no passion, roots out no vices, restrains no desires, nor unveils any corruption. It gives no holy purposes, no pure affections, nor noble aspirations. There is nothing in civilization that can warm a frozen heart or quicken a dead spirit; nothing that can create a loving principle in the heart

and make the golden rule the outgushing of a regenerate nature. It has a magnificent head, but no heart. The Gospel alone can give life, living, eternal life to a man, a nation, or a race. Jesus alone is the great Life Giver.

McLAURIN.

Ongole, India.

—The Tyro.

For the Christian Messenger.

### ONTARIO CORRESPONDENCE.

PARTY GOVERNMENT—HOME MISERIES—MINISTERIAL EDUCATION—THE FOREIGN MISSION, &c.

I am well aware that the border land between politics and religion is thickly strewn with combustibles, and it becomes the part of prudence to approach it with careful tread. But I cannot glance in thought to Ottawa and to the scenes which have been for weeks past transpiring within the walls of that majestic pile which is said by so competent a judge as the scholarly editor of the *Canadian Monthly*, to be by far the noblest specimen of architecture in America, without being reminded of a discussion which has been going on between the magazine just named and some of the political papers, upon the beauties and defects of Government by Party.

While reading the able articles in the *Globe*, or listening to the eloquent denunciations of coalitions and all their kin, by such men as Blake or MacKenzie, one is perforce compelled to admit that the only safeguard of good government and political purity is to be found in the Argus-eyed watchfulness of a well organized Opposition.

But when one on the other hand turns to the reports of the first session of the Second Parliament of the Dominion and scans *ad nauseam* the daily records of interpellations, and accusation, criminations and recriminations, questions of privilege, questions of fact, and questions of wholesale corruption or wholesale slander, he cannot but wonder whether after all Christian people in a Christian country ought not to be able to devise some better machinery for making and executing laws. Whether or no the scheme of the "DOCTRINAIRE" who writes the editorials for the monthly a scheme whose main feature is, I believe, the appointment or election of an executive by the Assembled Parliament, would help matters, or could be so worked as to result in anything but party government still, it does seem too bad and not at all creditable to a free and enlightened people, that a Government and a Parliament, with such magnificent possibilities before them as are suggested by the Intercolonial and Pacific Railways, the short cut across Newfoundland to England and Europe, and the line of ocean steamers on the Pacific to complete the shortest girdle around the world for steam travel, as well as the filling up of the vast and fertile vales and belts and prairies of the Great Northern regions of America, should be obliged to devote so large a portion of its time to the settlement of mere party issues and the acrimonious discussion of mere party questions. No one doubts the honesty, the ability or the patriotism of a large number of our representatives at the capital. The system must be largely in fault. Who will earn the eternal gratitude of this new nation and have his name handed down to posterity as the father of his country, by inventing some better system for the government of a free and enlightened (?) people?

In my last, I know not how long since, I think I said that we were rapidly approaching the close of a long and severe winter. That was hastily spoken. The winter delayed long and almost threatened to "linger in the lap of summer." To-morrow is May day and the farmers will only be fairly at work, I believe, at their Spring duties. Until within the last two or three days fires in our dwellings have been essential every day to health and comfort.