

# The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.  
Vol. XIX., No. 51.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, December 23, 1874.

WHOLE SERIES.  
Vol. XXXVIII., No. 51.

## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

### AN OLD MAN'S REVERIE.

A BALLAD FOR CHRISTMAS.

I sit me down and muse  
On days gone by;  
When round our hearth together sat,  
My wife and I.

Not we alone, that Christmas night,  
For happy faces three  
Gathered so close, wife held one tight,  
I, one upon each knee.

Our eldest born—"the Queen,"  
I proudly called my girl;  
The other was my wife's "right hand";  
The youngest our fair pearl.

One little one lay dead  
Within our hill-side grave,  
But only to my wife and me  
Its touch of sorrow gave.

The three so bright and joyous,  
Upon this Christmas eve,  
We need not sadden by our grief;  
And sure 'twere wrong to grieve.

God early took the darling,  
Into His kingdom fair;  
No sorrow, sin, nor danger  
Can reach our baby there.

But I am thinking, thinking  
Over days gone by,  
When round our hearth together sat,  
My wife and I.

Ah me! how widely scattered,  
Ah me! how lone I feel;  
But I humbly ask for patience,  
As I seek in prayer to kneel.

And yet should I feel thankful,  
For mercies richly given,  
I still have two, tho' sundered wide,  
And three in yonder Heaven.

My wife—no woman truer  
Her battle fought, the right;  
'Her children call her blessed,'  
And I bless her name to-night.

She was my Guardian Angel,  
My guardian Angel still;  
Till I go to rest beside her,  
In my home upon the hill.

I miss her sorely, sadly  
But she comes to me in sleep,  
And in the silent watches  
Whispers "Husband cease to weep."

And I think of her as resting,  
Her toilsome warfare o'er;  
Her spirit bright fulfilling  
God's work on yonder shore.

I am sure that God will teach me,  
But I'm slow to learn the way,  
And fear that never in this world  
My heart will truly pray.

For there's a bitter memory,  
Of a life so early gone,  
My pearl, my youngest darling;  
Oh God, Thy will be done!

He took her, Oh, He took her,  
My pearl so passing fair,  
My youngest blue-eyed darling,  
With the waving golden hair.

But first He took the mother,  
She might not live to see  
Our youngest die, our treasure;  
Nor all my misery.

And I am thinking, thinking  
Of joyous homes this night,  
Of children gladly playing  
In the glee-ome firelight.

Be thankful little children  
That God has given you,  
Your parents dear, and sisters;  
Be loving, gentle, true.

Then will this Christmas evening,  
With its own hallowed light,  
From out the long, long ages  
Like Bethlehem's star be bright.

B. P.  
Bristol, Christmas 1874.

### THE NATIVITY: CHRISTMAS HYMN.

BY HORATIUS BONAR, D. D.

Night of wonder, night of glory;  
Night all solemn and serene;  
Night of old prophetic story,  
Such as time has never seen;  
Sweetest darkness, safest blue,  
That these fair skies ever knew.

Night of beauty, night of gladness,  
Night of nights—of nights the best.  
Not a cloud to speak of sadness,  
Not a star but sings of rest:  
Holy midnight, beaming peace,  
Never shall thy radiance cease.

Happy city, dearest, fairest,  
Blessed, blessed Bethlehem!  
Least, ye greatest, noblest, rarest,  
Judah's ever sparkling gem;  
Out of thee there comes the light  
That dispelleth all our night.

Now thy King to thee descendeth,  
Borne upon a woman's knee;  
To thy gates his steps he bendeth,  
To the manger cometh He:  
David's Lord and David's Son,  
This his cradle and his throne.

He, the lowliest of the lowly,  
To our sinful world has come;  
He, the holiest of the holy,  
Cannot find a human home.  
All for us he yonder lies,  
All for us he lives and dies.

Babe of weakness, child of glory,  
At thy cradle thus we bow;  
Poor and sad thy earthly story,  
Yet the King of glory thou:  
By all heaven and earth adored,  
David's Son and David's Lord.

Light of life, thou liest yonder,  
Shining in thy heavenly love;  
Nought from thee our souls shall sunder,  
Nought from us shall thee remove.  
Take these hearts and let them be  
Throne and cradle both to thee!

## Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

### DOUBTING CASTLE.

BY MRS. HUNT-MORGAN.

Some persons indulge the mistaken idea that a man cannot be a Christian unless he has obtained perfect mastery over all his doubts and fears; in other words, that no Christian ever gets into Doubting Castle. For such individuals, scripture contains no encouragement or comfort, since "they that are whole need not a physician." Others adopt the equally erroneous extreme, hugging their doubts as so many evidences of their Christianity. And these admire the filthy rags of their own doubtings, counting them as righteousness before God, proudly flaunting them to be proofs of humility. But these wear not the true "wedding-garment," nor will their livery be acknowledged by the wardens of heaven, or looked on with approval by the Master there.

There is another class; and for them the Divine Father has loving messages of grace. They doubt, and feel their souls "fast bound in affliction and iron"; but the doubts are too real, the afflictions too sore, the chains too heavy, to be sentimentalized over, or theorized about. They wrestle towards the kingdom, dragging the "body of death," and they earnestly cry to be delivered; they are in captivity, and up from their prison-house of sin, rises to God the shriek of prayer; "Redeem me, and be merciful unto me." They hug their doubts! Why, their whole life is a continual cry to be freed from them! And as for passing judgment on others, they are too thoroughly in earnest about their own souls to do that. They cannot find the Saviour they love, and long for; they fear they never shall see the king in His beauty, but the sigh of their heart is, "O that I knew where I might find Him"! They doubt if ever their feet shall reach even the borders of "the land that is very far off"; yet they never cease to beseech the Lord through the darkness "I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain and Lebanon"! They are too miserable in Doubting Castle, they suffer too much from the home-sickness of the exile, to speculate who ought, or ought not to be in the Castle. They know they are there, and the pine for the rescue.

And of them the Lord has said:  
"To this man will I look, even to him

that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." And down from the Father's home, comes the message, "Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope; even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee."

Take courage then, weary trembler, and approach more trustfully His mercy-seat, where He waiteth to be gracious. Whatever may be the temptations with which Satan may assault you, cling still to the sanctuary, the horns of the altar, where the Lamb was slain for you; and when fears gather thick, still cling with the firm resolve:

"There, till the dear Deliverer come,  
I'll wait with humble prayer;  
And when He calls His exile home,  
The Lord shall find him there."

Fear not that He who died for thee will pass by thee, and leave no blessing for thy soul. Think not that He who wept over thy rebellion, can refuse the humble vow of thine allegiance. Dream not that since He paid the debt of thy transgressions, there can stand aught against thee in the book of His remembrance. Tremble not lest He who wearied so to win thee, should ever spurn thee from Him, now that thou art seeking Him.

"No: He is full of grace;  
He never will permit  
A soul that fain would see His face  
To perish at His feet."

## BURLESQUING CHRISTIAN UNION.

The grotesque struggles after Christian union by professed Catholics, but real sectarians, would be amusing but for the dishonour done to the Church of Christ. An inflated priesthood, encouraged by a subservient laity, will not yield to the simple conditions of the Divine Word that makes all one in Christ, but seeks to create an imposing structure that shall captivate by its grandeur and enthrall by its pretence. The Papacy it, in part, repudiates, and neither Old nor new Catholicism serves its purpose. It is eclectic in its spirit, and occasionally betrays a willingness even to extract from Hinduism and Mohammedanism support. Its present more humble work is the union of the Greek, the Roman Catholic, and the Anglican Churches! The Western Church is already improved, under the leadership of Dr. Dollinger, the Eastern under the guidance of "Sophronius," the most blessed and most holy Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople is in a hopeful condition, and the Anglican is so far advanced as to absorb or be absorbed by those kindred sects. But it does not appear quite plain whether Dr. Dollinger or Pope Pius the Ninth is the accepted representative of the Roman Catholic Church, and this preliminary difficulty may seriously embarrass the A. P. U. C. in its noble attempts to secure the unity of Christendom. These initials are not to be read as the schoolboy essayed, "You see the Pope's ass," although his guessing might have been further from the mark, inasmuch as the "Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom" seems in all its arrangements to carry the Pope on its back. The old man is, after all, the central character of the procession, and the other clerical and lay pretenders proffer their support to the infallible head of the holy Apostolic Church. While this mimicry of Christian union is attempted, happily the free Churches are clearly elucidating the true idea of Christian fellowship. Their free, independent, and joyous assemblies have just passed away, to be succeeded by a perpetual presentation of similar scenes in every village, hamlet, or town where a free church exists, and long before the A. P. U. C. has accomplished its object, the Continent, as well as our own home, will have abounding evidence that true Christian union can only be found where genuine Christian character has been produced. These monstrous organizations, that seek to imprison the

Church, must fall to pieces by their own weight. The Papacy feels the need of desperation in the struggle to hold its own; established Episcopacy has a kindred instinct, and these huge mechanisms, that live on a lie, impassionately appeal to their supporters for unstinted aid. But it needs only that these separate counterfeit churches should get entangled in their blended but complicated movements to make their destruction sure. The A. P. U. C. Society has just published a volume of sermons, and this is the dedication:

To the most blessed and most Holy Father in Christ,  
Pius the Ninth,  
by Divine appointment,  
Pope,  
Bishop of the Holy Apostolic See,  
also  
To S. puronius—  
Most blessed and most holy  
Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.  
Likewise  
To Charles Thomas,  
Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of all England, in the hope of the future unity of the Church of Christ, alas! so long divided against itself.

One of the sermons is by the Bishop of Capetown, and the whole production presents a case of silly delusion that only could be seen in the Established Church. Its vast resources have often made childishness powerful, and shallowness a mischievous force. It is quite time that our statesmen held the reins tightly, and taught the world that John Bull has not become a clerical tool. The Anglican Church seems bent on presenting the English character as an offering to an effete superstition. There are a few birds that follow the bats in their nightly wandering, but at the break of day both find their home. Happily the day of religious freedom has long since dawned, and it is quite time that these clerical birds of the night were sent to their rest.—*London Baptist.*

## Foreign Missions.

FROM OUR MISSIONARIES.

BUDDHISM.

Mr. Churchill says (Aug. 18)—"It does not seem to have much influence upon the people at large, especially the upper classes. It at least does not restrain them from any sin. They keep a sort of debt and credit account between the good and the evil they do, and hope in some way to strike a balance between them, and so reach that state which is neither one thing nor another—*Nrupan*. This is defined in one of our books, prepared by Dr. Jones, to be "an endless state of existence susceptible of neither pain, pleasure, knowledge, nor emotion of any kind." It is hard to understand how such a state of existence is possible. Some of the priests, however, seem to have got "fairly started for it already, for they appear to have about as little intelligence or interest in things as it is possible for rational beings to have. As all the males are expected to enter the priesthood for a longer or shorter period, it is just here that Buddhism exerts its principal power."

Again:—"Mr. Chandler pointed out to me the other day the spot where he would locate a Siamese mission. It is above the city proper, in the midst of a large population, principally engaged in fruit culture, and who have not come much in contact with Europeans. This is an important consideration; and if we locate a mission among the Siamese, I think this would afford us one of the best places in or around Bangkok. But it will cost a great deal to settle here. Land is valuable and building material costly. Lumber can be purchased at the steam saw mills for 60 cents per cubic foot. It might be obtained at a little less, perhaps, by purchasing logs and hiring Chinese to saw them up. It will cost money and time and labour to give the gospel to Siam, as to every other heathen people. Whether the results will be as great and as speedy as among other nations, none can say. The day of Siam's visitation is known

only to God; but he will not suffer earnest, faithful labour to be lost, whether those who labour see any results or not."

"I have had a good deal of conversation with Mr. McGilvray, of the Cheingmai Mission, respecting the upper parts of Siam. He estimates the number of the Laos proper to be about three millions. They are Buddhists, and much like the Siamese in customs and character."

We must carry the gospel to those "three millions of Laos."

From Miss Eaton to Dr. Cramp (July 30.)—"Spending a few days with Mrs. Dean of late, I enjoyed the privilege of accompanying her on her accustomed morning walk among the women of the market, and of listening to her conversations with them. At one place some half dozen women gathered to listen, but as there were numerous interruptions she invited them to her school-room in the afternoon, that she might see them quietly. Two old women came in. One of them, in reply to my question—"Grandmother, how old are you?"—answered "75"—and the other was but a few years younger. They evidently realized that they could not live long, and were interested as Mrs. Dean told them of the only way to be saved—of the insufficiency of their merit-making to help them—and that "the work of God is to believe on him whom he hath sent." Before going out one of them said, "We have been all our lives trying to gain merit, and all now it is of no use!" One woman told us that she had given up her old religion entirely—that now she believes in Jesus, and prays every morning and evening. As she sat in all her filth and wretchedness, and spoke of these things, I looked at her house, which was a home for her family and poultry—at her black mouth and teeth—at her naked baby—and thought how much she needed all the power of the religion of Jesus, to convert her life as well as her heart. Sometimes, after being told how far the religion of Christ is superior to that of Buddha, and urged to embrace it immediately, they carelessly remark, "We shall find out which is best when we die." But when assured that then it will be too late, they laugh, and seem not to care about it. Others say, "We like to hear of this while you are here, but when you have gone, then we forget all." So do they need to be told over and over again."

It is the old controversy between faith and works. Man wants to buy pardons and heaven: God gives both, having first given his Son, that through his death the blessings of salvation might be righteously bestowed. But the sinner refuses the gift, and persists in working for life. If almighty grace prevent not, he will continue to do so, till he "lies down in sorrow." The Church of God is a witness for free grace, and rebellious hearts are subdued by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the truth of the Gospel, clearly explained and affectionately urged on the attention. Thus the Lord saves souls, and settles the controversy. Our missionaries are called to fight in this holy war, and He who sends them promises "grace sufficient. Even the Siamese shall be brought to give up "merit-making," and to adopt Peter's creed—"We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved" (Acts xv. 11).

Mr. Churchill has sent a long and interesting account of a visit by the missionaries to the palace on the king's birthday (Sept. 20.) He writes to the Foreign Secretary under that date—"To-day is the twenty-first birthday of the young king, and there is quite a display in honour of the occasion. All the principal buildings in the city and along the river are illuminated for three nights."

"Among other ways of celebrating the day the officers of the king's body-guard conceived the idea of gathering together as many objects of interest as