

# The Christian Messenger.

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## Poetry.

### THE MYSTERY OF LIFE IN CHRIST.

I walk along the crowded streets, and mark  
The eager anxious faces;  
Wondering what this man seeks, what that  
man craves,  
In earthly places.

Do I want anything that they are wanting?  
Is each of them my brother?  
Could we hold fellowship, speak heart to heart,  
Each to the other?

Nay, but I know not; only this I know,  
That sometimes merely crossing  
Another's path, where life's tumultuous waves  
Are ever tossing.

He, as he passes, whispers in mine ear  
One magic sentence only,  
And in the awful loneliness of crowds  
I am not lonely.

Ah, what a life is theirs who live in Christ;  
How vast the mystery!  
Reaching in height to heaven, and in its depth  
The unfathomed sea!

### THIRTY-FIVE.

As one who climbs a mountain steep,  
And pauses on the way  
With backward glance his path to sweep—  
So would I pause to day,

Half-way.  
Half-way! and looking down the road,  
The stones that hurt my feet,  
The wayside thorns, the tiresome load,  
Make this short rest seem sweet—  
Half-way.

Half-way! a haze obscures my sight;  
My eyes grow dim with tears  
As, looking downward from this height,  
I count my buried years—  
Half-way.

Half-way! how bright and happy some!  
Their graves are strewn with flowers;  
But others shroud me in their gloom  
And bring back heavy hours—  
Half-way.

Half-way! how many a treasure from my grasp  
Has dropped along the way!  
Father! Thy strong and steady clasp  
I see anew to-day—  
Half-way!

Half-way! I look above,  
But nothing can I see!  
My Father's guidance and His love  
Are all in all to me—  
Half-way!

Half-way! and I may never count  
My "three-score years and ten!"  
But looking down on life's rough mount  
Think that this might have been  
Half-way!

Aye, looking down! It e'er my feet  
May tread the Mount of God,  
I fain would stop for rest so sweet,  
And drop life's weary load  
Half-way!

## Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

### THOUGHTS FOR THE TIMES.

No. VIII.

#### THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD.

During our Lord's abode on earth, and especially within a few days of his death, he repeatedly assured his disciples that though he was to be taken from them he would return, and that with his return the consummation of their bliss and the punishment of his enemies would be connected.

After the Lord's ascension a similar announcement was made by the angels who were in attendance on that occasion. See Acts i. 11. A confident expectation and an earnest desire for his coming prevailed among the early churches. It is evident from some expressions in the Epistles to the Thessalonians that the Apostle Paul's teaching on the subject had been misapprehended; Christians, having been led to entertain the hope that the Lord's coming might be then looked for as an event shortly to take place, which hope, the Apostle told them, was unfounded, as a fearful apostasy would previously occur. His prediction has been verified. The seeds of the apostasy were

sown in apostolic times. It sprang up before Constantine's reign. It budded and blossomed in the following centuries and it stands now in full-blown dishonour, shedding a baleful influence over the nations.

Readers of ecclesiastical history are aware that on several occasions, during the prevalence of wide-wasting calamity, produced by war, or plague, or earthquake, an impression has generally prevailed that the last judgment was about to take place, and that the Lord would soon appear for that purpose.

Eighteen hundred years and more have passed away since his ascension to heaven—and he is still there. Two opinions respecting his second advent divide the Christian world at the present time.

By one party it is held that in the latter days there will be a general diffusion of Christianity, and a general enjoyment of its salutary influence—a state of purity and bliss, in which the Saviour will be spiritually and remarkably present with his churches. Then will be fulfilled those splendid predictions of the extension of Messiah's kingdom, and its glorious blessedness, which are spread over the pages of the Old Testament. See Psalm ii. xxiii. 22-31; lxxii; xevii—xcviii; ex; Isa. ii. 1-4, xi. 1-9, xlii. 1-4, xliii. 1-12, liv. lx. 1-3, lxiii. 1-6; Dan. ii. 44, vii. 14-27, Mic. iv. 1-5. Those predictions are mostly couched in highly figurative language, which must be subjected to the usual laws of interpretation. Their fulfilment must take place before the Lord's second coming. It is further held that a time of declension and opposition to the truth will follow, and that then "the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven in flaming fire," and bring to a close the divine dispensations towards this world.

But all this is stoutly denied by the other party. The advocates of the second theory maintain that no such state of general blessedness will be enjoyed. They admit that the Gospel will be "preached among all nations," but, as they imagine, with no better success than has been hitherto experienced. They are of opinion that the last times will be times of sore judgments on the nations; that on the Saviour's sudden appearance "in power and great glory," the saints will be raised from the dead; that he will visibly reign on earth among them for a thousand years, Palestine being the probable seat of his government; and that at the end of that time the rest of the dead will be raised, and the general judgment solemnised. Some persons have gone so far as to calculate the time and fix the date of the Lord's coming; but they have egregiously failed.

Our Lord's announcements respecting his second coming are contained in the following passages:—Mat. xvi. 27; xxiv. 29-31, 36-51; xxv. 1-31; xxvi. 64. Mark xiii. 24-27, 32-37; xiv. 62. Luke xii. 35-48; xvii. 25-36. John xiv. 3, 18, 28; xxi. 22.

The views of the apostles on this subject are found in these texts, cited, as nearly as possible, in chronological order:—James v. 7, 8. 1 Thess. i. 10; ii. 19; iii. 13; iv. 14-17; v. 2, 23. 2 Thess. i. 7-10; ii. 1-8. 1 Cor. i. 7, 8; iv. 5; xi. 26; xv. 23-28. Phil. i. 6, 10; iii. 20. Col. iii. 4. 1 Pet. i. 7, 13; iv. 5. 2 Pet. iii. 3-13. Jude 21. 1 Tim. vi. 14, 15. Tit. ii. 13. 2 Tim. i. 12, 18; iv. 1, 8. Heb. ix. 28. 1 John iii. 2. Rev. i. 7; xxii. 7, 12, 20.

After a careful examination of all the passages that have been supposed to relate to this doctrine I have come to the conclusion that our Lord and his apostles spoke of only two visible comings of the Saviour; the first, his coming to be incarnate and to suffer—the second, his coming to judgment.

The expectation of a personal reign of the Saviour on earth is founded on mistaken views, and sustained by false interpretations. It is altogether inconsistent with the uniform testimony of the word of God respecting the spiritual nature of his kingdom. Such an event, as described by modern theorists, would be a backward step in the divine gov-

ernment, a revival of the spirit of Judaism.

The principal passage appealed to by the advocates of this theory is Rev. xx. 1-6, on this passage the following observations may be made.

1. It is unreasonable, and contrary to all good principles of interpretation, to deduce an important theory from a solitary portion of Scripture, and that found in the most obscure book of the Bible.

2. If the resurrection, and the reign of a thousand years (whence we get the word *millennium*) be interpreted literally, the whole of the description must be explained in like manner, and we shall be called on to believe in an actual and visible "key of the bottomless pit," an actual and visible, "great chain," an actual and visible "seal," as well as to extend a similar method of interpretation to many other passages, especially in the writings of the prophets, thereby involving ourselves in, inextricable difficulties.

3. The resurrection spoken of is not a resurrection of *bodies*, but of *souls*. This is the only place in which such a mode of expression is found. Can it mean anything more than that the *principles* and *spirit* of ancient martyrs and protesters again corruption will be revived, and will flourish again upon earth during a lengthened period? For if it be a *literal* resurrection, it is contradictory to our Lord's prediction, John v. 28, 29, which applies to the righteous as well as to the wicked.

4. As the next appearance of the Saviour will be his second coming, to judge the world, the theory of a personal reign upon earth is inconsistent with the uniform tenor of the testimony on the other side. The obvious meaning of so many plain passages of Scripture is not to be set aside by the interpretation of a text taken from a book which contains more things "hard to be understood" than any other book in the inspired volume.

5. The conclusion is, that the description in Rev. xx. 1-6 harmonises with the predictions adverted to above, and must be taken as a figurative representation of a period of blessedness and purity consequent on the outpouring of the Spirit in the latter days, that the binding of Satan denotes the restraint on his power which will take place under such circumstances;—that the resurrection spoken of will be the revival of the spirit of the best days of Christianity; and that the term of a thousand years indicates an indefinite and very lengthened season of gracious influence, during which true religion will be predominant on the earth, though irreligion will still exist, to be once more revived and then finally overthrown, when the Lord shall come "the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 28).

If we find here and there a passage which we know not how to bring within the range of the system which we are otherwise satisfied is in harmony with the Bible, we may safely conclude that our ignorance stands in the way, to whatever cause it may be ascribed. And we ought to be particularly on our guard against the assignment of specific dates to unfulfilled prophecies; or of any certain order, or succession of events in the details of their fulfilment. It is not for us "to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power" (Mark xiii. 32; Acts i. 7).

See Andrew Fuller on the Apocalypse, and Fairbairn's "Typology of Scripture."

No one need trouble himself to reply to me, as I shall not engage in controversy for other sufficient reasons, and because I am

SENEC.

The *Pekin Gazette* is the oldest journal in the world. It is printed on a large sheet of yellow silk, and appears in the same form, with the same characters, and on the same kind of stuff as it did a thousand years ago. The only change is in the writers.

## Foreign Missions.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AT MISSIONARY CONFERENCES:—

Mission work the chief aim and duty of a Christian Church.

The evangelization of Heathen Lands possible within the present century.

Foreign Mission effort in the first three centuries.

The importance and benefits of Mission Literature.

The best talent in the Ministry required for Mission effort.

Encouragement derived from the political aspects and scientific discoveries of the age.

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS. The following is a list of the Missions of the Board:—The Tulu Mission—the European Turkey Mission—the Western, Central, and Eastern Turkey Mission—the Mahratta Mission—the Madura Mission—the Ceylon Mission—the Fouchou Mission—the North China Mission—the Mission to Japan—the Micronesia Mission—the Dakota Mission—the Choctaw Mission—the Missions to Spain, Italy, the Austrian Empire, and Western and Northern Mexico.

Missions.....	19
Stations.....	70
Out-stations.....	466
Laborers employed, including Females, and Native Pastors, preachers, and School-teachers.....	1271
Churches.....	197
Church-members.....	9,435
Added last year.....	794
Common Schools.....	496
Pupils in Common Schools.....	17,123
Training and Theological Schools.....	12

LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY.—Summary of Missions:—

	English Missionaries.	Native Preachers.	Church Members.	Schools.	Scholars.
CHINA, 19	58	1,655	24	446	
INDIA, 44	287	3,541	262	12,513	
MADAGASCAR, 22	2,733	38,932	637	27,806	
SOUTH AFRICA, 30	107	4,734	64	3,009	
WEST INDIES, 12	25	4,824	61	3,475	
POLYNESIA, 26	393	14,330	44	13,439	

JAPAN. Mrs. Pruyn, of Yokohama, Japan, mentions that a man who was formerly a pupil of Mr. Thompson has recently returned to Yokohama, from his home, two hundred miles to the north, bringing eighteen young men with him to study the Bible. "And now, twice a day, all these earnest seekers of the truth are gathered to study God's own precious word." Mrs. Pruyn notices, as a remarkable feature of the Spirit's work there, "that so large a majority of those who desire a knowledge of the Gospel, and of those who profess their faith in it, are young men."

TEACHING WOMEN TO SEW.—Mrs. Winsor, of the Mahratta Mission, writes thus to a friend:—"Just before we left America you said to me, 'I hope you will teach the women to sew. Yes! teach them everything that will raise them from their idleness and ignorance. Some months since we had a small class learning to make little garments. As the rains commenced in June, we thought it well to commence a school for the women in the city. I went to the little native bungalow where I had appointed to meet them, the first day, not without some anxiety, lest none would be there but my Christian sisters. As I entered the room my anxiety was changed to joy and gratitude. There was the room full to overflowing. All castes and kinds were there, Mussulman, Marathi, Mahar, and Manz. The first I particularly desired to influence, and had never reached them before, in any way.

"How could I supply all these with work? I had, in my little faith, put together only a few pieces of patch-work. However, by persuading some of the Christian women that they could baste, I soon had each woman busily engaged with the work in her hand. But such sewing as that first day exhibited! Such stitches! And yet I

was delighted with that first day's experience, for I saw many eager ones anxious to do it all just right. But the best was to come. The work was all put away, a hymn was sung, and words about the way of salvation were spoken. They listened with a quiet eagerness that made all our hearts glad.

"All through the rains there has been no diminution of interest. As at the first, so now, they seem to love to hear about the 'new religion.' Oh! that the dear Saviour would open their hearts to receive the words, that they might become wise unto salvation."—*Missionary Herald.*

### SIAM HILL.

The following graphic sketch of beautiful scenery in Burmah is sent by Miss Norris:

There is some magnificent scenery in the Southern Provinces. Tavoy stands in an alluvial bottom and is hidden in the distance by the tall palms and glossy green Jacks, and yellow flowered cassias, and twenty other flowering trees unknown to song, which overshadow its humble dwellings; but Siam Hill is a conspicuous knoll, a hundred feet high, six miles long by half a mile wide, in the paddy fields half a mile east of Tavoy.

Here, after emerging from the shrubbery that obstructs the view, there suddenly opens out before the spectator a prospect of indescribable beauty "like a sleeping child, too blessed to wake." At his feet lie spread out the level paddy fields, divided into numerous one-acre lots by little mounds raised around them to retain the water, so as to suggest a gigantic chess board. On the south a silver stream, fringed with the dark foliage of wild fig trees, and the thick straggling bushes of a species of Hibiscus covered with large yellow and red flowers is seen pursuing its tortuous course beneath the shadows of Mount Burney, which rises twelve hundred feet above its southern bank. On the east "hills peep o'er hills" like the seats of a vast amphitheatre, bounded by Ox's Hump, rising in a most picturesque outline four thousand feet above the plains. Yonder, at the distance of fourteen miles is seen a foaming cascade making a fearful leap from a gorge half-way up the highest mountains. Green forests are diversified with white lichen-covered precipices, while here and there a whitened pagoda lifts its conical head above the summit of an isolated hill, or the smoke of a solitary hamlet is seen curling up in the midst of Wood-oil tree forests, or Liquid Amber groves.

"The Palm tree waveth high,  
And fair the Betel springs,  
And to the Indian maid  
The Bulbul sweetly sings.  
But I dinna see the broom  
Wi' its tassels on the lea,  
Nor hear the Lintie's sang,  
O' my ain countrie."

The above extract I have copied from an interesting and most instructive work of Dr. Mason's on "Tenasserim." It describes the hill on which our Mission Compound is placed, and falls far short of the beauty of the landscape, glowingly though it is told—a landscape on which I feast every day.

H. M. N.

### BIBLE TRANSLATION.

In the *Christian Spectator* Dr. Wenger publishes some suggestive notices of the work of a Biblical Translator in India. For instance, in southern and western India the word *deva* appears to be perfectly unobjectionable as a term designating the true God; but it is not so in Bengalee, which employs this term almost exclusively with regard to inferior deities. It is doubtful whether this remark does not to some extent apply to Sanskrit as well. Anyhow, both in Sanskrit and Bengalee, *deva* is often used as a title applicable to men of rank, like "Lord" in English; and in Bengalee it occurs also as a surname. Another word must therefore be selected. Common par-