

# The Christian Messenger.

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## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

### THE HOUR OF PRAYER.

Sweet hour of prayer, dear hallowed time,  
When man can bow before his God,  
And at that consecrated shrine,  
Find grace to bear affliction's rod.

Sweet hour of prayer; blest mercy seat,  
Oh; may I often there be seen,  
In childlike faith my God to meet,  
Without a dimming veil between.

Sweet hour of prayer; more dear, more sweet,  
For was it not observed by thee,  
Dear Saviour! in the cool retreat,  
When sweating drops of blood for me.

Sweet hour of prayer; Oh Jesus hear,  
My aspirations after thee;  
Be thou my Saviour very near,  
And dwell forever here with me.

Sweet hour of prayer Oh may I pray,  
For strength, and grace, and heavenly love;  
And may I there both night and day,  
Seek holy blessings from above.

Sweet hour of prayer, with my whole heart,  
May I this mercy ever plead,  
That thou wilt not from me depart,  
But comfort me in every need.

Sweet hour of prayer, oh may it prove,  
My strongest shield, and greatest boon;  
Dear Jesus keep me by thy love,  
And never from thee let me roam.

Thou Lamb of God, oh wash my soul,  
In thy dear, sin atoning blood,  
Nor let the waves of sin, e'er roll,  
Across me like a swelling flood.

Oh keep me always very near  
To thy dear wounded bleeding side,  
And when for thine thou shalt appear,  
In heaven, may I with thee abide.

J. P. N.

Hartford, Yarmouth, Feb. 4th, 1874.

## Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

### CHRISTIAN STRENGTH.

All Christians are born into Heaven's kingdom weak. They may be intellectual giants. Like Nicodemus of old, they may be masters in Israel; but, the first dawns of spiritual light upon their souls, find them babes of struggling helplessness, unable indeed, to take needful care of themselves. Of course, this is much the case with all, even mature Christians. Of ourselves, we can do nothing, to divine acceptance. We are all quite dependent upon the strength and mercy of our God. Nevertheless, there may be a high attainment of Christian strength, by which one is enabled, under Divine sanction and guidance, to so order his attitude and conduct, as that he shall succeed in prosecuting religious endeavor, more efficiently and wisely, than one without considerable age or experience. Without debate, there is a law of progress, which, under true and proper conditions, at once establishes its beginning and workings, with the incipient life of every child of God. The possibilities of that law of progress, however, are not always allowed to develop themselves according to the spirit and genius of the Gospel. But, at the outset, there is a special and peculiar sense, in which all converts to the religion of the cross, are weak.

Like the babe of carnal birth, the conditions to which it is subject, are those of weakness, ignorance and dependence. But, in either case, there is no need, where the conditions are regular and healthy, that the child should remain subject to weakness and ignorance.

A condition of dependence, however, will always exist, and properly should continue. The very first thing necessary to progress, in both physical and spiritual life, is *nourishment*. The young convert must have food convenient for it. And, like any other babe, he must ask for it; that is, pray for it. The babe, on its mother's knee, is not slow to cry for needful sustenance. And, child of God, wilt thou not cry unto your heavenly Parent, for the milk of his Word? Prayer, then, is a first condition and means, for the promotion of spiritual growth and

strength. But, does the babe cry for its mother's milk seldom, or often? Very frequently does it pray its necessity for nourishment. So do thou, young convert. Once a day will keep you lean. It will make you spiritual dwarfs. You must be in a constant frame of prayer. And yet, the babe must have exercise. Did it not keep its little hands and feet nimbly moving, it could not be swift to grow, and quick to be strong. So, Christian, you must be grandly active for God, if you would experience a healthy increase of spiritual strength. Ask God to direct your heart, so that, with David, you may run in the way of his commandments; and he will lead you into many ways of joyful usefulness. But, never try to run on any supposed errand of mercy, without first praying for God's wisdom and strength to guide your hands and feet, all the way. Then, let your hands be nimble to carry help to the suffering, while your feet shall sound the cheerful tread, of an obedient waiter upon your Lord. But prayer and exercise, is not all. There must be the consecrated expression of sacrifice for others. A right outlay of personal interest and mercy, for the real good of others, must always increase the volume of personal strength. "There is that giveth, and yet increaseth." Sowing is rewarded with an increased gathering, of many fold. This is a Christ like method of becoming completed, in the greatness of earthly character and glory. But in the expenditure of his sacrifice, Christ endured suffering. And, this principle, in his people, administers to the increasing strength of their souls. Of our Lord himself, it is said, that he became perfect, through suffering. That is, his character *manward*, rose to perfect, and manifest development. And, it is impossible for any Christian, to become eminent in piety, and specially strong in God, without passing through much of suffering trial, whereby he is humbled and brought into fervent contact with the source of all power.

### A SERMON BY HYACINTHE.

The former popular preacher of Paris—Father Hyacinthe—is at work in the Old Catholic movement on the Continent. A Geneva Correspondent of the London Baptist gives the following interesting sketch of Mr. Loysson at his work:

I can hardly give you a better idea of the pace at which the "Catholic Reformation," as they call it, is going forward in this part of Switzerland, than by an account of my last Sunday morning's church-going. It was at Chene, a large village, three miles to the east of Geneva, and the occasion of the service was this: Chene is a Catholic village, and the cure of it was summoned last week by the cantonal authorities to take the recently prescribed oath of fidelity to the laws. Inasmuch as one of the laws is that which has just been denounced by the Pope as null and void (not to repeat other adjectives still more emphatic)—the "law for the organization of Catholic worship," which gives each Catholic parish the right to elect its own pastor—the cure declined. The laity, however, are not so obedient. No sooner had the priest signified his refusal to continue his functions under the new law, than some of the leading Catholics of the village, without waiting for an election, resolved to invite Father Hyacinthe to say mass in the church on the very next Sunday, and the Catholic mayor of the commune himself presented the address.

I got there a few minutes before church-time. Never did a sleepy little Swiss village look wider awake than Chene did that Sunday morning. There were heads at all windows looking to see who would go to the church; for, according to the priest and the Pope both, to go to church that day was equivalent to going to perdition. The neighbours came down to the

street-doors, and talked it over in their queer caps and bodices. And crowds of little street boys approached within a safe distance of the church door, and listened to the discussions going on among the groups of peasants in blouses. I owed the priest something for his malediction for it secured me a choice of seats. Soon the church began to fill up, however, with people of every imaginable class, down to the roughest shock-headed peasant; and soon after Father Hyacinthe moved up the aisle from the sacristy to the altar bearing the chalice and the paten, the blouses from outside began to dribble in, until the aisles were choked.

The sermon was not brilliant—as the preacher remarked afterwards, he only talked. But what sort of a talk Hyacinthe would make in explaining his work for the first time to a church full of villagers is just what you would like to know.

"My brethren," he began, in a quiet, colloquial tone, "you know in what circumstances I am here this morning. This church was abandoned. Its worship had ceased. Yonder tabernacle-lamp, the symbol of perpetual adoration, had been extinguished. Your magistrates and the parish council thought it not best that the village should remain smitten with interdiction, deprived of all the offices of religion; and they have invited me to celebrate the reformed Catholic worship. The lamp burns once more—may it never fail again. The mysteries of the Holy Sacrifice are renewed at your altars. In the congregation of the righteous is heard the voice of joy and praise.

"It is charged against us that we are doing a work of division, of destruction, and of hatred in the Catholic Church. On the contrary, the work of destruction and division has been done already by those who have changed the doctrine of the Church: through new and false dogmas—by those assembled bishops who revolutionised the constitution of the Church by abdicating all their own functions to the Pope, and so left the Church without an episcopate. It is these who are doing the work of hate—pursuing us with maledictions. Our work is one of reconstruction, to build up the church again upon its ancient foundations, so long buried out of sight by supine rubbish. It seeks not to divide, but to reunite those Christians in the east and in the west long alienated from the Catholic communion. It answers hate with love, and insult and cursing with benedictions. This is the Catholic reformation.

"Now there are two opposite complaints made against this movement. From one side I am told, 'You are going too far.' You are laying your hand on things which are of great importance—the worship of the Church, the order and discipline of its clergy, and its relation to the state.' From the other side, I have the complaint, 'You are not doing your whole duty. You are not purifying the dogmas of the Church.' Now, these two criticisms answer each other and vindicate us. The doctrine of the Church—the old dogma as you have just heard it from the altar in the creed of Nice—is invariable. Renounce this, and you are not Reformed Catholics, for you are not Catholics at all. I do not speak of the superfluous additions of new doctrine that have been added to the old—of dogmas that are not dogmas. These ought to be cleared away.

"The reform which we have begun is not of the doctrine of the Church, but of its corrupted discipline. And the first two points which we approach are those which have a most close and painful relation to the morals of the family and of society. 1. Obligatory confession. Not that the ear of the pastor and his heart will not be constantly open to the willing confidences of his flock, and his mouth ready with godly counsels, but that henceforth the priest shall not be an inquisitor, professionally trained to the work of extracting the secrets of families or Governments, of extorting from the

hands of a parent the direction of his family. He shall not be suffered (as it too often happens) to contaminate the mind of youth with corrupting questions." [There was a solemn silence among the congregation as these things were said; and one or two men in blouses got up and left the church, making a little noise at the door as they went.] "2. Enforced celibacy of the clergy. The attempt had been made, the preacher said, to shut his mouth on this subject by pointing to his own marriage, and imputing to him unworthy motives. He refused to be silenced by any such attack on the most honourable act of his life. He had nothing to say against that voluntary celibacy of which he had so often spoken in praise, and in which some of the best and happiest years of his life had been spent. So long as celibacy was free, willing, joyous, it was a life well pleasing to God by as much as it permitted more complete self-sacrifice and devotion. When it ceased to be voluntary, it grew into a galling yoke, hurtful to the man himself, and to the society in the midst of which he lived. Among the Catholic churches of the East, under the distinct sanction of the Pope, the celibacy of the clergy was a matter of free choice. There the unmarried priests were of the monastic orders, gathered in convents; but the confessors and pastors to whom the people loved to go for sympathy and counsel, were husbands and fathers like themselves. And then followed a picture of the married pastor, the model husband, father and citizen. 3. The election of pastors by the people. This change, like the preceding, is no novelty, it is simply a return to the old freedom of the Church—the inauguration into its old place of dignity and authority of what St. Cyprian, the famous Bishop of Carthage, calls 'the majesty of the Christian people.' 4. 'And the final act of Reformation, which has this day been begun among you, how shall I define it? Let me call it the liberation of the Church in its relations with God. Why should not the Christian people be allowed to worship God in their own mother-tongue? It is said that the Latin and the Greek are noble languages—these modern tongues are vulgar. Nay, these three grand languages of Switzerland—the German, the Italian, and the French—let no man dare deny that these, too, are noble. What God has cleansed, that let no man call common! Down with this wanton barrier, and let every man speak to God, in the worship of the church, in the language which his mother taught him! The Liturgy of the Church is that by which man speaks to God. The Bible is that by which God speaks to man. An open Liturgy in every man's hand; an open Bible, in his own tongue, in every man's house—that he may judge for himself whether the words taught him are in accordance with those of Christ and His apostles—these are the means which we propose for re-opening the long-blockaded intercourse between man and God."

This was the gist of the sermon. It was listened to with profound attention and respect; and after it was concluded, the people stood gazing round the church-door, and at all the neighbouring windows, to see the Reformer as he drove off in his carriage.

Elsewhere in French Switzerland the work goes on. In the Bernese Jura, out of twenty-eight Catholic parishes, fifteen or sixteen are already re-organized, with reformed pastors of their own choice, and four others are just about to be. There is no lack of candidates—men in good standing in the priesthood; and it is expected that all the parishes will soon be supplied. The new priests have been uniformly received, of course, with abuse and insult on the part of the Ultramontane devotees, but with cordial welcome from the best part of the people. Their churches are full of worshippers, and one of the most violently culminated the cure of the village of Porrentruy, is said to have a class of catechumens numbering seventy-five children.

## Foreign Missions.

All intelligence relating to Siam is interesting to our readers. The following is taken from the London Times.

### THE KING OF SIAM.

BANGKOK, Nov. 23, 1873.

The city has for the past week been a scene of festivity and gorgeous procession and illuminations, owing to the re-coronation of the King, who has lately attained his majority. He was originally crowned about six years ago, on the death of his father; but, being then only a boy of 13, he could not undertake the sole charge of government, which was, therefore, intrusted to a Regent, who, fortunately for the country, has fulfilled his duties in a manner which is seldom met with in Oriental countries.

Prior to the present ceremony, the King, according to Siamese law, was compelled to enter the priesthood for a short time, and had to perform all the duties of the youngest novice and to receive instruction suitable to the position he was to occupy. After this ceremony he was, on the morning of the 16th of November, at half-past 5, recrowned by the attendant priests, which fact was announced to the people by a salute of 101 guns from the Palace, and another of 21 guns from a French frigate which came to Bangkok in honour of the occasion.

At 10 a. m. the King repaired to the Royal Throne, arrayed in the splendid State robes, and attended by his nobles bearing the different insignia of his power. A most brilliant assemblage had been previously congregated in front of the throne, and representatives from almost every civilized nation were present. Immediately after His Majesty had taken his seat on the throne he read a proclamation abolishing prostration and prostration in the presence of a superior. From time immemorial it has been the Siamese custom never to stand in the presence of royalty, and the highest nobles in the land could only approach the King on their knees, with their elbows resting on the floor and their hands joined in the act of worship. A nobleman visiting another of higher rank than himself would have to remain in a very similar position, no matter how long the interview might last. In the proclamation the King stated that he had been impressed with the conviction that no country could prosper where such servility and worship from one man to another was the custom, and that he wished to see men on a more equal footing, so that the poorest subject in the kingdom might feel sure of obtaining equal justice with the rich.

During the reading of this edict, all the Siamese present, to the number of about 400, remained in a prostrate condition on the floor, but at its conclusion they rose simultaneously and did their best towards making a bow to His Majesty in European fashion.

Many of them appeared ill at ease, and it was noticeable, by their round shoulders and half-stooping gait, that they were almost afraid of the position they found themselves in. After the reading of the Proclamation, the Regent delivered an address, eulogistic, of course, but, to His Majesty's credit, it must be said that it contained not a word of flattery. The Regent stated that the King had shown a perfectly unbiased mind, and, although young, he had not been led away by flatterers. He also remarked that although the tender emotions are apt to fascinate young men, yet His Majesty's control of this as well as other passions was highly commendable. The Regent also thanked the King, in the name of the nobility and people, for the abolition of prostration and for the many improvements which had been introduced at His Majesty's sole instigation, one of which, he mentioned, was a canal many miles in length, which had been built by paid labour out of the King's private funds during his minority. After wishing