

# The Christian Messenger.

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## Poetry.

### Only.

Only a seed—but it chanced to fall  
In a little cleft of a city wall,  
And taking root grew bravely up,  
Till a tiny blossom crowned its top.

Only a flower—but it chanced that day  
That a burdened heart passed by that way;  
And the message that through the flower  
was sent,  
Brought the weary soul a sweet content.

For it spake of lilies so wondrously clad;  
And the heart that was tired grew strangely glad  
At the thought of a tender care over all,  
That noted even a sparrow's fall.

Only a thought—but the work it wrought  
Could never by tongue or pen be taught;  
For it ran through a life like a thread of gold;  
And the life bore fruit—a hundred fold.

Only a word—but 'twas spoken in love,  
With a whispered prayer to the Lord above,  
And the angels in heaven rejoiced once more;  
For a new-born soul "entered in by the door."

## Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.  
Church Polity.

### No. II.

#### WHY WERE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES CONSTITUTED?

It has been already observed, that a Christian church is a religious society, that is, a society composed of religious persons. The purposes for which such a society is constituted must therefore be religious. The promotion of religion must be the business of the church. That is the main object which the members have in view. It may be variously considered:

#### 1. Among themselves.

Mutual advancement in personal piety, will be the chief concern with them. The words of Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets are very noticeable:—"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it," (Mal. iii, 16). The subjects of their conferences were probably "the mighty acts of the Lord" on behalf of their nation, and such providential interferences as individual saints were in the habit of regarding with gratitude and joy. (See Psalm xxxiv. 1-4.) What providence was under the Old Dispensation, grace is under the New, Truth is the food of the same (John xvii. 17); and believers have fellowship with each other in partaking of it. The gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit are employed for mutual behoof, and as "members one of another" they hold themselves bound to seek the profit of the brethren and sisters by the application of the word of the Lord to existing conditions. When members meet it seems natural that they should take the opportunity of conversing on portions of Scripture and gathering from them the instruction, admonition, or comfort they are adapted to convey. Each will seek to "please his neighbor for his good to edification" (Rom. xv. 2). Those who are specially qualified for such efforts (and the existence of qualification will soon become apparent) will be careful not to shrink from the discharge of duty, and every talent in the church will be put to use. Unfortunately, the tendency of the age is to confine the gift of edification to "pastors and teachers," and many a good minister of Christ is dragged away from home, it may be for miles, to visit one of the members, at a time of the day when he ought to be in his study preparing for the next Lord's day's work, and meanwhile his place might be filled with great suitability by a fellow-member. It is true that the shepherd should "be diligent to know the state of his flock"; nor will a conscientious pastor allow himself to be in

ignorance in that matter; yet there is a large amount of unreasonableness in some quarters. The demands of many church members are very exacting. They do not sufficiently consider the labor which the Christian ministry involves, and they pay too little heed to the Apostle's charge to Timothy:—"Give attendance to reading. . . Meditate upon those things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all," (1 Tim. iv. 13-16).

2. *The conversion of sinners.*  
"The church in—received no additions for more than a year. It has been at a stand-still all the time." Is that the normal state of a Christian church? Do the members satisfy themselves with occupying their pews when the place of worship is open? Do they refrain from all attempts to bring their neighbours to Christ, accounting that the special duty of the pastor, which no one must interfere with? Then, surely, there is some error or evil in that church. The stagnant state is not natural. If the testimony of the gospel is faithfully and earnestly delivered—if all the members are striving, each in his own neighbourhood, to "save souls from death"—if Christians "behold the transgressors, and are grieved," some fruit will appear. Diligent, affectionate witnesses for the Saviour will not be unblest. The readers of the Life of Harlan Page, (published by the Tract Society) cannot fail to be deeply impressed with a conviction that it is the duty of every member of a Christian church to do something for the Lord and for the souls of his fellow-men at all suitable seasons. Their gifts and opportunities must not run to waste. The Churches of Christ, under God, are the great converting power in the world. Wee be to that church in which any portion of the power lies idle!

3. *Fellowship.*  
The resources of churches vary exceedingly, and in the management of them there is a similar variety. Some persons are apt to let things take their own course; others are for meddling with every item. Many a strong church thinks itself weak, not having realized its full amount of responsibility. Many a weak church dreams of strength which it does not possess. Be that as it may, it is undeniable that a union of the strong with the weak, on equitable terms, is likely to be productive of benefit, by bringing together representative men from different parts of the country, especially if the representatives are chosen on account of their fitness for the office and work of delegates. Provision is thus made for the transaction of religious business with discretion and promptitude, and an Association so constituted promises to be prosperous.

I must confess, however, that as it appears to me, the Associations would be more useful than they are if they were more spiritual in their character. It might be an improvement if a part of one of the days of meeting were spent in an evangelical Conference on some practical subject, so managed as to enlarge the views, quicken the desires, and elevate the hopes of Christian people. J. M. C.

#### The Second Coming of Christ.

AN ESSAY READ BEFORE THE BAPTIST MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE HELD AT LAWRENCE TOWN, ANNAPOLIS CO., APRIL 8TH, 1879.

By Rev. JOHN BROWN.  
(Published by request of the Conference.)

It is not to be regretted that the above question is receiving more than ordinary attention at the present time, inasmuch as it is a subject of the greatest importance for us to keep in mind; and the fact that it is such a prominent question just now, naturally leads us to a more careful and thorough investigation than we should otherwise give it. Whatever it may mean, of late years, few subjects have been made more prominent, and more freely discussed than this, and while I cannot go back many years—I do not remember

any time when a more general interest was taken in it than now. I do not for a moment suppose this to be any indication of the near approach of the Saviour's coming, inasmuch as it is not mentioned as one of the signs of that event, but rather (if it be not uncharitable to say so) an indication of a desire on the part of some, and they are not a few, who are wise above what is written, and think that, from the signs of the times and certain calculations made, that they are in a position to prophesy the event to be very close at hand, some even fixing the year, and some the day. We are told to "Despise not prophesyings," but we have very little admiration for such prophesyings as these.

The second coming of Christ is often referred to in the Scriptures in language of solemn grandeur, and we should approach the subject with feelings of devout solemnity, and holy joy.

There are four things in connexion with the subject on which I shall endeavour to treat. 1. The fact. 2. The manner. 3. The purpose. 4. The time.

#### 1. THE FACT.

That Christ is to come again, is made clear and plain in the Bible as anything can, or need be. The prophecies concerning it are as clear, distinct, and emphatic, as those that speak of his first coming, and as those prophecies which speak of the one have been fulfilled, so also will those that speak of the other. Daniel (vii. 13, 14) says: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." This not only predicts his coming, but his universal reign as well. Matthew (xxv. 31) says: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." Christ himself says: "He shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's and of the holy angels." Luke ix. 26.

He says again: And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John xiv. 3. This passage may have a two-fold application; 1st, his coming to receive them to himself at death, as to their souls; and 2nd, to receive them to himself at the last day as to their bodies. Paul says: "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation," Heb. ix. 28. These are a few of many similar passages that speak of the second coming. So much for the fact of his coming.

#### 2. THE MANNER.

This too is pointed out with great clearness, and the overwhelming glories of that day should fill every Christian's heart with holy rapture, and lead them to long for his appearing, and to say, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly." The manner is spoken of as follows:—"Matthew lxxiv. 30.) says he shall come "in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory;" and again, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels" Matt. xvi. 27. Also in chapter xxv. 31, already quoted to prove the fact of his coming, we are taught the manner; "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." Mark (viii. 33.) speaks of his coming "in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." Daniel (vii. 9, 10.) speaks of the event in language of terrible grandeur: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him,

and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The judgement was set, and the books were opened." Paul (1 Thess. i. 7, 8.) says: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is evident that when Christ shall come, all the angels, as to numbers innumerable, will come with him. The grandeur of that day will be further increased by the descent from heaven with Christ, and the angels, all those who will have died in the Lord before the Archangel's trumpet shall sound. I need hardly attempt to prove what from the Word of God seems perfectly clear, viz., that the soul of the believer at death goes to be with Christ, which Paul teaches in Phil. i. 23, where he speaks of "having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ;" and again in 2 Cor. v. 8, he expresses himself as willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord:

If, as some teach, the soul lies asleep in the grave till the resurrection, and if according to Paul, to depart, or to die, is "to be with Christ," the conclusion is that Christ is still in the grave, and will be till the resurrection. The sleep theory therefore virtually denies the resurrection of Christ. "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." 1 Cor. xv. 14, 17.

We know that when Christ left this world, he went up into Heaven. Mark (xvi. 19.) says: "he was received up into Heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." Consequently if Christ is in Heaven and the Christian dying goes to be with him, he must necessarily be where Christ is; which is not in purgatory, nor in the grave, nor in an intermediate state, but in Heaven. All those who have already gone to glory, as well as all who will have departed to Heaven (which being a place should always be written with a capital letter) before the trumpet sound, will come from Heaven with Christ when he comes to judgment. Heaven was once silent, then for once it will be empty. If proof of this be needed the following may suffice. Zechariah (xiv. 5.) says "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee."

Jude (14) says: "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." Paul (1 Thess. iii. 13) speaks of "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints." Writing to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. iv. 14.) he says: "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." If it be said that the resurrection is here meant, then it cannot be said that God will bring them with him, for before he can bring them with him, they must be with him where he is. Doubtless the resurrection of the body is included, at which time, though the precise time is not stated, the reunion of body and soul will take place. Probably the soul will take its place in the body before it rise from the grave, as I presume was the case with Lazarus and those who rose from the grave after the resurrection of Christ. (Not at his death as is taught sometimes. Hymn 239 in Psalmist teaching the same error.) The then-changed living, and the raised dead, will ascend to meet the Lord in the air. I do not say the reunion will actually take place before the body rise, still it seems most reasonable; all I care now to prove is, that the souls of the departed will come from Heaven to form part of that innumerable host that will accompany Christ when he comes to judgment. So much for the manner.

#### 3. THE OBJECT.

This I shall state in the simple, plain words of Scripture. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his

sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." Matt. xxv. 31-33. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. v. 10. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired (thamazo, as in Septuagint in Isa. lii. 15.) in all them that believe . . . in that day." 2 Thess. i. 8-10. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Rev. xx. 11, 12. It is seen from the foregoing that Christ is coming to judge the human family of all nations, ages, classes, and distinctions. This however is not altogether the object of his coming, inasmuch as the fallen angels are to be judged as well. Peter (2 Eph. ii. 4.) says: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment &c." Generally speaking then the object of his coming is two-fold; namely, to judge the world and the fallen angels. Thus much for the object.

(To be Continued.)

#### Religious Liberty in Siam.

The kingdom of Siam takes a position among the most enlightened nations of the world in respect to religious liberty. Our veteran missionary at Bangkok, the Rev. Dr. Dean, sends us a copy of a proclamation issued in October last, at the instance of Colonel Sickness, United States Consul at that port. Colonel Sickness moved in the matter in consequence of some interference with two missionaries. The proclamation recites the facts, and proceeds as follows:

"Whoever is of the opinion that any particular opinion is correct, let him hold to it as he pleases; the right or wrong will be to the person who holds to it. In the treaties and in the customs of the Kingdom of Siam, there is no prohibition against persons who shall hold to any particular religion. If any one is of the opinion that the religion of the Lord Jesus is good, let him hold to it freely.

"Whenever there is government work, persons who hold to the religion of the Lord Jesus must perform it. No religion is henceforth allowed to interfere in government work. Whoever shall hold to any system of religion let him do so freely. Let no Phraya Lao, Taosaan or common person being a relative or allow to be done—as worshipping spirits, feasting spirits, and various employments on Sunday; let there be no compulsion or constraint to practice or to do anything of the kind,—it is absolutely forbidden. Only war and business of absolute importance are excepted. At such times they must serve on Sunday, but let there be no impositions.

"Again, if persons seeking a living shall hire out to some American citizens, let no Prince Master Phraya Lao, or Taosaan interfere to prevent it and become an occasion of dark foreboding in regard to the good relations of national friendship. Princes great and small, Phrayas, Taosaans and common people on learning of this proclamation, let them not violate it in any particular, it is absolutely forbidden."—*Watchman.*

A little girl who was spending a few days with a farmer uncle, visited the barn-yard, and while looking at the well-fed cows, remarked: "Why, uncle, just see, all the cows are chewing gum, aren't they?"