

# The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

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WHOLE SERIES.  
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## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

### Beyond.

Out of the darkness,  
Into the light,  
Out of the shadow,  
Into the sun.

No more pushing  
Into the fight,  
No more toiling,  
For work is done.

Over the river,  
Lay down the oar,  
Pause at the portals  
For garments white;

All that is darksome  
Leave on the shore,  
Nothing can enter,  
Save what is bright.

Souls that were trailing  
Deep in the dust,  
Hearts that by sorrow  
Were purified,

There never murmur:  
Perfect the trust,  
Learn they the secret  
Why they were tried.

Out of the mystery,  
Into the truth;  
Never to wander,  
Never to stray.

Clothed with the vigor,  
The bloom of youth,  
Hasten on Father,  
That long'd for day!

S. B. E.

## Religious.

### The work of Church Leaders.

At the late session of the London Baptist Association, the president elect, Rev. J. Clifford, gave an excellent address on "The work of Church Leaders." It is the custom in England—and a very good one—for the president elect to be the vice-president of the previous year. By this means he is enabled to prepare an inaugural address on some important subject suited to the times.

This subject is one of importance especially in populous cities. Difficulties in government are sure to arise, and the temptation will be strongly felt at times to drive rather than to lead, to use the whip and the goad rather than persuasive speech and winning deed. Disagreeable people are found here and there even in Baptist churches. Grace and sense are not always associated. Some good men are incurably stupid, and not a few "saints" are very great sinners. A little fire from heaven to consume an "awkward man," or rather to burn up his awkwardness, would be a great convenience if it could be procured on the quiet. Talleyrand said, with regard to English public school education, "It is the best which I have ever seen, and it is abominable." So we are sometimes in danger of saying of our actual Church government—"It is really the best we know of, and it is abominable."

But we are not the men to change our policy because of difficulties. We have reckoned with them, and expect them. We are aware that we could easily get rid of some of them by adopting a bishop, a churchwarden, and a parochial vestry, or by creating an omnipotent oligarchy in the shape of a conference, or by padlocking the lips of three-fourths of our fellow-members, or in some other way curtailing the freedom and hampering the life and growth of men; but we are extremely unwilling to pay such a price merely to put ease into our work, and to take the strain off our shoulders. The best children are reared where the home government is felt to be a common interest, and every difficulty bravely faced by those really in charge. The best citizens are made where the government is freest, and each individual is brought to take a large and active share in the affairs of the nation; and the best Christians will be nourished in a sphere of personal responsibility, and of warm sympathy with the common object and aims of church communion.

Bad business arrangements are as

injurious on Sunday as on Monday, in the account of churches and schools, as in those of drapers and merchants; and God's kingdom is as worthy of the most splendidly developed business faculty as any mammoth house of trade in this metropolis. Indeed, I know of few finer sights than that of a largely endowed and thoroughly cultured man of business devoting his powers to the direction of the affairs of the Church of God! (Applause.) By no means inferior to this work is that which devolves upon the seat-steward. His business is to care for the comfort and well-being of the worshippers, to welcome strangers, and to minister generally to the wants of a section of the congregation. No position excels this, certainly not of a deacon or elder; scarcely if at all, even that of a preacher. Its importance, its opportunities of usefulness, and its power to advance the welfare of the church. It is the highest prize the church has to give to the willing hearts and cultivated ability of her members, and therefore the very best man should have it. This work, done well, without fuss and a simpler and vainer, and with real kindness, free from rose-water imbecilities, and full of a manly Christian interest in the welfare of men, will be one of the most helpful auxiliaries a well-led church can enjoy.

And if you will forgive me for saying it, I verily think the leaders of the Church are responsible for its MANNERS, and they are bound to set the pattern and style of the church's life, of its conduct toward those who are without as well as towards one another. Emerson declares that "behaviour is the first sign of force," and an ancient maxim says, "manners are stronger than laws." Churches, and denominations of churches have manners, as nations have, as families and individuals have; and I should not be breaking the commandments if I were to say that some churches have very bad manners. They do not know how to behave, and it is difficult to teach them. Now and again they move a little ungainly; they are awkward and self-conscious, wanting in natural ease and dignity, extremely fussy about nothing, given to "brag" about themselves and their respectabilities, and wanting in the real graces and courtesies of life. The Christian Church is intended to be the home and refuge of all the courtesies and gentlenesses of life. The world is rude and harsh, inconsiderate and intolerant. It lacks heart, and therefore lacks pity for the weak and erring, and divinest chivalry for the wayward and unfortunate. But in a society whose Head and Chief, whose inspiration and power is the gentle Christ, that Christ who breaks not the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax, pity and kindness should never be absent, consideration for others should always be in the ascendant; and there we should teach and be taught to "adorn every day with sacrifices."

"Every chapel should have them. If only one stranger comes to the service in the course of the morning or evening there should be some one to give him a kindly welcome, and to make him feel that he was never so much at home in his life before. A seat-ward should have a pleasant face, a kindly manner, a quick eye, and a loving heart. He should never be "bilious" on a Sunday. He must see everything and everybody. Know where the draught comes from and how to stop it. Keep the "babes" near the door, so that in case the darlings wish to take part in the service they may be easily accommodated in the rear of the congregation, where the mother, who loves no prattle like her babes, may have the luxury mainly to herself. He should read character, at a glance; be polite without being "fussy," and active without being excited. He must never take offence, and must not give it, if he can possibly help it. He should be able to see the visitor at the further end of the pew who has no hymn-book. He should always be there at least fifteen minutes before time, to see that the chapel-keeper has not left any dust to be removed by hats or dresses, and to have all things in perfect readiness for Divine worship. Above all, he should be "wise to win souls to Christ." This should be his supreme desire; and all his wisdom, tact, skill, and love, should be employed for this end. Blessed is the seat-steward who does his work well; and happy beyond expression the church that owns him.—GENERAL BAPTIST ALMANACK, 1879.

It should be, it will be yet, the "best society," the best school of manners, the finest nursery for whatsoever things are "lovely" to look upon and to enjoy, whatsoever things are of good report, and win honest praise from men, whatever feeds modesty of spirit, persistent preference of others, grace of behaviour, strength of will, and the beauty of holiness." (Applause.) We do not plead for pantomime, for sentimentalism, for the spicing of social superiors. "From my very soul," said Cowper, "I loathe all affectation"; and of all affectation the most ghastly is that of a Christian church which mistakes stiffness of movement for good manners, frigidity for dignity, and cold and distant respectability for the manly naturalness and ease of a genuinely Christian and grace-filled spirit. "Manners" do not make the church, but they enter as potent factors in determining the rate and character of its progress; and the making of the manners rests mainly upon those who are the leaders of the church.

### How the Chinese Government cares for the children of the poor.

In order to save these innocent victims from the death to which the extreme poverty of their parents would almost inevitably devote them, the Chinese government has looked with favour upon their being "exposed," and has made this course as easy as possible, by divesting it of every feature which might make it ignominious in the sight of the public; furnishing gratuitously abundant aid in such cases, and giving it the protection of the strictest surveillance, under the guardian-care of the mandarins.

At Peking, every day at early dawn, five wagons, each drawn by an ox, pass through the five sections into which the city is divided (that is to say, the northern, the southern, the eastern, the western, and the central section; for so it is divided). Notice of the time when these wagons will pass is given by certain signals, and all who have children, living or dead, to entrust to them, give them over to be carried to the *Tu-in-tang* that is to that charitable institution, in which are physicians, matrons and nurses, which the sovereign maintains at the expense of the State; where there are besides, mandarins to watch over its decency and good order, and where the whole management is submitted directly to the judges of the high tribunals which we call in Chinese *Li-pou* which may be rendered by "the tribunal having the oversight of the rites, morals and customs of the people," (*le tribunal inspecteur des rites, des moeurs et des usages de la nation*.) Children who are sick are placed under the care of nurses; and the dead are deposited in a species of crypt, where they are covered with quick-lime, in order that the flesh may be speedily consumed.

Once each year in Spring commissioners appointed by the *Lipou*, and chosen from among the mandarins composing this tribunal, repair with much ceremony to the *Tu-in-tang*; and there preside over the erection of a funeral-pile on which the remains of these little bodies are burned to ashes.

So long as the funeral-pile is burning, a company of *bonzes* (priests) surrounds it, repeating prayers, which they address to the spirits of the earth and to the genii presiding over births, beseeching them to show more favor to these little ones in that future time when they shall re-appear under a new form.

When the prayers are ended, and the funeral-pile entirely consumed leaving only ashes, the mandarin-commissioners cause every one to withdraw, and they themselves retire, to return the following day and preside over the removal of these ashes. This ceremony takes place with the same pomp as that of the preceding day. They collect the cold ashes carefully, place them in a sack, and depart to scatter them on the surface of a river, or a neighboring stream. The priests again offer prayers, in which they entreat the spirits of the waters, and those which

preside over generation, to cause that these ashes, quickly dissolved, should exhale in vapor and not remain long without entering again into the formation of some other beings like those whose remains they are, but fortunate as to live any longer than they did.

The people are induced to believe that the reason why these ashes are not buried, instead of being strewn upon the water as is the custom, is because the ashes, scattered on the river, being more quickly dissolved than they would be in the ground, are sooner in a condition to be restored to their former state by evaporating with the water; but the true reason is that before the establishment of this ceremony the government had discovered that these ashes were put to an improper use in magical performances, or in chemical processes, in order that the composition of certain substances might be thereby perfected. It is especially claimed that these ashes, mixed with the ingredients from which porcelain is made, render it firmer, more translucent, and much more beautiful than it would be without them. If this be the actual effect, which the presence of the phosphate of bone renders quite probable, it would not be impossible to obtain it from the ashes of young animals.

Once each month the same deputies of the *Li-pou* make their regular visit of inspection. They inform themselves as to the number of children, and substitute fresh nurses where needed, or in place of those who have reached the limit of their engagement, which never extends over three years. In short, they see for themselves whether everything is in order, and correct abuses if any have crept in.

### A remarkable Woman.

Rev. Dr. Jeter, one of most able and venerable of the denominational editors of America, gives in the *Religious Herald* an account of a woman whose life is really worthy of study—especially by doleful Christians. We call the more interesting facts, preserving, as far as possible, the writer's own words:—On our visits to Richmond more than fifty years ago, we were attracted by the appearance of a woman, who, on account of her imperfect hearing, usually sat near the pulpit during public religious services. She was past the bloom of life, low of stature, but quite corpulent, of yellow or sunburnt complexion, with brown hair, prominent eyes, bearing marks of disease, and a mild, but not particularly intelligent, countenance. Her person would have attracted attention in any assembly. This was Miss Lucy Courtney, a granddaughter of Elder John Courtney, who, for thirty-five years, was the loved and venerated pastor of the First Baptist Church. She is still living, and in her ninety-first year. She was baptized at an early age, by Rev. Jacob Grigg, who for a short while assisted Elder Courtney in the pastorate. From that time she has been a consistent and much-loved member of the church. For thirty-five years she has been perfectly blind, and for more than twenty years as deaf as she is blind. She can neither see the brightest lightnings, nor hear the loudest thunder.

It is wonderful how, in sister Lucy, feeling supplies the place of sight and hearing. She rises at five o'clock in the morning, winter and summer,

sweeps out her room, makes her bed, dresses herself, attends to her wardrobe, threads her needle, mends her clothing; and, in short, is a careful, neat housekeeper. Her memory is extraordinary. She lives in the past. The persons and events familiar to her in her mind. She recollects when the First Baptist Church worshipped in a barn without glass windows. She remembers well the Baptist ministers who visited Richmond in the early part of the century. Her recollections are by no means limited to what she knew in her early years. She is well-informed of passing events, and her mind retains the minutest and the most unimportant information. In keeping time, she is equal to a clock and an almanac. She knows the day of the week, the month, the holidays, and her church communion day. We have not heard of an instance of inaccuracy in her recollections.

Sister Lucy is exceedingly fond of company. That the reader may understand the process by which she has intercourse with her friends, we must request him to accompany us to her dwelling. She is brought out to the parlor and seated by one of the family. We take our chair by her and grasp her hand. She begins: "Who are you? Do I know you?" She has two signs: Squeezing her hand means, Yes, and shaking it, No. We squeeze her hand. "Are you a preacher?" We give the same sign. She will then probably guess several names; and if she fails to guess rightly, she will propose to spell the name; and begin at once to call the letters of the alphabet. When she reaches the letter J we squeeze her hand. Now she knows us, and asks, "Are you Brother Jeter?" On receiving an affirmative answer, she shows great joy, for we were long her pastor when she could see our face and hear our voice. We may now prepare to answer questions by the simple signs of Yes and No. It is surprising how much information she can pump out of us in half-an-hour by this process. Her questions relate to family, Church and State affairs, and to things past, present, and future, showing that she is well informed on all subjects of usual conversation.

The case of sister Lucy furnishes a striking illustration of the value of religion. She is almost entirely cut off from the enjoyments of life. She dwells in irremediable darkness and in silence, broken by no voice of friendship, and yet she is calm, cheerful, hopeful. No murmuring word escapes her lips. She cherishes the most grateful remembrance of all the attention and kindness shown to her. To her visitors she always utters words of encouragement and hope. She is on the shore of the river, ready, waiting, but not impatient to cross it, with the sweet assurance of a blessed immortality. She is suffering from the infirmities of age, but may yet live several years before she shall enter her "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." There she will see as she is seen, and hear the voice of her Redeemer, and the songs of the celestial choir.

### The Grace of Giving.

BY REV. JOHN E. EDWARDS, D. D.

In an old letter, written by an inspired apostle, the writer essays to stimulate the church-members at Corinth to increased liberality in giving, by an appeal to the example of other churches. He alludes especially to "the churches of Macedonia." And in referring to them he makes special mention of a grace by which they were, pre-eminently distinguished, which seems to have been lacking, or at least not abounding in the church at Corinth. And what suppose you friendly reader was that grace? Was it the grace of patience? No. Was it the grace of gentleness, meekness, resignation? No. Was it the grace of zeal for the honor of God and the promotion of his glory? Not exactly that; for he says his previous letter had wrought that in them. What then? Will you believe it