

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business : fervent in spirit."

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## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

### "REQUIESCO IN SPE."

"I rest in hope";  
All my life the waves I've breasted,  
Never loiter'd, never rested  
Till my work was done,  
Weary toil beneath the sun;  
But at last the crown is won.  
'Requiesco in spe,' Amen, say we,  
Lost in His will our own would be.

"In Christ I hope;  
He all my life has me defended,  
Now when this fitful dream is ended  
He will not me forsake,—  
Tho' on my ear should break,  
The sound that e'en the dead must wake,  
With all my sins, with all my own unrest,  
I sleep in Him and wake supremely blest."

Rest, dear one rest;  
A slumber as profoundly deep—  
As myriads know, who sleep their sleep  
The liquid wave beneath :—  
Who do not feel in death,  
The summer's peaceful breath  
Floating athwart their hallowed resting place,  
Sifting the leaves with sad ethereal grace.

Thou need'st thy rest,  
For thou hast been severely tried,  
Still trusting in the crucified,  
Nor fainting 'neath the rod,  
The path hast patient trod  
Which led thee to thy God.  
We leave thee there,—Again we hear thee say,  
'I rest in hope.' God grant we may.  
Eldersley.

## Selections.

### MYSTERIES.

A mystery is something which we cannot explain. It may be a fact, as clearly known to us as that of our own existence, while the explanation is hidden in impenetrable obscurity. The province of mystery is to our knowledge as the twilight to the day. It results from the intermingling of the known with the unknown, the blending of light and shade. The light penetrates the darkness, without the darkness being able to comprehend it. The sphere of our knowledge is always bounded by a borderland of mystery.

To acquire knowledge is only to clear up some portion of the all-embracing mystery. Any branch of knowledge presents to us only mysteries at the first. A youth at school, who has only learned the more ordinary arithmetical calculations, looks with wonder, if not with distrust, at what appears to him the strange and disorderly procedure of the algebraist at his side. And his bewilderment is rendered complete, when he is told that some of the characters used stand for quantities entirely unknown. He may follow every step of the demonstration with observant eye, and yet no light therefrom penetrate the eye of his mind; while, to the larger information of the other, all is positive and clear. In the progress of investigation, and the consequent accumulation of knowledge, much that was once mysterious has ceased to be so.

But then, every inquiry that reaches a sound conclusion, implies and involves a realm of mystery beyond it. We are finite, but encompassed, nay, insphered in the infinite. The known will always be outnumbered and outmeasured by the unknown. No matter to what depths our investigations penetrate, no matter from what depths in the inscrutable any fact is revealed to us, our positive knowledge is in every instance suspended in the inexplicable.

True science is, therefore, modest in its pretensions. It prompts the spirit of inquiry, at the same time that it humbles our pride of thought. The very greatness of its achievements tends to impress us with the proportional littleness of our loftiest acquisitions. There is always infinitely more in heaven and earth than is dreamed of in our philosophy. Said Sir Isaac Newton, "I seem to myself only to have gathered up, here and there, a pebble on the shore; while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." Thus spake the true philosopher. How different from the philosophy, falsely so called,

of modern Rationalism. The Rationalist cries out against mystery, ridicules it, and demands that nothing shall be believed but what can be explained. It may as well be asked that we believe nothing at all. Absolute idleness or infinite wisdom; nescience or omniscience. There is no order of intellect between them that could comply with the exorbitant demand. A fine intelligence cannot outgrow the mysterious. Neither Religion nor Philosophy can exist without it. Let the Rationalist try his hand at unravelling the countless mysteries in which his own being is involved, before he attempts those of Religion. Let him master the human before he assaults the divine. To refuse our assent to the facts and doctrines of Religion, simply because they involve mysteries is to condemn ourselves to absolute and perpetual stultification.

The truth is, the mysteries of Nature are not a whit less numerous or less profound than those of Revelation. Indeed, there is hardly a mystery in Revelation but what we find an analogous mystery in Nature or Providence. We cannot explain the great mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh. But we find an analogy in the union of our spiritual and material natures, which we are quite as incompetent to explain. We cannot unfold the mystery of that "Eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." But neither can we tell what *Life* is in any case. It is the part of sound reason to acknowledge that we know but in part, trusting that when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. If we consider it well, we shall find our own existence involving the most inscrutable of all mysteries. Our lives, in fact, are like algebraic demonstrations. Their character and worth depend upon the unknown quantities they involve. He lives to the noblest purpose who lives above the vicissitudes of outward facts and incidents, and most in the atmosphere of heavenly and eternal mysteries.

Revelation has followed the analogy of Nature, in presenting us the simple facts it behooves us to know, without attempting to clear up the manifold obscurities in which they are involved. And sound Reason, as well as sound Faith, will admit facts that are demonstrably true, though it does not appear how they are to be explained.—*Examiner.*

### CONVERSION BEFORE BAPTISM.

The greatest drawback to the prosperity of a church of Christ is unconverted membership. And the churches cannot be too earnestly urged to the exercise of the utmost caution, lest they should become sufferers in this way.

The inducements to swell the membership of a church, not merely from a regard for the souls of our fellow-men, but also from earthly motives, are strong. Frequent accessions to a church increase the popularity of the minister, and often great injustice is done to humble, devoted servants of Christ, who toil faithfully, but are not permitted to see many converted under their ministry, by the harsh criticisms of their brethren, when perhaps a thousand fold more of the blame rest upon prayerless worldly members, than upon them.

We can easily see from this what an inducement there is for ministers to hurry people into the church. Again, accessions of people of property into a church lessen the pecuniary burdens of the others. When men of learning, renown, or science are added, the church becomes elevated in social standing. In proportion as the membership of a denomination increases, the political influence of that denomination increases also. Such are some of many motives or (as they may be properly termed) temptations which sometimes work disastrously, by introducing unconverted persons into church fellowship. It is foolish, it is wicked to be too hasty in receiving members. Let it first be clearly manifest that the candidate has received the gospel of Jesus in the love of it. It is not sufficient that he has wallowed in the "Slough of Despond," that he was wept and received stripes under the frowning cliffs of Sinai. It is not even enough that he has been to the "Interpreter's House," and has received lessons from the Divine Teacher there; receive him not by the significant ordinance of baptism into "the

House Beautiful" until he has come to the Cross. "He ran thus till he came to a place somewhat ascending; and upon that place stood a cross, and a little below, in the bottom, a sepulchre. So I saw in my dream that just as Christian came up with the cross his burden loosed from off his shoulders and fell from off his back, and it began to tumble, and so continued to do, till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more." Unless the applicant has experienced a release and made a discovery similar to that so graphically described by the inimitable dreamer, he is not fit for baptism and subsequent membership. A fortress would be more efficiently defended by one hundred good men and true, than by a thousand, one-half of whom were secret traitors. A building slowly but solidly built up of massive granite blocks will stand the pelting storms, which would speedily overthrow the hastily erected structure, which, with a good block here and there, has loose crumbling substances between them. The well-built ship whose timbers are sound and strong can stand the storms and make the port in safety; whereas, the one whose timbers are shaky or rotten, however perfectly painted and handsomely rigged, may be expected to founder during the first gale. So with a church; the enemy will soon have possession, if unconverted members are continually added to its numbers. It will soon fall to ruins, or sink into oblivion, if an unconverted membership constitute any considerable portion of its material.

The spirituality of a church constitutes its real strength, not its numbers. Let us ever remember that tears or other manifestations of feeling are not enough. Religion commands itself to the intellect as well as to the emotional nature, and he who has passed from death unto life can give a *reason* of his hope. Let this reason be elicited and proven to be a good, evangelical reason for hope, before it receives our suffrages.

Such being our convictions with regard to the reception of members, the injustice of the accusation so frequently made against us, that "all Baptists care for is to get people under water," and that we think "it is all right with those who are immersed," will readily appear. Far from believing in "water salvation," Baptist principles are, that none should be received for baptism until they furnish satisfactory evidence that they are already in a saved state.—*Canadian Baptist.*

### HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE CHESAPEAKE AFFAIR.—On Friday Feb. 19th Mr. Haliburton asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs for information respecting the capture of a vessel under the Confederate flag by a Federal vessel of war within the harbor of Sambro, near Halifax N. S.

After commenting on the necessity for preventing such high-handed acts on the part of U. S. officials, Mr. Layard said he had applied to Lord Lyons for information but long before an answer could be obtained he had received from Lord Lyons a despatch stating that Mr. Seward of his own accord had forwarded to him an explanation and apology. The following is a copy of

#### MR. SEWARD'S APOLOGY.

"Department of State, Washington, Jan. 9, 1864.  
The undersigned, Secretary of State of the United States, has the honor to present his respects to the Right Hon. Lord Lyons, accredited to this government as the minister plenipotentiary of her Britannic Majesty, and to state that he has submitted to the President certain papers which were placed in the hands of the undersigned by his lordship on the 2d day of this month, and which are described as follows :—1, Memorial of Susan Henry; 2, Affidavit of John E. Holt; 3, Memorial of John E. Holt; 4, Affidavit of John E. Holt; 5, Provincial Secretary to Mayor of Halifax, Dec. 19, 1863; 6, Mayor of Halifax to Provincial Secretary, Dec. 19, 1863; 7, Same to same, Dec. 22, 1863; 8, City Marshal to Mayor of Halifax, Dec. 21, 1863; 9, Police-constable Hunt to City Marshal, Dec. 21, 1863. The undersigned is authorized, in the first place, to express to his lordship his appreciation of the delicacy of the manner in which his lordship has thus, without formal complaint, brought to the notice of this government the fact that the commissioner and other officers of the United States Steamer *Ellis* and *Annie*, in their recent visit at Halifax in pursuit of pirates who had captured the American steamer *Chesapeake* and

taken refuge within British jurisdiction, directly violated the sovereignty of her Majesty by the assumption of power and authority in the name of the United States, as well on board the said steamer *Chesapeake* as on board the British schooner *Investigator*, while within British waters, without having obtained consent thereto of the authorities of her Majesty's government there or elsewhere. The undersigned observes that in some of these papers it is represented that the acts of power and authority referred to were attended with circumstances of severity, rigour, and insult to British subjects. The undersigned, however, thinks that it sufficiently appears from the papers that the rigour and severity alleged were not greater than were necessary to secure the persons of the pirates in pursuit of whom the officers complained of were engaged, and to deliver them up to the British authorities of that place. He hopes that this view of the case may be taken by her Majesty's government. The undersigned would observe, in the next place, the *Chesapeake* and prisoners were promptly delivered to those authorities, in compliance with the instructions of the department. The undersigned is further authorized to assure her Majesty's government, in the spirit of a former communication made by the undersigned to his lordship, relating to the capture of the *Chesapeake* in British waters, that the President disapproves and regrets the act of force, power, and authority which was exercised by the officers of the *Ellis* and *Annie*, within British waters, on the occasion mentioned, as a violation of the law of nations and of the friendly relations existing between the two countries so greatly to the satisfaction of the United States and to the advantage of both nations.

The President has reason to believe that the proceedings thus disapproved were taken by the officers concerned under the influence of a patriotic and commendable zeal to bring to deserved punishment outlaws who had offended against the peace and dignity of both countries. The President, while recognizing this circumstance as modifying the character of the transaction, and mitigating the censure to be bestowed upon it, nevertheless freely concedes that it does not constitute a justification for the violation of the sovereignty of Great Britain, which those officers have committed. He has, therefore, directed that they shall be censured for this violation, and he will take such other means as may be necessary to prevent a recurrence of the grievances complained of. Fully determined to make all the amends that are due to Great Britain in the premises, the undersigned will await the consideration of her Majesty's government upon the case as it has now been submitted.

"The undersigned avails himself, &c., &c.,  
(Signed) WM. H. SEWARD."

Earl Russell in reply to Lord Lyons says :—  
The readiness with which Mr. Seward, in his first communication with his lordship manifested to make all proper and suitable reparation for the acts of the United States officers has rendered it unnecessary for me to insist upon the questions which, under other circumstances, it would have been my duty at once to instruct your lordship to discuss with the government of the United States, namely, the wilful and flagrant violation of her Majesty's territory by the officers of the United States cruiser *Ellis* and *Annie*.  
The government of the United States having subsequently made, as reported in your lordship's dispatch of the 12th of January, a full apology for the violation of her Majesty's territory, committed by its officers in case of the *Chesapeake*, it is only necessary for me to authorize your lordship to state to Mr. Seward, that her Majesty's government accepts that apology in the same spirit in which it has been offered, and are truly glad that the matter has been settled in a manner honourable to both parties, and calculated to improve the friendly relations which her Majesty's government are always anxious to maintain with the government of the United States."

This was deemed fully satisfactory.

A scoffer once scornfully asked "What advantage has a religious man over any one like myself? Does not the sun shine on me as well as on him, this fine day?" "Yes," replied his companion, a pious laborer, "but the religious man has two suns shining on him at once—one on his body, the other on his soul."

That God should be reconciled after such a dreadful breach as the fall of man made, is wonderful. No sin, all things considered, was ever like to this sin; other sins, like a single bullet, kill particular persons; but this, like a chain-shot, cuts off multitudes as they stand upon the sea-shore, which no man can number.

Hold idleness to be the mother of sin; it both robs thee of the good thou hast, and hinders thee of what thou hast not.