

A Reading Room

# Christian Messenger.

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"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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## Poetry.

### The Beggar's Death.

BY SCHUBART.

The beggar on his lonely bed  
In wretchedness is dying,  
And yet, effulgent on his head  
A crown divine is lying;  
Come, quiet earth and silent grave,  
His limbs forsaken cover;  
He lays on you his wanderer's staff,  
His pilgrimage is over.

On riches, honor, pleasures, strife,  
No trust of his is centered;  
He hastens naked from this life,  
As naked it he entered;  
A Christian man he dies in bliss,  
When kings may die forsaken;  
A treasure beyond price is his,  
A faith in Christ unshaken.

Rough is the bier on which he lies,  
On pauper help depending;  
No funeral pomp for him arise,  
No purchased tears descending;  
Into the common earth his frame  
In careless haste is hurried,  
And in his grave obscure his name  
Is now forever buried.

Yet God for his great day of grace  
Is that poor name retaining,  
The mute entreaties of that face  
Not, like mankind, disdain;  
He whom the princes of the land  
On earth were coldly spurning,  
Will soon be at his God's right hand  
In seraph glory burning.

My God! if 'tis thy wise decree  
That here in want I languish,  
May I, like Lazarus, in thee  
Find comfort in my anguish;  
May angels bear my soul like his,  
From this poor world of sorrow,  
To endless plains of heavenly  
To an eternal morrow.

## Religious.

### "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."

It was a gay circle which had gathered in Mrs. Grey's mansion, to celebrate the wedding of her oldest daughter Helen. Aunts and uncles and cousins were there; a real family party. Capacious as was the house, there was still need of crowding. So, early in the day, it was settled by Lucy and Jenny, Eliza and Mary, that they should all occupy the same room at night. They were cousins and not often together, so it will be quite a treat to them, they said. Lucy and Jenny were sisters—Eliza was an orphan residing with their mother's brother in a distant city, and Mary was the bride's sister, a timid, gentle girl of sixteen.

Mary had no sooner invited her cousins to share her room at night, than she repented of it. Shall we tell the reason why? Simply, because the thought sprang up at once in her heart of a certain duty which she owed to them, and from which she could not well escape if they were together alone, that night. The duty of speaking to them upon the matter of the soul's salvation, and perhaps even of praying with them. Mary was the only one of her family who was a Christian.

A year before, her heart had been touched by Divine grace—she had seen herself a sinner, lost and ruined, and had been enabled to trust in the atoning blood of Christ for salvation. She soon united with the church of which her dead father had been a member, and which her mother attended, out of respect to his memory merely. Within a few weeks there had been special interest manifested in the meetings of the church, and Mary had shared richly in the blessing. Her heart had received a warming influence. She felt an increased love for Christ and his people, and never experienced so much delight in reading and prayer as now. The Sabbath before our story opens, her pastor had preached from the words, 'Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it,' and strongly urged upon his hearers the duty of direct personal effort for the conversion

of sinners—private conversation, and when possible, prayer, being the chief means to be used. They were especially urged never to neglect a distinct impression upon the mind, that Christ demanded a special work for Him, whatsoever it might be.

The seed of truth fell deeply into Mary's heart, and she felt that she must begin at once to do something for the souls of those around her. But with whom should she speak? Her own mother and sisters? Oh, that would indeed be hard. But she felt an intense desire for their conversion, and that very evening while sitting alone with her mother, she with a trembling voice and tearful eye, told her of what thoughts the sermon had awakened in her heart. 'I do feel, dear mother,' said she, 'that I long for you to come to Christ, and trust in Him alone for salvation.'

'Mary, my daughter, answered her mother, in a kind but dignified tone, 'I beg that you will not trouble yourself about me, I do not feel that I need my daughter's reproofs—I endeavor to do my duty, and have no doubt of my acceptance with God. I know that you mean it well, but I should prefer to have no more of this kind of talk from your lips. Will you ring for lights? We will have tea.'

Poor Mary! she felt as if she should sink into the earth, and after doing what her mother bade her, she fled to her own room, and falling on her knees, poured forth her prayers and tears. She felt crushed. But by and by a sweet feeling of peace stole into her heart, as she felt assured that she had but obeyed her Savior's command, and resolving yet to go on in efforts to do good to those nearest her, she calmly obeyed the summons to join the family at tea. The wedding was to take place that week, and of course, all

to get no chance to speak of what was in her heart, to her sisters—still she felt reproved for not doing so. It was in vain that she reminded herself that this was not the right time—that presently, when all this hurry was over, it would be far better for her to converse with them. 'Now is accepted time, now is the day of salvation,' was constantly ringing in her ears. Of course, she was not happy, neglected duty always makes us miserable, unless the sense of right be cold in the heart. The day of the wedding, she could bear it no longer, and slipping out of the house, she went to a book store and purchased a beautiful pocket Bible for her sister, the bride. Then, having written her name and date in it, she sought her room; in hopes of finding her alone a few moments. But she found her surrounded by many companions, all busy in arranging the decorations for the evening. All full of mirth and glee. At first she drew back, but an inward voice seemed to say, 'this is your last opportunity, do it.' So she said 'Helen, please come here a moment,' and her sister throwing down the lace she was busy upon, joined her in the entry.

'Come in here, just a minute, dear,' said Mary, drawing her into a little room near. 'I won't detain you long. There dear,' said she, putting the Bible into her hands, 'is my bridal gift for you—and oh, darling sister,' added she, bursting into tears and throwing her arms around her neck, 'do read it every day, and do, dear sister, think about your soul and receive Christ as your Saviour.' 'Why, my dear child, what ails you?' said Helen, patting her cheek tenderly, 'you are nervous surely about my going away—don't you know that I was confirmed last Sabbath, in St. John's, and am as much a member of the church, as my pious little sister is?'

Ah, Mary knew it well—and this was why it was so very hard for her to speak in this way to her, yet she had no idea that her sister was any better for her profession, so she simply said, as she wiped away her tears—'yes, sister, but I fear that you do not feel that you are lost and ruined, and in need of the blood of Christ to save you—this is what I desire.'

'Well, dear, I am sorry you think me so dreadfully wicked, but I'll forgive you, and many thanks for your nice present—it's bound just like my new prayer-book. Now

let us go back to my room; come, I want you to arrange my bouquet for me.'

The duty was done, and Mary felt such a relief, such a sense of her Heavenly Father's approval, that she went cheerfully to the room, and was one of the happiest, if not the gayest of the party; yet she had met with so little encouragement that she shrank from further trials on that day.

The wedding was over at last, the guests had separated and the young couple, attended by a few select friends, gone to their new home in another street. Mary and her cousins retired to their room—the hour of trial had come.

'Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it,' clear and strong sounded the voice of her Lord once more—dare she disobey it? Poor Mary, how she trembled. Well was it that she had asked grace for the time of need, else she would surely have failed now.

'Mary, Mary, what is the matter?' called Jenny. 'Why don't you come to bed, you look as if you were saying your prayers?'

'That is what I was wishing to do,' said Mary, lifting up her bowed head. 'I always read a chapter in my Bible and pray before retiring, and I was thinking that I should like to read aloud to night, if you have no objection.'

'I have objection,' said Eliza decidedly, 'I am tired and wish to sleep, and I can do my reading and praying for myself, when I choose it.'

So saying, she angrily turned upon her pillow. 'Well,' said Lucy, 'I am willing to hear you read if you want to so much, but what a queer girl you are, cousin Mary; are you pious? If you are, you must be altered a good deal since I saw you last.'

'I trust,' said Mary humbly, as she trust that I am changed somewhat. That is, I have learned to feel my need of a Savior, and to trust in his mercy alone for salvation from eternal death, and I do wish all my dear friends felt so too. Now I will read.' She opened to the Gospel of Matthew, and read of Christ's last words to His disciples, His agony in the garden and his crucifixion. She would have stopped after reading a few moments, but raising her eyes, she found that Lucy and Jenny were listening intently—something prompted her to go on, and she did so. As she read, her soul became filled and absorbed with the wonderful, ever new story of the cross, and when she knelt to pray, all fear had fled, the trial then would have been to refrain from prayer. She felt, as never before, the worth of the soul—of those souls who were listening to her voice, and most earnestly did she plead with God in their behalf—entreating for light, for guidance, for pardon. As she concluded, what was her astonishment at finding Jenny and Lucy kneeling beside her and sobbing bitterly.

'Mary, don't leave off,' 'pray for us said they, and 'oh, Lord have mercy,' were repeated by them also. Then rising, they begged of Mary to tell more fully what they must do to be saved. 'I have felt before, sometimes,' said Lucy, 'as if I wanted to be a Christian, as if my heart was very wicked and needed to be made pure and holy, but I have never seen and felt my utter sinfulness and need of Christ, as now—oh what shall I do?'

Again the three youthful forms knelt in prayer. Pleading with God for pardon and peace, through Christ. And it came, even then. Heaven and the world had been brought distinctly before their minds in a moment's time, and they firmly and fully chose the former—and God sealed the consecration with his smile and His forgiveness.

In joy they laid themselves to rest at length, and in joy did they awaken in the morning—wondering indeed, at the great change which they felt had passed upon them, yet firm and clear in their hope and their purpose of serving God. No persuasions, no ridicule, could induce them to attend the scene of dissipation that evening. Not even the fear of offending their cousin, the bride, could move them. The news of the sudden change passed rapidly among

their friends and was whispered about, even in the ballroom that night, and not a few hearts trembled within the splendid dress, as the story was told that Lucy and Jenny, those gay young girls, so full of life, and fond of amusement, had become Christians—were even then in the room of prayer, instead of that of the dance.

'Oh,' thought Mary, as she stood one bright Sabbath morning upon the river's bank and saw her two cousins led down into the water and buried beneath the wave, and again rising, coming forth to newness of life, 'Oh that I might ever be able to obey the command "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."—New York Chronicle.

## Temperance Sermon.

The following are the notes of a Sermon preached by the Rev. Mr. Johnstone, at the Blackfriars' Street Baptist Church, Glasgow.

"Curse ye Meroz," &c.—Judges v., verse 25.

I. There is a great enemy that opposes the cause of God.

There are many enemies that do so, but it is to intemperance that our attention is now directed. It is the enemy of all classes of society. It weakens the intellect, ruins the character, hardens the heart, and turns it from God. It roots out religious principle, blunts the affections, obliterates the memory, and sears the conscience. It is the hindrance to true progress, the bane of the community, the destroying wolf in the church, and the raging bear in the world. Its evils are legion. Does it not oppose God's will?—Christ's gospel? It promotes Sabbath desecration, swearing, and blasphemy. If that which leads to all this debasement, degradation, madness, and wickedness is not a great foe to God and

II. This enemy must be subdued. Its strongholds must be thrown down, its engines must be destroyed, its bulwarks must be removed, its armies must be brought over to the side of truth.

1. The truth of God demands it.

2. The cry of the Church requires it. In the present day she is crying for revival, but can this take place without the great stumbling-block of true and vital religion being removed? May not God even now be saying unto some, as he said to Moses in days of old—Why criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward, and then they shall behold the swelling tide of intemperance rolled back, and their great enemy completely subdued. Action must be joined with prayer.

3. The cry of humanity demands it. Can we listen to the cries of those who are enslaved by this great enemy, and say that it is not high time it were subdued?

III. Christians are honourably to be helpers of the Lord in this work. They are the salt of the earth, to keep it from corruption; the servants of the Lord, to obey his precepts; and the soldiers of Christ, to engage in his battles.

In order to being thus honoured, it is necessary.

1. That we be truly on the Lord's side.

2. That we heartily approve of the Lord's designs.

3. That we obey his commands.

4. That we fight the Lord's battles.

Zebulon and Naphtali were a people that jeopardised their lives unto the death in the high places of the field, and were greatly honoured in the song of Deborah; but Reuben, ever characterised by instability, preferred the sheepfolds to the camp, and by divisions in his own tribe was prevented from taking part against the common enemy. When professing Christians are arguing on the best means for putting down intemperance, it should not by them be forgotten that it is increasing in strength. It is an honourable work to be the means of turning men not only from this, but from all sin.

IV. The Lord's displeasure will rest on those who do not engage in this work.

It was not Deborah that pronounced the curse on the inhabitants of Meroz, but the Angel of the Lord. And what can those