

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
VOL. V. No. 24.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 1860.

WHOLE SERIES.
VOL. XXIV. No. 24.

Poetry.

Selected for the Christian Messenger.

"All is known to Thee."

"When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, they
thou knewest my path."

"My God, whose gracious pity I may claim,—
Calling thee Father,—sweet, endearing name,—
The sufferings of this weak and weary frame
All, all are known to thee.

"From human eye 'tis better to conceal
Much that I suffer, much I hourly feel;
But Oh,—the thought does tranquilize and heal—
All, all is known to thee.

"Each secret conflict with indwelling sin,
Each sickening fear I ne'er the prize shall win,
Each pang from irritation, turmoil, din,
All, all are known to thee.

"Nay, all by thee is ordered, chosen, planned;
Each drop that fills my daily cup,—thy hand
Prescribes for ills none else can understand.
All, all is known to thee.

"The effectual means to cure what I deplore,
In me thy longed-for likeness to restore,—
Self to de throne, never to govern more.
All, all are known to thee.

"And this continued feebleness,—this state
Which seems to unnerve and incapacitate,
Will work the cure my hopes and prayers await.
That can I leave to thee.

"Nor will the bitter draughts distasteful prove,
When I recall the Son of thy dear love.
The cup thou wouldst not for our sakes remove,
That cup He drank for me.

"He drank it to the dregs: no drop remained
Of wrath—for those whose cup of woe he drain'd;
Man ne'er can know what that sad cup contained.
All, all is known to thee.

"And welcome precious, can his spirit make
My little drop of suffering for his sake.
Father, the cup I drink, the path I take,
All, all is known to thee."

Selections.

The Sluggard's Reproof.

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

"The sluggard will not plough by reason of the
cold: therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have
nothing."—PROVERBS XX.

I, Now, first I am about to speak of
THIS SLUGGARD. Ploughing is hard work, and
the sluggard does not like it. If he does go
up and down the field once or twice, he makes
a short turn of it, and leaves a wide head-
land; and, moreover, he leans on the handle
of his plough, and therefore the plough does
not go in very deep—not so deep as it would
if he were to do as the active ploughman
does, hold the handles up, in order that the
share may go deep into the soil. But he goes
nodding along, half dragged by his horses,
and glad to do nothing. He would be very
pleased indeed if his feet would go without
being moved, and if the clods would but move
one another, and lift his feet up for him, so
that he might not have the trouble of carry-
ing himself after his plough. But, good,
easy man, he knows he will be laughed at if
he says ploughing is hard work, so he does
not like to say that. "I must get better ex-
cuses than that," he thinks; and so he says,
"It is so cold: it is so cold! I would not
mind going out to plough, but I am frozen to
death! I shall have chilblains; I have not
clothes enough to keep me warm; it is so
cold to my fingers. Oh, how the snow comes
down! The ponds are all frozen; the ground
is so hard; the ploughshare will get broken;
it is so cold!" Lazy fellow! Why don't
you say ploughing is hard work? That is the
English of it. But no, he must have a more
genteel excuse, that he may not be so likely
to be laughed at. Suppose it were not cold,
do you know what he would say? "Oh, it
is so hot! Oh, I cannot plough; the perspi-
ration runs down my cheeks. You wouldn't
have me ploughing this hot weather, would
you?" Supposing it were neither hot nor
cold, why then he would say, I believe, that it
rained; and if it didn't rain, he would say
the ground was too dry, for a bad excuse,
he holds, is better than none; and therefore

he will keep on making excuses to the end
of the chapter; anything will he do rather
than go and to do the work he does not like—
that is, ploughing.

Now I have made you smile. I wish I
could make you cry, because there will be
more to cry about than to smile at in this
matter, when I come to show you that this
is spiritually the case. There are men and
women who would like to go straight to
heaven. They like the harvest, but they do
not like the trouble of ploughing. They have
not the common honesty to say, "I do not
like religion." But what do you suppose
they say? Why, they make another excuse.
Sometimes it is this: "Well, I am as anxious
as anybody to be a Christian; but, you know,
these are such hard times." Hard times!
The times always were hard to such people as
you are. "But in these times," say they,
"there is no warmth in Christians; they are
all so cold-hearted. Why, I go up to the
chapel, and nobody speaks to me. There is
not one-half the religion that there used to
be; and what there is, is not half so good as
it once was. The article is depreciated.
Now, if I lived over in Ireland, then I would
plough; if I lived over where there is the
Revival, then I would be a saint; or if I
had lived in the Apostle Paul's days—heard
such a man as that preacher, or if I could
have talked to those early Christians, I would
not object to be a Christian. But these are
such cold-hearted times—such lots of hypoc-
rites, and so few Christians—I don't think
I shall think about religion at all." Ah, that
is a pretty excuse, that is; for you know
what you are saying is false. In the first
place, you know that there is life in Christ's
Church even now, and that there are still (if
you would but look) a few men to be found—
good, loving, warm-hearted, Christian men.
You know that there are still left faithful
preachers. The faithful have not failed from
among men; and although hypocrites be
plentiful, still there are many sincere souls.
And what if there were not? Are you con-
tent to be lost, because the Church is not
what it ought to be? Now, just look at it
in that light. Because there are a good many
hypocrites, you have made up your mind to
go to hell. Is that the English of it? Be-
cause there are such multitudes going there,
you think you will go too, and keep them
company. Is that what you mean? "No!"
say you, "not that." That is it, Mr. Slug-
gard, though you don't like to say so. It is
a bad excuse you have made. It won't hold
water—you know it won't. You know very
well that when your conscience speaks, it tells
you that this excuse is a bad one. It is one
that will not stand you when you are lying on
your dying bed; and, above all, it is one that
will vanish in the day of judgment, just as
the mists vanish before the rising sun. What
business can it be of yours, what the Church
is or what the Church is not? If you will
not think about the things of God in these
times, neither would you be converted in the
best of times; and if the present agency is
not blessed to you, neither would you be con-
verted though one rose from the dead.

But, says Mr. Sluggard, "Well, if that is
not a good excuse, I will give another. It is
all very well for you, Mr. Minister, to talk
about being religious, and that like, but you
don't know my business, and the sort of shop-
mates I am engaged with. You know very
well it is a hard matter for me to hold my
own as it is, with merely going to a place of
worship; but if I really were to throw all
my heart into it, I should have them all down
upon me. I tell you, sir, my business is such
a one that I could not carry it on and yet be
a Christian." Hark ye, Mr. Sluggard; suppose
it is a business that you cannot carry on with-
out going to hell with it—give it up, sir.
"Ah, but then, sir, we must live." Yes,
sir, but then we must die. Will you please
to recollect that also, for that seems to me to
be a great deal more of a necessity? Some-
times when people say to me, "Why, you
know we must live." I sometimes think I
do not see any necessity for that. They
would be almost as well dead as alive, some
of them. "But we must live." I am not
sure of that. I am sure of another thing,
you must die. Die you certainly must. Oh,
that you would sooner think of that—rather
of dying than of living! But, besides, it is
all nonsense about your business being one

that you cannot carry on and be a Christian.
I tell you, sir, there is no business that is a
legitimate one which a man cannot carry on
and not adorn his Master in it; and if there
be such a business, come out of it as you
would out of the burning city of Sodom.
"But then I am in such a house, sir. I am
so laughed at." Yes, sir, but if somebody
were about to leave you a thousand pounds on
condition that you wore a red riband round
your arm—you know you would be laughed
at if you did;—or suppose it were that you were
to wear a fool's-cap for a week, and you would
have a thousand pounds a-year for life after-
wards, would not you wear it? Ah, I should
not like to trust you. I believe you would
put it on, and when people laughed you would
say, "Laugh, laugh, but I am well rewarded
for it;" and yet here is your soul at stake,
and a little laughter, you say, drives you back.
I do not believe you, sir. I do not think you
are such a fool as that, to be laughed into
hell, for you cannot be laughed out again by
all their laughter. I believe your second
excuse is as bad as your first one. I shiver it
into a thousand pieces. The fact is, sir, you
don't like religion. That is it. You don't
want to give up your sins. You are willing
to be what you are—a sinner dead in tres-
passes and sins. That is the plain, simple
English of it, and all the excuses you can
make won't alter it.

"Nay," says one, "but it is such a hard
thing to be a Christian. Do you know, when
I hear the preacher saying what manner of
persons ought we to be, I think, ah! I had
better not set out, for I shall never go all
the way. When I hear of the trials, and
temptations, and troubles of the child of God,
I think I will not go." Ah, there you are
again, Mr. Sluggard, you will not plough by
reason of the cold. But you recollect what
has been so often impressed upon your mind
—though we have many troubles and many
trials, yet grace is all-sufficient for us? Do
you not know that though the way is long, yet
our shoes are iron and brass, and though the
work is hard, yet Omnipotence has promised
to give us strength all sufficient? You only
look at one side of the subject and not on the
other. Why not think for a moment on that
grace of God which guarantees to assist and to
carry through all in whom it begins the good
work? Sir, your excuse is an idle one. I
tell you again that the naked truth is this,
that you love your sins; that you love them
better than heaven, better than eternal life,
that you are a lazy fellow, that you don't like
prayer, nor faith, nor repentance, and I warn
you that your fate will be that of this slug-
gard, who begged in harvest, and he had
nothing.

Says one, "I have no time, I have not in-
deed." Time for what, sir? What do you
mean? "Why, I have no time to pray an
hour in the morning." Who said you had?
"But I have no time to be attending to re-
ligion all the day long." Who asked you to,
sir? I suppose you find time for pleasure;
perhaps you find time for what you call re-
creation, and the like. There are many pre-
cious bits of time that you sweep away and
never look up. Where there's a will there's
a way; and if God has made you love religion
and love the things of God, you will find
time enough. That is a worse excuse than
any other, for God has given you the time,
and if you have not got it you have lost it.
Look for it, you will be accountable for it at
the last great day. You have been hiding
your talent in a napkin, and now you say you
cannot find it. You had it, sir; where
it is, is your business, not mine. Look it up;
and God help you to shake off your sloth,
and may you in earnest be constrained by the
Holy Spirit to be a Christian, and to espouse
the life of the pilgrim, and run with diligence
the race that is set before you.

I have thus tried to describe the sluggard
as the man who would not plough by reason
of the cold—the man that would like to be a
Christian, only he does not like the cross; who
would like to get to heaven, only he does not
like the road there. He would be saved,
but oh! he can't, can't give up his sin. He
can't walk in holiness. He would like to be
crowned, but he does not like to fight. He
would like to reap a harvest, but he neither
likes to plough nor sow. Mr. Sluggard, I have
three little sentences to say to you before I
go on with my next head. Will you try to

treasure them up; No pains, no gains; no
sweat, no sweet; no mill, no meal. Will you
just recollect those three little things? I will
tell you again, lest you should forget them.
No pains, no gains; no sweat, no sweet; no
mill, no meal. So just get up, sir, and may
God grant that you may get up to some pur-
pose. Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise
from the dead, and Christ shall give thee
light. "Let us not sleep, as do others, but
let us watch and be sober, and hope to the
end."

To be continued.

Political Economy of Christi- anity.

Our moral perversities are the bitter root
from which all our evils spring. Hence come
disease, poverty, and an illimitable train of
ills. Our vices are an immense tax upon our
pecuniary resources, and altogether the most
considerable cause of poverty. They are a
vast whirlpool in which untold sums are an-
nually engulfed. They not only waste what
we produce, but are the great source of idleness
to subtract from our powers of produc-
tion. By the influence of the Gospel, these
evils are counteracted, men are taught indus-
try, thrift and economy, and thus to make
the most both of their powers for producing
and of the proceeds of their application.

The piety and virtue which christianity
inculcates are an effectual antidote to the evils
which afflict the individual man and the so-
ciety to which he belongs. Our ministry of
good tidings to the poor, therefore, is an im-
pulse towards national wealth. We come
not only with a religion that

"satisfies all doubts,
Explains all mysteries except her own,
And so illuminates the path of life
That fools discover it and stray no more."

but with a religion which advances all the
material interests of mankind. There exists
not within the reach of human knowledge or
experience so potent an instrument for cor-
recting those obliquities which produce the
poverty of nations. It is God's own mode
for purifying the heart and improving so-
ciety; one supplied by His infinite resources
of wisdom and of mercy; an emanation from
"the darkness of light insufferable," shining
amid the gloom of this world's night to "give
us the light of the knowledge of the glory of
God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Each Christian may feel that he is of too
little account in the vast system of means by
which these glorious results are to be reached,
to be missed, and hence he may attempt noth-
ing himself for the propagation of the Gospel.
But is not the place of each ocean drop also
small, and each ray of sunlight quite incom-
petent to the work of a general illumination;
and yet if all the drops and all the rays should
thus reason each against doing its own work
because it is so trifling, where would be our
oceans or our days? God has made you, Chris-
tian, responsible for only so much of this vast
system of Christian economics as he has given
you power to supply. If you are a mother,
hear His voice saying, "bring up that child
for me." If you have a friend, use your in-
fluence over him to bring him to Christ. Do
the work of the day in the day, and the duty
at hand do first, and when this is done, enter
upon the next that offers. Thus, by the joint
effort of all the soldiers in God's sacramental
host, this world must be conquered to truth
to love and to prosperity.—N. Y. Chronicle.

Did Jesus Sing?

At a gathering of children on Christmas
day, a gentleman present related a very inter-
esting incident.

A little girl, about three years of age, was
very curious to know why Christmas greens
were so much used, and what they were in-
tended to signify.

So Mr. L. told her the story of the babe at
Bethlehem,—of the child whose name was
Jesus.

The little questioner was just beginning to
give voice to the music that was in her heart;
and after Mr. L. had concluded the narrative
she looked up in his face and asked, "Did
Jesus sing?"

Who had ever thought of that? If you
will look at Matthew, twenty-sixth chapter
and thirtieth verse, you will there find almost
conclusive proof that Jesus sang with his dis-
ciples.—Sunday School Gazette.