

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. IX. No. 48.

HALIFAX, N. S., WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1864.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXVIII. No. 48.

Poetry.

ONLY A BABY'S GRAVE.

Only a baby's grave!
Some foot or two, at the most,
Of star-daisied sod, yet I think that God
Knows what that little grave cost.

Only a baby's grave!
To children even so small
That they sit there and sing—so small a thing
Seems, scarcely a grave at all!

Only a baby's grave!
Strange! how we moan and fret
For a little face that was here such a space!
O more strange, could we forget!

Only a baby's grave!
Did we measure grief by this,
Few tears were shed on our baby dead;
I know how they fell on this.

Only a baby's grave!
Will the little life be much
Too small a gem for His diadem
Whose kingdom is made of such?

Only a baby's grave!
Yet often we come and sit
By the little stone, and thank God to own
We are nearer Heaven for it!—*Good Words.*

Religious.

THE GUILT OF THE HEATHEN.

It is probable that in the minds of many there is a great misapprehension as to the real spiritual condition of the heathen. Their superstitions, their practices, the grotesque forms they worship, their profound ignorance, awaken pity—a sense of puerility and weakness; and in this sentiment is lost the true conception of their wickedness and guilt. It would be too painful, too abhorrent to the purities of civilized life, to draw aside the veil which hides the enormities and the crimes in which idolaters indulge; and because they who are conversant with them dare not speak of them, there are many who are unwilling to believe the lost condition of heathen without the Gospel, or that they are exposed, and deservedly so, to those fearful judgments denounced against idol-worshippers in the Scriptures of truth. Our missionary, Rev. F. Laughlan, has, in his letters, frequently referred to the awful immoralities which are rife in China, and we now avail ourselves of a private letter to quote the impression they have made on his mind. At various times he has furnished us with facts which fully bear out the general statements of the following extract, but which we cannot venture to place before the eyes of our readers.

"To a Christian mind," he says, residence in a heathen land is very oppressive. You see hundreds, thousands, of persons every day, and the thought constantly comes to your mind, that not one of all these people, in all human probability, but will go to deserved and eternal perdition. The impression left upon my mind, after hearing missionary sermons and addresses in England, was, that the heathen were more to be pitied than blamed. I pity the heathen not less than ever I did; I blame them more. In spite of all I have heard or read from universalists and tender-hearted theologians, I feel that my sense of the guilt of heathendom increases with my knowledge of heathen religion, life, and practices. When I was in England, the first chapter of Romans sometimes staggered me. It is more intelligible to me now. You will, I know, excuse any liberty if I say, when speaking of heathendom, speak of its *guilt*. Dwell upon it. It seems to me not simply the truest way, but also the most powerful, inasmuch as a mind in harmony with the law of God (and a Christian's is supposed to be so) will be more moved and stimulated to action by seeing the divine law broken and God insulted."

It must not be forgotten that the heathen have a conscience which reproves them for the vices in which they indulge, and the crimes they commit; that they *know* that their sins are sins in the sight of God. Their guilt should render our pity the more profound. But our pity were misplaced if it

lead us to palliate the enormity of their guilt or to imagine any escape from the awful penalties divine justice has pronounced against idolatry, except through faith in Christ Jesus. —*Missionary Herald. (London)*

"A LAUGHING-STOCK."

He was a good man, that Deacon L. I knew him well. He was my kindred and my friend. He stood over six feet high, and was proportionately large; a farmer, "well to do"—always moral and upright. When about forty years old, he became deeply interested in religion. Naturally very, very diffident, he said little or nothing to any one about his feelings. Months rolled on, and still he was anxious, distressed; while yet he had regular seasons of secret prayer, read his Bible, and was doing all he felt he could and ought to do, save *one thing*. He was the head of a family. He had a sweet wife and four children, all impenitent; but they were his; and conscience urged him to the duty of erecting the family altar. But the cross,—oh, it was too great for his timidity! So it was put off, and new duties discharged in other directions as an offset; but he grew nothing the better, nay, rather the worse. At length, one morning, in his field, he solemnly resolved that that night he would, come what might, make the attempt at least, to pray in his family. A seamstress was at his house, from whose ridicule and scorn he shrank; but his mind was made up. And here I give his own language. "When I went to dinner, she told me she wished to go home that afternoon. Never did I carry a person from my house so gladly before. She was now out of my way, and one great obstacle was removed. Night came on, and I seemed to gain strength for my duty. But just as I was about to get my Bible and tell my family what I intended then and thereafter to do, who should knock at my door but the youngest brother of my wife, a mirth-loving, captious young man, a member of college, just the last person in the world I then wanted to see? What should I do? What,—what? my heart cried; and my agony seemed to me more than I could bear. But my vow had been made, and there could be no going back. I arose, got my Bible from the shelf, and told them what I was about to do.

"My wife looked as though she would sink. My children looked one at another, at their mother, and at me, not knowing what was to happen. My brother-in-law seemed greatly amazed. But rallying all my strength, I read a Psalm and knelt down; at length I said, 'O Lord'—and could not utter another word; and there I was, a great stout man, upon my knees, a *laughing stock* for my family. There I was; I could not speak, and there my proud heart was humbled, and there my heavenly Father met me, and my soul was filled with unutterable peace. When I arose, my poor wife was mortified, and hung her head to conceal it. My brother-in-law said nothing, soon retired, and the next morning he left home for college again."

That family altar has not ceased to burn with daily incense, though the priest thereof has ministered unto it for forty odd years. New mark the result of that attempt at prayer, when the good man was, in his own esteem, "a laughing-stock." In about a week he received a letter from that brother-in-law student, which began with these words: "Rejoice with me, brother Daniel, for I have found the Savior; and that scene at your house the other evening God has blessed to the salvation of my soul." This young man studied divinity at Andover, but when about to be licensed to preach the Gospel, was taken with bleeding at the lungs, and soon went to his rest. That wife, those children, and many others under the same roof, have found the Saviour through the instrumentality of this praying man. He bore the cross and received the crown. He lives still in a green old age, calmly waiting for his summons to go up higher.

Be sure it is always best to obey God. Nothing is gained, but much is lost, by shrinking from duty. They are difficulties *overcome* and *conquered*, upon which we rise. The Christian is a soldier. He must not *fear* when executing a command. The anxious lose—oh, how much they lose! sometimes the immortal soul—by failing to *do* the right

thing, that *one* thing, to which God evidently calls. Many a head of a family has stumbled at the cross of family prayer, and lost all. What, though for once, or a hundred times, he may be "a laughing-stock"! It matters nothing, when such interests are in peril. The care of the soul is the great care. Who can—or will—neglect it?

"IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON."

Dr. Chalmers, on his return from England, some years before his death, lodged in the house of a nobleman not far distant from Peebles. The Doctor was known to excel in conversation, as well as in the pulpit. He was the life and soul of the discourse in the circle of friends at the nobleman's fireside. The subject was pauperism—its causes and cure. Among the gentlemen present, there was a venerable old Highland chieftain, who kept his eyes fastened on Dr. Chalmers, and listened with intense interest to his communications. The conversation was kept up to a late hour. When the company broke up, they were shown up-stairs into their apartments. There was a lobby of considerable length, and the doors of the bed-chambers opened on the right and left. The apartment of Dr. Chalmers was directly opposite to that of the old chieftain, who had already retired with his attendant. As the Doctor was undressing himself, he heard an unusual noise in the chieftain's room; the noise was succeeded by a heavy groan. He hastened into the apartment, which, in a few minutes, was filled with the company, who all rushed in to the relief of the old gentleman. It was a melancholy sight which met their eyes. The venerable white-headed chief had fallen into the arms of his attendant in apoplexy. He breathed for a few moments, and expired. Dr. Chalmers stood in silence, with both hands stretched out, and bending over the deceased. He was the very picture of distress. He was the first to break silence. "Never, in my life," said he, in a tremulous voice, "did I see, or did I feel, before this moment, the meaning of that text, 'Preach the Word: be instant in season, and out of season.' Had I known that my venerable old friend was within a few minutes of eternity, I would have addressed myself earnestly to him. I would have preached unto him and you—Christ Jesus and him crucified. I would have urged him and you, with all the earnestness befitting the subject, to prepare for eternity. You would have thought it, and you would have pronounced it, out of season. But ah! it would have been in season, both as it respected him, and as it respects you."

A RIDE ON AN AVALANCHE.

Professor Tyndall, in a letter to *The Times*, describes his perilous adventures up the Piz Morteratsch as follows:—

"Towards the end of last July, while staying at Pontresina, in Ober Engadin, I was invited by two friends to join in an expedition up the Piz Morteratsch. This I willingly did, for I wished to look at the configuration of the Alps from some commanding point in the Bernina Mountains, and also to learn something of the capabilities of the Pontresina guides. We took two of them with us—Jenni, who is the man of greatest repute among them, and Walter, who is the head of the bureau of guides. We proposed to ascend by the Rosegg, and to return by the Morteratsch glacier, thus making a circuit, instead of retracing our steps. About eight hours of pleasant healthful exertion placed us on the Morteratsch Spitze, where we remained for an hour, and where the conviction forced on my mind on many another summit was renewed—namely, that those mountains and valleys are not, as supposed by the renowned President of the Geographical Society, ridges and heaps tossed up by the earth's central fires, with great fissures between them, but that ice and water, acting through long ages, have been the real sculptors of the Alps. Jenni is a heavy man, and marches rather slowly up a mountain, but he is a thoroughly competent mountaineer. We were particularly pleased with his performance in descending. He swept down the slopes and cleared

the 'schrunds,' which cut the upper snows with great courage and skill. We at length reached the point at which it was necessary to quit our morning's track, and immediately afterwards got up some steep rocks, which were rendered slippery here and there by the water which trickled over them. To our right was a broad couloir, which was once filled with snow, but this had been melted and refrozen, so as to expose a sloping wall of ice. We were tied together at this time in the following order:—Jenni led, I came next, then my friend H—, an intrepid mountaineer, then his friend L—, and last of all the guide Walter. L— had but little experience of the higher Alps, and was placed in front of Walter, so that any false step on his part might be instantly checked. After descending the rocks for a time, Jenni turned and asked me whether I thought it better to adhere to them or to try the ice-slope to our right. I pronounced in favour of the rocks, but he seemed to misunderstand me, and turned towards the couloir. I stopped him before he reached it, and said, 'Jenni, you know where you are going? the slope is pure ice.' He replied, 'I know it; but the ice is quite bare for a few yards only. Across this exposed portion I will cut steps, and then the snow which covers the ice will give us a footing. He cut the steps, reached the snow, and descended carefully along it—all following him, apparently in good order. After a little time he stopped, turned, and looked upwards at the last three men. He said something about keeping carefully in the tracks, adding that a false step might detach an avalanche. The word was scarcely uttered when I heard the sound of a fall behind me, then a rush, and in the twinkling of an eye my two friends and their guide, all apparently entangled together, whirled past me. I suddenly planted myself to resist their shock, but in an instant I was in their wake, for their impetus was irresistible. A moment afterwards Jenni was whirled away, and thus all five of us found ourselves riding downwards with uncontrollable speed on the back of an avalanche which a single slip had originated. When thrown down by the jerk of the rope, I turned promptly on my face and drove my baton through the moving snow, seeking to anchor it in the ice underneath. I had held it firmly thus for a few seconds, when I came into collision with some obstacle and was rudely tossed through the air, Jenni at the same time being shot down upon me. Both of us here lost our batons. We had, in fact, been carried over a crevasse, had hit its lower edge, our great velocity causing us to be pitched beyond it. I was quite bewildered for a moment, but immediately righted myself, and could see those in front of me half buried in the snow, and jolted from side to side by the ruts among which they were passing. Suddenly I saw them tumbled over by a lurch in the avalanche, and immediately afterwards found myself imitating their motion. This was caused by a second crevasse. Jenni knew of its existence, and plunged right into it—a brave and manful act, but for the time unavailing. He is over thirteen stone in weight, and he thought that by jumping into the chasm a strait might be put upon the rope sufficient to check the motion. He was, however, violently jerked out of the fissure and almost squeezed to death by the pressure of the rope. A long slope was below us which led directly downwards to a brow where the glacier suddenly fell in a declivity of ice. At the base of this declivity the glacier was cut by a series of profound chasms, and towards these we were now rapidly borne. The three foremost men rode upon the forehead of the avalanche, and were at times almost wholly immersed in the snow; but the moving layer was thinner behind, and Jenni rose incessantly and with desperate energy drove his feet into the firmer substance underneath. His voice, shouting 'Halt! Herr Jesus, halt!' was the only one heard during the descent. A kind of condensed memory, such as that described by people who have narrowly escaped drowning, took possession of me, and I thought and reasoned with preternatural clearness as I rushed along. Our start, moreover, was too sudden, and the excitement too great, to permit of the development of terror. The slope at one place became less steep, the speed visibly slackened, and we