

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

NEW SERIES.  
Vol. XII. No. 51.

HALIFAX, N. S., WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1867.

WHOLE SERIES.  
Vol. XXXI. No. 51.

## Religious.

### Somnolency at Church.

Dr. Guthrie has got into hot water. In the course of an animated and racy address, in which he perhaps somewhat exceeded the bounds of prudence, in a village school-room near Edinburgh, the rev. doctor graphically described the somniferous state of a large congregation in the Free Church of Thurso. Let anyone should imagine that the minister was the cause of the congregation indulging themselves to a quiet siesta, he took care to blame the bad ventilation of the building. Unfortunately, however, the public were less charitable, and the minister, who is said to be one of the most effective of Presbyterian ministers, has had to bear not a little banter from various newspapers. It was a fine opportunity for journalists to satirize Scotch preaching, and it proved to be irresistible. But the unlucky congregation, one of the largest in the Free Church of Scotland, has felt highly indignant at the charge made by the doctor, and the son of the incumbent has challenged the accuracy of his statement. He admits there are a score or so of inveterate sleepers in the church, and others who are occasionally to be seen under the same influence; while many hang down their heads as if in deep slumber, which he attributes to the effect of truth upon the conscience! On this point he observes:—"On sacramental Sabbaths, I have frequently seen half the congregation with their heads on the book-board; and at the communion table not one in ten would be found sitting upright. At the period of the revival of 1859, it would not be exaggeration to speak of six hundred as listening in that attitude, or even of whole rows of pews in which not a raised head was to be seen." Dr. Guthrie has accepted the challenge, and reiterates his statement that he saw 600 out of 1,200 or so, who were, as he believed, asleep. "There is no mistake about that. For, indeed, I was so struck with the spectacle that, in order that there might be no mistake, I reckoned the proportion of people in the posture of sleep in as many pews as would give a fair average of the whole, and I calculated that at least half the congregation were in that, to say the least of it, very suspicious posture." He again lays all the blame on "the stupefying effects of carbonic acid," and not on the preacher, who, judging from his son's defence, really does put some snuff into his sermons, and he very sensibly observes in conclusion:—"It were well that those, wherever resident, who, when deeply interested in a discourse, drop their heads on the book-board and seem to go asleep, abandoned a habit at once so suspicious and so unnatural. It were well that, following in such a case, what I always thought was the instinct and universal practice of mankind, they assumed the posture not of sleep, but of attention; sat up like men, and looked the speaker in the face; even a dog or a horse, to say nothing of men and women, turns his head not from, but to you when you speak to him. Religion, let me add, always looks best, and thrives most, when she appears in a natural garb." It seems pretty evident that Dr. Guthrie was mistaken in his calculation of the number of sleepers in the Thurso congregation. It is almost too ridiculous to suppose that one-half of a large congregation should be actually asleep. That more than that number might be morally asleep is possible, since, unfortunately, it would not be considered a phenomenon, and the peculiar habit of drooping of the head might easily mislead even so keen an observer as Dr. Guthrie. It was hardly discreet, however, to mention the name of the church, since a charge like this is one that will not easily be forgotten. He should, at least, have remembered what he confesses he overlooked, that there might be "a chiel among us takin' notes," the printing of the notes naturally following.—*Leisure Notes.*

Rev. Dr. Parks, in a sermon recently preached, said that an eminent physician having been called to a case of chronic dyspepsia, recommended to the patient as a prescription, *Philippian 4: 4*. Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice.

### Patience added to Temperance.

Patience—a meek endurance of the wrong-doing and weakness of others—is an essential trait in symmetry of character. This gentle and lovely grace is impressively commended to our cultivation by the words and example of the Saviour. "Come unto me, for I am meek," is his winning call. When he was reviled, he reviled not again; and when expiring upon the cross for us, that wondrous prayer, "Father, forgive them," shows how He, the perfect One, could bear with the wrongs of men. This meek endurance of outrage is difficult attainment by even the most advanced Christian; for the more perfect he is, the more acute is his perception of sin in others as well as in himself, and the more acute his sense of disapprobation. Yet when patience has its "perfect work," he meekly endures the glaring delinquencies, gross inconsistencies, and even the flagrant sins of those around him. He may reprove the sin, but must regard compassionately the sinner.

Such is the patience required in the canon. But is there not danger here that, while the Christian regards so tolerantly the sinner, he may forget the heinousness of the sin? While preserving his soul in equanimity amidst the thousand follies and foibles of professing Christians, may he not find his own heart grow less sensitive to wrong, his spiritual perceptions lose their vivacity, and his judgments conform too closely to the standard of the world? Unless we greatly misjudge, many of the most meek and in other respects faultless Christians allow their patience towards their brethren to degenerate into a toleration of their errors. In their gentleness they excuse and palliate and apologize for the wandering brother, until they lose sight of the odiousness and sinfulness of his conduct. To prevent this excess of toleration, they need an additional grace which will keep them in close communion with the Spirit of Holiness, and lead them to regard sin as God goes. To effect this they must add to patience, godliness.—*Am. Mess.*

### A Shipwrecked Soul.

Did you ever hear the cry, "A man overboard?" In the silence and darkness of midnight, it is a sound to thrill one's nerves, and echo in memory for a lifetime.

I was once upon a steamer when this terrible cry rang through the vessel, waking nearly every sleeper, and starting men and women out of their berths as from a horrible dream. There were the hoarse shouts of command; the sudden cessation of the huge engine's beating and throbbing; the rattling of chains as hurrying hands lowered the boat; the splash of oars for a few seconds; and then all was still. How still! No one ventured even a whisper, as every ear was strained to catch some returning note of hope from the boat as swallowed up in the darkness.

A half hour passed, and then one and another began to say sadly, "It is too late."—Yes, it was too late, and presently the voices of the men were heard as they slowly neared the vessel, and then filed reluctantly over its side, answering in low, despondent tones to our anxious inquiries, that they could find no trace of the lost captain, for search during their absence had revealed that an officer of the army was the missing man. With intellect partially disordered from suffering of body, it was believed he had sought relief and rest in the unanswerable sea.

There was one of the deck-hands, a fair-haired blue-eyed young man, who had helped to lower the boat, and had stood leaning against the guards till its return, who seemed to feel as if the general sadness at this mournful event was a thing rather contemptible, and who in speaking of his companions' ineffectual search, used very flippant and profane language. "What's the use of whining?" said he with an oath; "he'll find good society and shipwrecked men enough down there in the seaweed, I'll warrant."

"My son," said an old man who stood by laying his hand on the youth's shoulder, "a drowned body may seem a slight thing to you but how about a shipwrecked soul?"

The young man started, and his cheek flushed at the awful solemnity of the question realized itself to him. His offensive indifference was evidently the result rather of thoughtlessness and subjection to bad influences, than of a hardened conscience.

The group standing near delicately withdrew, and left the two by themselves: it was "a word in season." For the remainder of our voyage no oaths were heard from that young man's lips; and there was a subdued manner about him so noticeable, that we could not but be hopeful that he was learning to know the only way by which the voyager to eternity may escape that awful shipwreck of a soul.

### Different kinds of Christians.

There are Christians who attend church twice a day, rain or shine; and those who attend only once, if it is pleasant, and not at all if it is not. There are Christians who attend all sorts of concerts except "concerts for prayer"; Christians who don't attend the theatre, and Christians who do; Christians who play cards, and Christians who do not; Christians who attend dancing parties, but don't give them; Christians who attend them and give them; but don't dance themselves; Christians who dance to a piano, but don't to a violin; Christians who send their children to a dancing school, but not to a Sabbath school.

There are Christian mothers who would attend prayer-meetings, but can't leave their families so long—one hour—but who attend gay parties once a week, leaving their families for three and four hours. There are Christians who never have family prayers, and there are Christians who have; those who never hardly read their Bible, but read the evening papers daily; there are Christians who think dancing, card-playing and theatre-going right, but preaching about them wrong. There are Christians who complain about the low state of piety in the Church, who never attend a prayer-meeting. There are Christians who complain of the minister for not coming to see them, yet would feel awkward if he came to pray with them, or to ask them to attend the prayer-meeting.—*Central Christian Herald.*

### Excommunication at Birmingham.

The Rev. T. B. Pollock, the "priest" of St. Alban's, the most advanced ritualistic church in Birmingham, recently expelled a young woman from the holy communion. Having first warned the young woman privately that she would not be allowed to approach the Lord's table, Mr. Pollock—when she persisted in approaching it—openly denounced or "excommunicated" her, speaking from the pulpit, and warned the congregation to refrain from associating with her lest they should be partakers of her sin. Mr. Pollock in accordance with a further provision of the rubric, reported what he had done, to the Bishop of Worcester. On Sunday a number of her friends went in a body, in charge of the young woman, to St. Alban's Church, where it was arranged she should present herself for the Holy Communion. The church was excessively crowded, and a great number of people outside were unable to obtain admission. A select few guarded Miss Taylor near the altar. They laughed loudly at the ritualistic manner of conducting the service, and interrupted the sermon by coughing. Before the service was at an end, the crowd outside burst open the door and rushed in. The women took fright and hurried towards the altar as the only means of escape. As many as could get out left the church in terror. The dense crowd inside the church filled the aisle and stood upon the seats, the service being for a time put an end to. The conduct of the crowd being of a somewhat menacing character, Mr. Pollock and his brother priests and the choristers appeared in a line on the lower step of the altar, with a large cross held in front of them by way of protection and of awing the crowd. In about ten minutes order was so much restored as to allow of the service being hurried through. There were a few communicants, but the place was so crowded that Miss Taylor, like many others, was unable to approach the altar.

### Living Epistles.

My Kate was about to be confirmed, and a preliminary step, was required to commit the first chapters of John's gospel.

"Mind, Kate," said I, "you must try to understand what you learn."

"Yes ma'am," was the reply.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I say unto you, ye must be born again," puzzled her completely.

"It seems," said Kate, "as though somehow a man must be made quite anew before he can enter the kingdom of heaven: Tell me how it is."

I did tell her as well as I could, of the wonders of the new birth. How a man's whole tone of life and current of thought must be changed. That whereas he once supremely loved himself, and those things that ministered to his worldly desires and afforded worldly enjoyment, he would henceforth find his highest pleasure in doing God's will, and in leading others to know and serve him. I told her of the blessedness of those who walk with God,—who live in sacred communion with him, whose heart daily cries out "Whom, O God, have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee."

Then I dwelt upon the blessed character and gentle temper of the renewed ones,—their patience, humility and charity. I told how in consequence of that great change, it was easy for a man, who had once been violent and vindictive, to forgive instantly and perfectly all injuries, to return good for evil, blessing for cursing.

All this was new to Kate. Overcome by the mighty truths she had heard for the first time, she sank upon her knees, and raising her hands to me, exclaimed—

"Tell me, Mrs. B, did I ever see a renewed one?" Can I ever see such a one?

What a question was that! For half a year she had seen me each hour of the day. The relations of mistress and servant had been uniformly pleasant. The common duties of life had been satisfactorily discharged. But she never suspected that I was one of the blessed number of those who had been "washed and sanctified and made new in Christ Jesus." No, she never once suspected that I was describing myself!

Nor was I. The holy life I could so graphically depict, was not my life. It was the life I aimed at, but did not attain. How much easier to describe it than show it,—to tell it than live it!

"Ye are our epistle, known and read of all men," says Paul. Ah, these same poor Corinthians, with all their faults, had a way of living we do not seem to understand. They were known to be Christ's,—known to belong to the household of faith. About us,—Christians of the present time, there is a fearful uncertainty. Our neighbors and our domestics do not see Christ Jesus in us. They cannot guess what regeneration is, from anything they see in us. We talk finely about it but we do not live it.

Oh, the power of a single holy life! What a mighty influence for good does he wield who is always and everywhere a living epistle for Jesus!—*National Baptist.*

### A Good Husband.

"Kind words are never lost."

I often see articles about the good wife and what she must do to make her husband happy, but rarely anything about a good husband, and what he must do to please his wife. I have been a wife and mother for nearly twenty years, and I believe have done all in my power to make my husband and children happy, and I must say that nothing so much adds to my happiness as a kind word from my husband, a kind look, a kind act. Oh, how cheering, after a hard day's toil at the wash-tub, or the wheel, or the loom, or the hot fire all day cooking for harvest hands, or a sleepless night with a sick babe—how cheering is a kind word and a sweet kiss and a smile from the husband and father. But to think of bitterness, angry looks, enraged temper, scolding and complaints of everything around him makes my very blood run cold.

Now, gentlemen if you see defects in your good wives, try kindness and see if it won't