

# Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business : fervent in spirit."

Vol. XIV. No. 1.  
NEW SERIES. }

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, January, 6, 1869.

{ WHOLE SERIES.  
Vol. XXXIII. No. 1.

## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

### CONTENT.

Spring came with smiles and tears to us,  
And filled our path with flowers;  
And Summer came and brought the full  
Perfection of her hours;  
The Autumn came, we tasted then  
The sweetness of the dowers.

Ah, but the skies were bright in May  
When o'er the morning dew  
We saw the bright sun send his beams  
From yonder hill, and knew  
The dear old world held many a joy,  
And all we loved were true!

But Summer joys were sweeter far  
And brighter than the May—  
The dear delights that blossomed full  
And over-ran the day,  
Were fragrant with the roses breath,  
And with the new mown hay!

And Autumn brought a tender trust  
Too deep for word or song,  
When all the woods were russet-dyed,  
And all the shadows long,  
When every hill-side echoed back  
The crickets sad, shrill song.

Now shall we tremble when the winds  
Are wailing o'er the moor,  
And shall we doubt the constant love  
That filled to brimming o'er  
With happiness, the days we passed  
So peacefully before?

We sadly know the dying year  
Holds many a misspent day,  
And many an hour when in our joy  
The soul forgot to pray,  
And many a sin, and many a wrong,  
And oft we went astray.

But, though we falter in the path  
And many a spot we mark  
By weak uncertain wanderings  
And stumblings in the dark,  
We trust, at last, to reach the light  
And know no more the dark.

And looking through the shad'wy gloom  
Of Winter's lingering night,  
We paint the Coming Year all fair,  
And beautiful, and bright,  
We trust the Hand that measures out  
Alike the dark and light.

Truro, Dec. 24th.

## Religious.

### LOVE OF DENOMINATIONAL VIEWS.

BY REV. SILAS BAILEY, D. D.

Persons of every sect, in turn, are blamed for the partiality which they manifest for their own denominational sentiments. If they express a preference, they do it at the risk of being thought uncharitable, perhaps, of being called bigoted, narrow-minded, etc. Some, through fear of such charges, make indecent haste to assure those differing from them, that they have no strong, cherished leaning towards one view more than another, that they can easily and readily affiliate with any who claim to be Christians; and that, to them, one platform of faith is as acceptable as another.

Others make a distinction between the different articles of their creed. They wish stronger freedom, separate the essential from the non-essential, "the fundamental from the non-fundamental." Whether an item of faith or position shall go to this or that side depends often on whether holding it firmly will be any bar to their admission to this or that social circle. What is unpopular with those whom they aspire to associate with is non-essential.

But is there anything blameworthy and censurable in an unwavering attachment to one's religious convictions? Is there anything commendable in disguising and concealing such an attachment? There is only one answer to these questions. Whoever is made the judge, the decision is one. The man or woman, who is always open and frank, whatever may be the social consequences, is the one to whom men in their hearts, yield universal homage, while, on the other hand, no such regard is felt for

the one who is false to his own convictions. Men may, by their words, seem to pronounce another judgment. To break down and silence those who differ from them, they may give currency to another sentiment, but in their heart it is not so.

It is presumed here, of course, that the individual has come to his convictions in a legitimate way. He does not believe any article, nor pursue any course in practice simply because his church does; nor because influential citizens believe and practice the same; nor because the community as a whole, take kindly to them, nor because his family has held to this way through many generations; but because, upon careful comparison, his judgment is convinced that they are in harmony with the revealed will of God, and furthermore, because they are endeared to him by being interwoven with all his Christian experience.

Where religious convictions have such an origin, they should not be trifled with. Attachments to truth and practice thus rooted can scarcely be too strong. No man can do homage to what contradicts them without compromising his Christian manhood, not to say without bringing into doubt his fealty to Christ. The very persons whom he aims to conciliate by a surrender of what he believes to be the will of God and his duty, will feel towards him as men always have felt and must always feel towards those who are treacherous to great interests entrusted to them. Such seeking to save life is ever the sure way to lose it.

There is another consideration which is entitled to some weight. The principles which go to make up the Baptist creed have a most honorable record. They are inseparably connected with the world's advancement, and illumine the brightest pages of human history. Over the Baptist faith there has ever shone a divine ray. It has pierced the dungeon into which the believer has been thrust and made it a Bethel. It has fallen upon the battle-fields where truth and error had met and struggled for the mastery. It has lain across scaffolds, whither the feet of the martyrs have come. God has been with those who have earnestly contended for those heaven-taught principles. Out of weakness they have been made strong, waxed valiant in fight and turned, again and again, the armies of the aliens; and greater victories await them in the future than have been won by them in the past.

JOHN MILTON.

We are transported a hundred and fifty years back (1675). We can almost fancy that we are visiting him in his small lodging; that we can see him sitting at the old organ beneath the faded green hangings; that we can catch the quick twinkle of his eyes rolling in vain to find the day; that we are reading in the lines of his noble countenance the proud and mournful history of his glory and his affliction. We image to ourselves the breathless silence in which we should listen to his slightest word; the passionate veneration with which we should kneel to kiss his hand and weep upon it; the earnestness with which we should endeavor to console him, if indeed such a spirit could need consolation, for the neglect of an age unworthy of his talents and his virtues; the eagerness with which we should contest with his daughters, or with his Quaker friend Elwood, the privilege of reading Homer to him, or of taking down the immortal accents which flowed from his lips. These are perhaps foolish feelings. Yet we cannot feel ashamed of them, nor shall we be sorry if what we have written shall in any degree excite them in other minds.

We are not much in the habit of idolizing either the living or the dead. But there are a few characters which have stood the closest scrutiny and the severest tests, which have been tried in the furnace and have proved pure, which have been weighed in the balances and have not been found wanting, which have been declared sterling by the general consent of mankind, and which are visibly stamped with the image and superscription of the Most High. These great men we trust that we know how to prize, and of these was Milton. The sight of his books, the sound of

his name, are pleasant to us. Nor do we envy the man who can study either the life or the writings of the great poet and patriot without aspiring to emulate, not indeed the sublime works with which his genius has enriched our literature, but the zeal with which he labored for the public good, the fortitude with which he endured every private calamity, the lofty disdain with which he looked down on temptations and dangers, the deadly hatred which he bore to bigots and tyrants, and the faith which he so sternly kept with his country and with his fame. —Macaulay.

### A FLOWER FOR THE DEAD CHILD.

BY CAROLINE A. SOULE.

One bright afternoon in May we were leaning against the iron fence that surrounds Murray Hill Reservoir, looking wistfully at the beautiful pansies which bordered the whole length of the flower-bed, when suddenly we felt our dress pulled three or four times in quick succession.

We turned and saw a little creature, five or six years old, bare-footed and bare-headed, with garments which, though clean, were patched in a dozen places. Tears were dripping down her cheeks very fast, and her lips were quivering with trouble.

As she caught our eye, she said eagerly, between her sobs, "Get it for me; do lady, get it please; I want it so much, I do."

"What is it, dear? What do you want me to get for you?"

"Come and see;" and she led me a few steps, and then pointed to a dandelion which was nestling lazily in the green turf, looking like one of those golden stars which the poet tells us "in earth's firmament do shine."

"I can't reach it—I ain't long enough to get it—but you is," and she took my hand and slipped it between the railings.

"But what do you want of it, little one?"

"I want it for baby, 'cause,"—a big sob choked her for awhile,—"'cause he's dead, and my mother says he ought to have a nice flower in his hands. Do please get it for me."

The emphasis in the last sentence moved me as few orators could.

"Don't believe her, Madam," said a voice at my side,—a clear ringing voice,— "She'll pick your pocket while you are reaching for it."

Looking around we saw a handsome boy about twelve years old, standing near, and watching us as though he thought we were not very well versed in New York street life. But before we could speak, the little girl turned and said with eager, childish earnestness,— "I won't pick her pocket either. I isn't a thief. I'se good—good as you is—so there."

"Well, you're a story-teller, anyway. I don't believe the baby's dead any more than I believe I am. You know you're telling a fib," and he looked her keenly in the eye.

"I knows I isn't, so there then. I isn't, I goes to Sunday-school, and little girls that goes to Sunday-school never tells fibs. He's dead, lady, dead as"—hesitating for a sufficiently strong comparison—"dead as he ever can be—very dead—so dead that he can't never wake up any more. Do please lady, get me the flower. I'll say something for you when I goes to bed, if you does."

"What will you say, dear?"

"I'll say, God bless the good lady, and don't make her little baby die."

We didn't reach after that dandelion; but we took the little darling by the hand, and turning to the boy, said to him, "If I will go to a florist's and buy a few white flowers and green leaves, will you go with me and see the dead body?"

"Yes, madam," he answered respectfully; "but what can I do there?"

"Nothing probably; but I am not accustomed to going alone into tenement houses and I don't know what kind of people I may meet. I should like to feel that I had a protector."

He strained up at once, and said, in a frank manly way, "I'll take as good care of you madam, as if you were my mother."

"So we went along, a queer trio even for this city's queer sights; one side of me a

boy dressed in the height of fashion,—on the other, a bare-footed, bare-headed, patched-up little wanderer.

We bought the bouquet, white roses and buds, and myrtle sprigs, and a leaf or two of sweet-scented geraniums, and then submitted to the guidance of the child.

It was a long way she led us, across the avenues, but she stopped finally at a tenement-house, and went before us up four flights of stairs, and then silently pushed open the door of a back room, and said softly, "See lady, see boy—he's dead."

It was a very plainly furnished room, but everything was clean, the floor like a Shaker's kitchen, and the window panes like polished crystal.

In an old-fashioned wooden cradle, which looked as though it might have rocked four or five generations, lay the little dead baby. The mother sat beside it. Worn out by long watching, she had fallen asleep in her chair, but her foot was on the rocker, and it was a touching sight to see that, by the force of habit, she kept the cradle moving regularly to and fro.

"Wake up—wake up and see the lady," said the little girl, before we could prevent her.

The woman started wildly, then recovering herself, spoke kindly to us. We told her how and why we came there, and asked her to accept the flowers, and put them in the baby's hand. She did so, but many a tear dropped on them before they were fastened in those little cold white fingers.

Then she turned to us, and said in a voice that fruitlessly strove to be calm, "I thank you very much, I used to live in the country and have plenty of them, and I have always kept plants here; I thank you very much. Some one will put flowers in your hands, when you are dead, to pay for this, though may the Lord spare you long."

As we wiped away our tears, for we could feel for her as only those mothers can who have buried an idolized child, the boy whispered to us, "Would you be afraid to stay here half an hour, or so?"

Afraid—in a room hallowed by the mystery of death! "No;" we said; "why do you ask?"

"Because I want to go and get something. I'll come back as soon as I can, and see you safe home."

We sat down and listened to the mother's story, holding the while the little girl upon our lap.

Presently two men came in; one the father; the other, the undertaker with the coffin.

We put down the living child, and lifted the dead one, handling it as tenderly as if it had belonged to our dearest friend. We held its cold face to its little sister, its father and mother, and when they had kissed it so many many, many times, we put it reverently into the coffin; reverently, though only an empty casket now, it had once held a gem more precious than pearl or diamond.

The boy came back within the time he had named, a paper box in his hand, which he quietly gave to us. On opening it, we found a beautiful wreath, one woven expressly for the dead; white flowers and green leaves only.

"Ought you to have done this?" said we, for a glance told us it was very costly.

"Yes, oh, yes. Do give it to them. I bought it with my week's spending money. It was so wicked in me to call that poor little thing a story-teller."

We placed it on the coffin-lid, and then motioned the giver to come and look upon the fair baby face. And then we said good-bye to all.

The little girl came all the way down stairs with us and as we bent to kiss her, put her arms impulsively around our neck and said earnestly, "I'll be sure now to say, God bless you lady, and never, never make your baby die." And then loosening her clasp on us, she turned to the boy, and taking both his hands in hers, said with a touching emphasis, "Don't you believe me now; didn't I tell the truth?"

"Yes, yes;" tears starting to his eyes. "Yes, you did speak the truth—but there's so many bad children about, one don't know who is good any more."