

Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XV. No. 52.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, December 28, 1870.

WHOLE SERIES
Vol. XXXIV. No. 52

Poetry.

DECEMBER.

BY WILLIAM MORRIS.

DEAD, lonely night, and all streets quiet now;
Thin o'er the moon the hindmost cloud swims
past
Of that great rack that brought us up the snow,
On earth strange shadows o'er the snow are
cast;
Pale stars, bright moon, swift cloud, make
heaven so vast,
That earth, left silent by the wind of night,
Seems shrunken 'neath the gray unmeasured
height.
Ah! through the hush the looked-for midnight
change!
And then, on while its last stroke's solemn
drone
In the cold air by unlit windows hangs,
Out break the bells above the year foredone.
Change, kindness lost, love left, unloved, alone;
Till their despairing sweetness makes thee deem
Thou once wert loved, if but amidst a dream.
O thou, who longest still to life and love,
Though nought of good, no God, thou mayest
discern,
Though nought that is, thine utmost woe can
move,
Though no soul knows wherewith thine heart
doth yearn,—
Yet, since thy weary lips no curse can learn,
Cast no least thing thou lovedst at once away,
Since yet, perchance, thine eyes shall see the
day.
[From "OLD AND NEW" for December.

WHY DOST THOU WAIT?

Poor trembling lamb! Ah! who outside the fold
Has bid thee stand, all weary as thou art?
Dangers around thee, and the bitter cold
Creeping and gnawing to thine inmost heart,
Who bids thee wait till some mysterious feeling
Thou knowest not what perchance may never
know
Shall find thee where in darkness thou art
kneeling,
And fill thee with a rich and wondrous glow
Of love and faith; and change to warmth and
light
The chill and darkness of thy spirit's night.
For miracles like this, who bids thee wait?
Behold the Spirit and the Bride say come!
The tender Shepherd opens wide the gate;
And in his love would lead thee gently home,
Why shouldst thou wait? Long centuries ago
Thou timid lamb, the Shepherd paid for thee,
Thou art his own. Wouldst thou his beauty
know
Nor trust the love, which yet thou canst not see?
Thou hast not learned this lesson to receive,
More blest are they who see not, yet believe.

Still dost thou wait for feeling? Dost thou say,
Fain would I love and trust but hope is dead
I have no faith, and without, who may
Rest on the blessing which is only shed
Upon the faithful? I must stand and wait,
Not so. The Shepherd does not ask of thee
Faith in thy faith, but only faith in Him,
And this he meant in saying "Come to me,"
In light or darkness seek to do his will
And leave the work of faith to Jesus still.
Selected.

December 19th, 1870.

Religious.

THE HERALDS OF THE ADVENT.

When the Lord Jesus came an infant,
last heir of the royal house of DAVID, and
first and only heir-apparent of the kingship
in the heavenly kingdom, it was without
pompe or circumstance to challenge the
regards of the world. No birth could have
humbler surroundings than his. Yet there
were heralds to hail his advent such as
never welcomed king's son on earth. If
men knew not their king when he came,
and were dumb, all heaven was on a stir,
and heaven's messengers winged their
several ways to celebrate his glory. Who
can say in his heart that the proclamations,
and the anthems, and the messages, and
the prophesying, and the praises of these
were not sublime beyond compare with any
pageantry of the proudest royal families of
earth, greeting a new-born heir—sublime,
too, as contemplated in relation with the
ever-spreading glories, through the centu-

ries, of that king who was then first an-
nounced as lying, a babe, in a manger?

I. THE STAR.—Legend and tradition
have nothing authentic to add to the history
of this sign in the heavens. Astronomy,
chief of sciences in the exactness of its
determinations, and precise enough in its
grasp of the celestial mechanism to cast the
place and movement of any known sphere
in any remote age, past or future, is here
at fault. The conjectures which it has
devoutly ventured to make, after the most
subtle calculations, fail to adjust with the
recorded facts; and the Star of Bethlehem
has neither ephemeris, nor place, nor name
in the celestial roll as registered by man.
Was it, then, an ephemeral flying torch
held aloft in angel's hands, or was it a true
sphere of the sidereal realm, appointed just
then to reach its perihelion, thence to speed
off again through an orbit, and time of
revolution, vast enough to span the ages
between two Comings? And will it flash
to human eyes once more the "sign of the
Son of Man in heaven" "when he shall
come with power and great glory?" We
may only wonder and say: Blessed Herald
Star, set on high to guide the far off
Gentiles on the pathway to the birth-place
of a king—the noblest work that ever star
might hope to do!

II. THE MAGI.—Wise men from the
far East, astrologers skilled in the science
of the stars, which they and their fathers
had learned to know all by name—names
that still are written as they gave them—
professed interpreters also, for the multi-
tude, of the signs in the heavens as fore-
shadowing events. It could be no mere
conjunction of planets or ordinary horoscope
of the zodiac which should so marvellously
affect them, and start them westward
through a toilsome journey over deserts.
It was some surpassing portent, such as
astrology had not recorded before, such as
could have no interpretation but in fulfil-
ment of some great expectation of human-
ity. Moreover, it were hard to believe less
than that some divine inspiration came down
to sanctify their augury and lend zeal to
their faith, as night by night they moved
their tents in following the Star. Thus
they, too, became Heralds, and with all the
authority of their honored vocation, they
bore a message through the land, from the
river to the sea, from the plains of Chaldea
to the borders of Judea, to Jerusalem
itself, till all the Holy City was stirred with
amazement when such men proclaimed such
truth. Thus came they, the first Gentiles,
to bring homage and gifts, and to point
Israel to its new-born king. It matters
not if we call them three holy kings, GAS-
PAR, MELCHIOR, and BALTHAZAR; they
were heralds of the Advent, with whom
God spake when Edom would again smite
Jacob with deadly hate, in the last struggle
for the lost birthright to a throne. And
they obeyed, and depart from our sight to
reappear in the second Coming.

III. GABRIEL—"Man of God" is his
name, a messenger of peace, to comfort
man withal. What is unearthly and un-
revealed it is vain to search, and curiosity
may seek no further, through this glimpse
of angelic intelligence, than to frame the
thought of a blessed ministering spirit,
flying on errands of mercy. And when
the Advent was at hand, surely such an one
could not but be filled with the glory of his
mission, and as a herald, voice the elo-
quence of Heaven's great love. Twice he
came—to ZACHARIAS, and to MARY at the
Annunciation. May we not dare believe
it thrice, and was it not also GABRIEL that
to the Shepherds, and to the world brought
the "glad tidings of great joy?"

IV. THE CHOIR OF ANGELS.—Close on
the flight of GABRIEL came this multitude
of the heavenly host, praising God. That
news was "more than heaven could bear,"
and

"Down through the portals of the sky
The impetuous torrent ran;
And angels flew, with eager joy,
To bear the news to man."
The recitative, on that wondrous occasion,
was carried by one angel voice, yet seems
almost out short by that glorious anthem
which these herald angels taught to men.
Their heavenly music is still ringing over

the world, the voicing never to die out;
yea, is it not swelling ever louder, grander,
as new souls catch the theme and join the
chorus, and new joy awakens fresh music
from the herald angels in heaven?

V. THE SHEPHERDS.—From feeding
their flocks, perhaps in the green pastures
and beside the still waters where DAVID
had once been a shepherd, they made haste
to the manger at Bethlehem. With a quick
faith they believed and "made known
abroad the saying which was told them and
all they that heard it wondered." Thus
these humblest of men became also her-
alds.

VI. SIMEON AND ANNA.—As hoary
mountain peaks catch the first rays of the
rising sun, heralding from their shining
caps to an expectant world the dawn of
day, so were these gifted above all others
of that generation to catch the hidden glory
of that marvellous birth. They had been
waiting, into old age, through a rayless
night, expectant. They stood in the temple
to close the priesthood of the Jewish faith,
and herald at last the One High Priest of
the world, passing over upon him what was
left, uncorrupted, of the holy trusts of the
past. Grand beyond measure was their
part, as among the Heralds differing from
that of the Magi or of the Shepherds, it
was the one official transfer of the Old
into the New. And in that one moment
these two aged priests and prophets of
God, looking upon the babe, heralded more
than was yet in the minds of the Apostles
to conceive even long after they had begun
to preach the gospel of the "Child Jesus."
They proclaimed him "a Light to lighten
the Gentiles." It was a daze of glory,
their bright spirits, ready to depart, looked
into—the glory of the kingdom as we have
seen it come in these centuries, and coming
still. Through the scene there was a heralding
grand in itself, and yet the more so for its
sublime fitness to the occasion, among the
divinely ordered appointments of the na-
tivity. The venerable Past was thus taking
a bright look of the Future, thereupon to
finish its work and die. "Now lettest thou
thy servant depart in peace," was the
"nunc demittis" not of a man, but of a
dispensation the stamp upon the seal upon
the tomb of Judaism.

As when scales fall off from a bud
bursting into blossom so these passed away,
the last Heralds of the Advent.—*Chris-
tian Union.*

CHRIST THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR.

BY REV. JAMES P. BOYCE, D. D.

Upon what grounds can it be asserted
that the absence of a separate personality,
for Christ's human nature, made Jesus in
any respect not like unto his brethren?
Scripture affirms, and reason supports the
idea, that the same person existing and op-
erating, we know not how, but according to
the nature of God, was truly God; and also
existing in human nature, and operating as
we do, through its conscious relations to
the real body and human soul, of which
that nature was composed, was truly man.
In each nature he knew of his relation to
the other, as God knowing that he was man,
as man knowing that he was God. Yet the
divine nature did not partake of that human
knowledge and experience which he had of
affliction, suffering, and temptation, any
more than the human nature experienced
the conscious relation of Christ to the
Father in the divine nature, or possessed
the attributes of omniscience or omnipres-
ence. No limitations, nor changes, which
he experienced in his human nature, could
deprive him of complete divinity; nor could
any influence, or any value arising from the
essential union of his person with his divine
nature, take away from the absolute and
real humanity assumed by Christ, and con-
sciously realized by him when he became
man. However united, he was capable of
separate experience, action, thought, and
knowledge; and, indeed, of separate exist-
ence in the two natures. Thus is it, at
least, with us. We have separate experi-
ence of the sufferings and joys of our souls
and of our bodies, and this fact removes

any difficulty in believing that it was so
with Christ, as to his divine and human
natures, when we find the Bible thus
teaching.

It is here that we are to find the full ex-
planation of the many seeming contradic-
tions involved in what is taught us of the
person and work of Christ. So intimate
is the union of the one person with two
such distinct natures, that we cannot always
separate what Christ says of himself as
God, from what is said as man. This,
however, may puzzle us in interpreting the
work of God, but not in harmonizing its
statements. But without this doctrine the
word of God cannot be made at one with
itself. When, however, we remember that,
though truly divine, he is truly human, and
that, because of the one person, all that he
does in either nature may be as fully said
to be done by him as though he had no
other, we can then see how beautifully and
regularly the Scripture statements fall into
their respective ranks, and in that twofold
unity each statement receives its full force.
It is thus that he, who is said to fill the
universe, was contained in the womb of
Mary; that he, whose are the cattle upon
a thousand hills, felt the pangs of famish-
ing hunger; that he, who made the world,
had not where to lay his head; that he, who
had given to the fig tree its fruit, and knew
what it bore, came to it, if happily he might
find anything thereon; that he, to whom
as God are known all things from the founda-
tions of the world, yet offered up fervent
prayers, with agony and strong supplication,
not for others only, but chiefly for himself,
and also declared that he knew not the
judgment day; that he, who, as God, had
given salvation to men before his incarna-
tion, because of the certainty of the work
he would accomplish, yet as man approach-
ed with shrinking, and perhaps with fear of
failure in his work, praying the Father that
the cup might pass from him. And, hang-
ing upon that cross, how amazing the mys-
tery of contradiction! As God, he enjoys
supreme felicity in the unchanged blessed-
ness of his divine nature. As man, he is
in vital agony both of body and soul. As
God, the eternal outflowings of the mutual
love of the Father and the Spirit, and of
himself, the eternal Son, continue to bestow
unabated mutual bliss. As man, he is the
victim of the Father's wrath, which, because
of the sin upon him, culminates in that
Father's withdrawal amid the agonizing cry
of the Son, My God, my God, why hast thou
forsaken me? With a loud cry the mortal
man dies, but the eternal life of God
remains unchanged.

Thus have we seen, in the review of the
Scripture teachings as to the doctrine of
the suffering Christ, that in the possession
of an unchanged and proper divine nature,
and a complete human nature, Christ
suffered on our behalf. The sufferer was
God and was man. Yet it was not God
that suffered, but he that is God, being
also man, suffered in his human nature.
As the same person, however, was united
with both natures, and as that person was
the Son of God, so may we say that the
Son of God suffered. This, however, is
the suffering of a divine person, not of the
divine nature, and of that person, otherwise
incapable of suffering, through the assump-
tion of human nature. If, therefore, called
upon to give expression to the Scripture
statements upon this whole subject, we may
express it thus: There is one God, in three
persons, distinct in personality, but un-
dividedly and unchangeably the same in
essence and nature. We may speak of a
divine person, but not of a divine nature;
we must say the divine nature. A divine
person may, therefore, become incarnate,
and yet the incarnation be not of the whole
Godhead, for the persons are distinct; but
the divine nature cannot, because, as com-
mon to all, its incarnation would be that of
the whole Godhead. It was a person of
this Godhead, the Son, the Word, who so
united to himself human nature, as to
become a person in that nature, a man. In
this union he assumed all that constitutes a
man. The fact that he had no other
personality than such as had always sub-
sisted in the divine nature, does not make
him an impersonal man. It only forbids