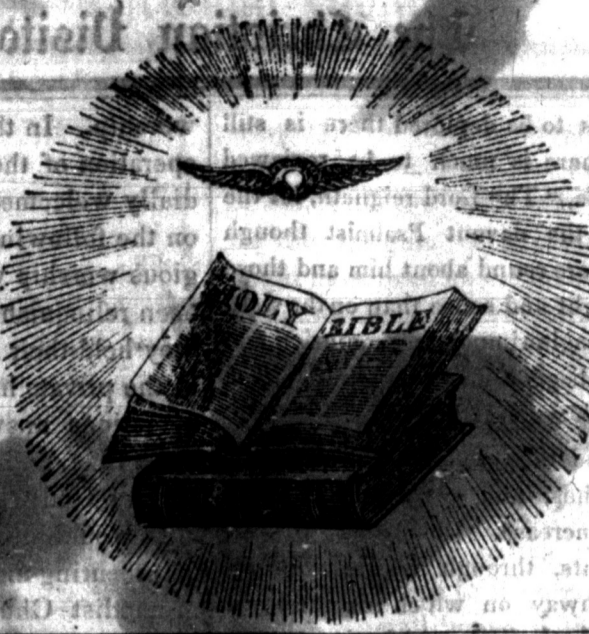


Christian

Visitor.



A Family Newspaper—Devoted to

Religious and General Intelligence.

BAILEY & DAY, Proprietors.

“BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE—BY LOVE UNFEIGNED.”—St. PAUL.

Rev. E. D. VERY, Editor.

VOL. I.

SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1847.

NO. 6.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

Is PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY, BY BAILEY & DAY,

At their Office, Prince William Street, over Messrs. Vaughans & Lockhart's Store, immediately opposite Sands' Arcade.

TERMS:—10s. per annum, invariably in advance. Eight copies sent to one address for fourteen dollars.

TERMS OF ADVERTISING:—For one square, (12 lines or less,) 3s. for the first, and 1s. 3d. for each subsequent insertion.

All Communications, &c., connected with the paper, to be directed to the Publishers.

No letters will be taken from the Post Office unless post paid.

A LEGAL LEGACY.

Of great value is the following, from the pen of the late Judge Story. It is equally applicable to the members of the bar in all meridians:

“When'er you speak, remember every cause stands not on eloquence, but stands on laws—Pregnant matter, in expression brief, Let every sentence stand in bold relief; On trifling points not time nor talents waste, A sad offence to learning and to taste; Nor deal with pompous phrase; nor e'er suppose Poetic flights belong to reasoning prose. Loose declamation may deceive the crowd, And seem more striking as it grows more loud; But sober sense rejects it with disdain. As nought but empty noise—and weak as vain. The froth of words, the schoolboy's vain parade Of books and cases—all his stock in trade—The pert conceits, the cunning tricks and play Of low attorneys, strung in long array, The unseemly jest, the petulant reply, That chatters on and cares not how or why, Studious avoid—unworthy themes to scan, They sink the speaker, and disgrace the man. Like the false lights by flying shadows cast, Scarce seen when present, and forgot when past. Begin with dignity; expound with grace Each ground of reason in its time and place; Let order reign throughout—each topic touch, Nor urge its power too little or too much. Give each strong thought its most attractive view, In diction clear, and yet severely true. And, as the arguments in splendor grow, Let each reflect its light on all below. When to the close arrived, make no delays By petty flourishes or verbal plays, But sum the whole, in one deep, solemn strain, Like a strong current hastening to the Main.”

We would often direct the attention of the reader to those scenes of the Saviour's sufferings, and to those traits of his character, in the contemplation of which such emotions will be excited in the bosom of the believer, as will enable him to answer intelligently the question of his Lord—“*Lovest thou me?*” The theme of the following selection, we think, is adapted to produce this effect. It is presented to us from the pen of one who well knew how, in the use of a subject intrinsically and supremely excellent, to hold the heart in delightful captivity.

THE SAVIOUR'S DEVOTIONAL HABITS

“Jesus went up into a mountain:” for what purpose? To view the Judean landscape, while the setting sun was flashing the Lake of Genesaret, and flinging his yellow radiance over the adjacent wilderness? No!

“When the evening was come, Jesus was there alone.” Why? That he might watch the rising of the evening star, and mark the lamps of heaven kindling in clusters and constellations throughout the hemisphere? No. Did he, then, ascend the mountain to enjoy repose?—The Saviour needed rest at the time, for he had spent the day in healing the sick and feeding the hungry, under a scorching sun, and amidst a crowding multitude. But it was not for rest that he retired: “He went up into a mountain apart to pray.” Was this devotional exercise less sublime than gazing on the gilded landscape and the glowing firmament? Those who ascend mountains, voluntarily and alone, do so

in general, to indulge poetic or scientific taste; to command the prospect, and to commune with nature in silence and solitude. Jesus ascended to pray: and by prayer, to commune with God: a nobler communion than poets or philosophers ever had with nature, in her majestic or lovely scenes. And yet, how few are alive to the sublimity of devotional solitude! Praying in secret to the Father who seeth in secret, is an exercise equally solemn and august; but how little interest it excites to say of a man, *he is alone praying!*

Tell men of taste, that their favorite poet is alone, amidst the scenery of the lakes or the Grampians; alone on the Alps or the Andes;—alone in the Coliseum of Rome, or amidst the Pyramids of Egypt; and immediately his admirers will realize his emotions, and dwell with him in spirit, amidst clouds and cataracts, rocks and ruins, and feel as if he were more than mortal. But tell them that he is alone praying; and that moment the charm will be dissolved, and that man pitied as insane, or despised as fanatical. So lightly is devotional solitude esteemed.

Tell scientific men, that the first astronomer of the age is alone in the chief observatory in the world, with the most powerful telescopes ever lifted to the heavens; and all kindred minds will at once kindle in prospect of his discoveries. The silence and solitude of his post are held sublime, and felt to be in harmony with the silent sweep of the celestial orbs, and the music of the spheres. But tell his admirers, that he often pauses, amidst the roll and radiance of the heavenly bodies, to pray; and although one of their own poets has said that

“An undevout astronomer is mad,” his devotion will be esteemed madness or weakness. “The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling, Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,”

and is almost adored; but the penitent's eyes, swimming in tears of contrition, and hardly daring to look up, even when alone before God, are despised by the generality of mankind.—But “a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” The astronomer tracing the stars in their courses, and tracking the devious comet in its flight, is held to be a star of the first magnitude in the mental system—strong in undertaking, and lofty in genius. But the christian, retired to pray, is held to be almost mean-spirited. And yet—he lifts his adoring eyes to heaven of which the incarnate “brightness of the Father's glory” is both “the morning star” and “the sun of righteousness;” and in his light, sees the landscape of eternity illuminated—the valley of the shadow of death, irradiated with the Divine presence, and all the intermediate track of time basking under the eye of Providence. Often, when alone praying, he finds his closet the very gate of heaven, and feels as if “open vision” would follow his intimate communion with God and the Lamb. Whatever, therefore, may be thought or said, by taste, science, or ignorance, of going apart and being alone to pray, devotional solitude is often exhilarating, and always soothing.

It is commended by the high example, and commanded by the high authority of the Saviour—

“Cold mountains and the midnight air, Witnessed the fervour of his prayer.”

His example does not, of course, enforce an ascent to a mountain in order to pray. He went up into a mountain from necessity—not from choice; because as the Son of Man, he had not

where to lay his head; no home or closet.—To those who have both, his command is, “Enter into thy closet.” And we learn from his example, that *inconvenience* must not prevent secret prayer. Here was the Saviour upon a lonely mountain—exposed to the cold winds and dews of the night—the ground damp beneath his knees, and the air chill around him; and yet he prayed—prayed long; the morning star often finding him where the evening star had left him. We have not such inconveniences to surmount. What is a cold room in winter, of a close room in summer, compared to the hoary side of a bleak and dreary mountain at midnight? And yet how often are cold and heat allowed to hinder or hurry over secret prayer? Let Sloth look to the Saviour's retirement, and blush! God might have enjoined us to ascend such a mountain whenever we prayed; and if he had commanded it, the duty would have been indispensable; but, in tender accommodation to our comfort, he has granted us, what he withheld from his incarnate Son—a house; and says “Enter into thy closet.”

The Saviour's example proves that the *fatigue* of labour must not prevent secret prayer. He had spent the day until the evening in active exertion amongst the multitude that followed him into the wilderness. During all the time he had been under a burning sun in a sandy desert, and had afterwards to ascend the mountain alone. And there—neither shelter nor refreshment awaited him; but, although thus exhausted and exposed, he closed the labours of the day by prayer. Now, his example ought to have all the authority of a law—all the influences of a charm upon his disciples. We do not come home more fatigued than he was. He had no house—no domestic comforts—neither shelter nor pillow for his sacred head; and yet he went apart to pray. He will remind the prayerless of this fact.

The Saviour's example proves that even deeds of *charity* and great exertions for the poor and afflicted, must not set aside secret prayer. He closed a day of mighty effort on behalf of suffering humanity, by going apart to pray. And surely if serving others must not prevent devotional solitude, serving ourselves must not be allowed to do so: if acts of charity will not excuse neglect, the labours of industry cannot: if giving money to the poor be no plea for the omission of prayer, making money is not a valid one. Accordingly, while “diligence in business” is expressly enjoined, “fervency of spirit” in prayer, rests upon the same high and unalterable authority. Pray or perish is the alternative set before us in the gospel.

The Saviour's example proves that *no strength* of character or of grace can render devotional solitude unnecessary. He who had the Spirit without measure—who knew no sin—who was full of grace, and in whom Satan could find nothing to work upon—He went apart to pray. He held neither the fulness of his Godhead, nor the perfection of his humanity, as a reason for restraining prayer. And surely nothing that we have “attained” can render us independent of secret devotion!—“The servant is not greater than his Lord.” If, therefore, Satan, or sloth, or pride, say we may do with less prayer than at first, let us hear the insinuation as we should the assertion that we can do with less glorying in the Cross than we began with.

But here an important question forces itself upon the mind—Why did the Saviour pray? He did often and fervently; and the fact has been perverted into an argument against his proper divinity. But remember what he prayed for: it

was chiefly for *others*; and when it was for himself, never for ability to *save*—never for virtue to give efficacy to his *atonement*—never for strength to *redeem*. No—all his petitions in his own behalf were for the helps required by his human nature. He could, indeed, have drawn on the resources of his own personal Godhead: but it was necessary that the co-operation of the Father in the work of redemption should appear; and therefore, all the dependence of his humanity was thrown on the Father's good will: and thus prayer was rendered both necessary and proper. Besides, secret devotion is more than prayer: it is also *communion* with God. Now, what is more natural, and consistent, and becoming, than that the Son should retire to commune with the Father? For having dwelt in his bosom from eternity, it might be expected that he would maintain the original intimacy, both for its own sake, and that it might be known that neither distance nor incarnation had interrupted their fellowship. Instead, therefore, of derogating from his divinity, such prayer harmonizes with the highest ideas of Godhead—being in fact, a specimen of its devout communion. Besides, in praying as in all practical duty, the Saviour was acting as the *example* of his followers. He had taught his disciples to pray; and he illustrated and enforced the lesson by his own devotional habits; and if it was worthy of his divinity to inculcate devotion, it could not be unworthy of him to *exemplify* it. “When he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them:” he sent them into secret to pray, and he himself went apart to pray.

The Saviour consulted our interest as well as his Father's glory when he enjoined devotional solitude upon his disciples. For, in the best frame of mind, a christian requires to be alone at times. The privacy of the domestic altar is not sufficiently “apart,” when the heart is full and overflowing with adoring and melting views of sovereign and free grace. The full-souled exclamation, “Why me, Lord?” with its tones, and tears, is fit only for the ear of God. And when the witness of the Spirit is strong, and the seal of the Spirit bright; when the soul is borne away amongst “the deep things of God,” and the dazzling scenes of eternity—we must be alone, or lose one half of the enjoyment.—Even a family, however endeared, would be a check, at these sacred moments, on the full flow of devotion feeling, and on the flush of a hope full of immortality solitude is the real element of these raptures. But then—the christian is not alone; the mount of communion is covered with “horses of fire, and chariots of fire.” He is alone “with an innumerable company of angels, and with the spirits of just men made perfect.”

Solitude is also peculiarly suitable to the *worst* frames of a christian's mind. The tones and terms in which backsliding, or indeed any sin, can be deplored in the domestic or social circle, are both too general and tame for the emotions of a contrite spirit. David was alone when he said, “I have gone astray like a lost sheep.” Asaph was alone when he said, “I was as a beast before thee.” Ephraim was alone when he smote upon his thigh and acknowledged that he had been as “a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke.” And our secret sorrows and shame are not fit even for the ear of our families. They might be misunderstood and misinterpreted by others; whereas, He who heareth in secret can heal in secret. And what a sanctuary is solitude for the expression of all those feelings which, even at home, can only be breathed in general and gentle terms! It will not do to utter before our families all our fears of death, nor all our anxieties for them.—