

# Christian

A Family Newspaper—Devoted to



# Visitor.

Religious and General Intelligence.

GEO. W. DAY, Proprietor.

"BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE—BY LOVE UNFEIGNED."—ST. PAUL.

{ Rev. E. D. VERY, Editor.

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## A WORD FOR THE BIBLE SOCIETY.

With what stern weapons shall our spirits wage  
A warfare with the evils of the age;  
Break Superstition's dark and heavy chain,  
Which fatal Error rivetted again;  
Gilding the fetters with a brighter name,  
Their weight of cruel bondage still the same!

How can we meet, with calm, untroubled eye,  
The giant scorn of Infidelity;  
Or rouse Indifference from that dangerous sleep,  
Which watchful Death unbroken fain would keep  
Till the last hour of mercy has been given,  
And then the lost awakes,—but not in heaven!

And how shall mortal weakness dare to go  
To deadly conflict with this hydra foe,  
Unarmed, like David with his shepherd's sling?  
This blessed book, God's holy truth, we bring;  
The Spirit's sword, the gift of Heaven alone,  
Can bless the People, and defend the Throne.

Speak, word of God! with all-subduing might,  
Diffusing liberty, and love, and light;  
"Settled in heaven," thy power can never fail;  
O'er all his enemies shall God prevail,  
Till, "sanctified by truth," all conquests won,  
Christ's prayer is answered, and his Church is one.

Water of life! may we rejoice to see  
"The healing of the nations" spread by thee;  
A feeble, trembling hand the cup may give,—  
Thou, Lord! canst bid the dying taste and live;  
Now, on thy Revelation deign to shine,  
And make its triumphs, like thyself, Divine!

## Italy.

One of the first things that strikes the traveler in Europe, is the uniform excellency of the roads. It is usual to speak of the roads in England, as if their perfection were an exception to the general rule. But England has no roads—because the nature of the country does not call for them—which compare in costliness or magnitude with the roads to be found all over Italy. They form the ever-present monument of the science and liberality, and civic policy of its government. The traveller is kept in a constant surprise at the boldness and the perfect success of road-making over or under mountains, down precipices, upon endless terraces of collonades, through rocks and over torrents, where the most costly masonry is to be reckoned not so much by feet or rods as by miles. We have by no means seen, as yet, the most celebrated road over the Alps; but the road over Mount Cenis, and that from Florence to Rome by Perugia, are both worthy of the highest admiration.

Another peculiarity is the entire absence of wooden buildings. Every edifice, however humble, is of stone; all out-buildings, barns and huts, however rude, are built of this permanent material. The stone has originally been white-washed, but this is rarely renewed, and a universal dinginess characterizes all the buildings on the continent. Another and still more striking point, is the absence of anything answering to what we call a village. Such a thing is not to be found in the whole route from Paris to Rome. The collections of houses occurring every few miles upon the way, are uniformly built as closely together as the houses in the most crowded part of a city, leaving generally, barely room enough for a carriage to pass between them.—The small towns, therefore, have not the least advantage over the great cities, either in roominess, cleanliness, or freshness of air. They are huddled together just as compactly as possible. Nothing can exceed the ordinary discomfort, disgusting filth, and crowded habits of these little cities of three or four hundred people. This has not been a matter of choice. It has grown out of the necessity of keeping together for purposes of mutual protection in time of civil war. It is very common to find a gate at the beginning and end of one of these streets; itself, perhaps, jammed in between two steep hills, and thus con-

verted into a fortress. In other cases, the little town is built about a small open square, having but one entrance and exit. Single houses, excepting castles always, are for the same reason exceedingly rare. The necessity of providing against enemies, has perched all the considerable towns in Italy upon the tops of hills, or the steep declivities of mountains, or else along the shores of the Mediterranean, just where the Appenines crowd nearest to the sea. The more inaccessible and the less convenient to the plain, the more fit for a city. In many cases it is impossible to draw an ordinary travelling carriage up to the gates of a city of ten or twenty thousand people, without the aid of oxen. However offensive to his utilitarian notions, or to the pacific habits of these times, such situations may be, the traveller finds them unspeakably gratifying to his sense of the beautiful. The very beau ideal of the picturesque is reached in these sharp hills, bristling with towers and churches and battlements, and crowded with half ruined walls. Who can ever forget the exquisite beauty of the towns upon the shores of the sea between Genoa and Leghorn? The mountain sides above are covered with churches and campaniles, while every ledge that juts out into the Mediterranean is castellated with an irregular pile of houses, presenting every form that can excite the imagination or gratify the love of beauty. Above, the road winds along upwards, cut into the steep side of the mountain, and circles round, facing all points of the compass within a few minutes time. Now you seem brought to a dead stop by the sheerness of a precipice, and a short turn brings you, without warning, from a view entirely land-locked, to a broad Mediterranean prospect. The olive and the vine, the orange and the fig, form the foliage, while the prickly pear and the aloe hedge the roadside. In Italy, roads of the most perfect description are made where we should think it folly to attempt any passage, and this is one of the reasons of the extraordinary charm of travelling there.

The smoothest and most feasible roads run through the most inaccessible and broken provinces. A road, whose engineer considers a sheer precipice no obstacle, but patiently cuts a serpentine terrace up its side, or who is prepared to bore through a quarter of a mile of rock rather than abandon its direction, or who does not hesitate to go about three or four miles to accomplish only perhaps a single mile of aerial distance, must necessarily have a beauty which cheap roads cannot possess. Between Florence and Rome the country is surpassingly beautiful, and the towns exceed in picturesqueness of situation all we had ever conceived. How is it, we asked ourselves, as we came upon Arezzo, Perugia, and Narni, that the world does not ring with the praises of these places, hung between heaven and earth, to the admiration of both for their beauty of situation? Prague, a city of 15,000 inhabitants, full of old churches and convents, a church for every house almost, and surrounded with immense walls, is situated on the top of a mountain, which it took us an hour or more of hard climbing with oxen to reach. The view extends a whole day's journey. From the collonade of an old convent, we looked down upon four or five cities—Assisi, Foligno, Spoleto, and others—upon three ranges of mountains, and beautiful plains covered with ripe grain, with green vines, and grey olives, and the dark cypress. Never can that picture be taken down from the chamber of memory. And Narni our view was upon the highest part of the lofty and steep hill from which this beautiful little city commands the exquisite vale of

Terni, the most fertile valley of Italy! What should we think of a city on the top of Mount Holyoke, or on the side of a mountain house at the Catskills? And such are the sites of Perugia and Narni.—*Foreign Cor. of Ch. Inquirer.*

Translated from the German for the Reflector & Watchmen.

## Mohammed and his Religion.

Since the beginning of the world, no other mere man has ever exerted on the human family so great a religious, moral, and political influence as the Arabian, Mohammed. Without those rare natural gifts which Providence sometimes calls into exercise to produce remarkable changes in the world, and even with a narrow views and slender mental attainments, he has, for twelve centuries, thrown the simple yet strong net of his doctrine over a hundred millions of souls.

Like most of those men who have been great and energetic, the Prophet of Mecca came forth from an intellectual atmosphere. There prevailed around him a disposition which he did not originate, but which he found already in existence, and had only to cherish and extend. The Arabians, especially the stock of Koroish, to which Mohammed belonged, regarded themselves as the descendants, through Ishmael, of the pre-eminently favored Abraham. To that son, and his race, according to the popular belief, had been transferred the light of divine revelation, although it had, at length become obscured. The Ishmaelites wished not to be behind their brethren, the Israelites. They, too, must have their prophet to restore the faith of Abraham to its original purity, and make it the religion of the whole world. By frequent intercourse with the Jews and Christians, at that time (about A. D. 600) very numerous in Arabia, the feeling of the nation and of the tribe was naturally awakened. The Jews had despised and rejected the last great prophet whom God had sent to them. But the Christians, in attributing to him divine dignity, had been supposed by the heathen to have fallen into the opposite error. They had also lost their unity, and were divided into a confused multitude of sects contending with each other. So, it was believed, since the one branch of the posterity of Abraham had made themselves unworthy to be the bearer and organ of the divine revelation, or had failed to perform its work, the succession passed to the other branch, the descendants of the patriarch by the son of Hagar.

The fulness of time had come. Arabia was ripe for a great reaction of the Ishmaelitic spirit in religion. Christianity, Judaism, Parsism, and the inherited idolatry, had there produced a mingling and fermentation of religious systems; and only the mighty chieftain was needed to awake the slumbering, or collect the scattered energies, and to guide into the right channel, the everflowing, chaotic stream of thronging ideas.

As Mohammed cherished the conviction that his tribe was the noblest, the preserver of the ancient national religion, and that he was one of the most eminent of his tribe, so he considered himself called of God to accomplish, as the restorer of the genuine faith of his fathers, the religious and political regeneration of Arabia. He was not the only one in that country, nor the only one of his tribe, who laid claim to such a mission. In his own time, other prophets appeared in Arabia. Especially Tolecha and Moseilama had numerous confiding disciples; and to the latter and his adherents do the Mohammedans a tribe of Arabian descent, on the western coast of Africa, refer their origin and their religion. The sword, however, decided in favor

of Mohammed; and thus a stiff Judaism, founded on the abstract unity of God, and divested of the ancient hope which had been cherished by pious Hebrews, respecting a Messiah, and of all the deep spiritual elements therewith connected, became the dominant religion in the Arabian peninsula, and soon also in the greater part of Asia and Africa.

## Novel Reading.

The taste for novel reading, is a serious obstacle to the circulation of sound or religious reading matter. Novel readers do not want religious books. Indeed their taste has become so vitiated, that nothing but a novel bloated with a sickly sentimentalism, and descriptions of love-sick swains and lasses, can be relished. To such a taste all other kinds of reading are insipid, "tedious and tasteless." "History is too dry and tedious; biography too much colored and overstrained. The Bible, oh that is so dull and mysterious; and religious books are only opinions of men. The Bible tells all about religion." Such may be regarded as the language of those lovers of fiction.

But if this taste were confined to those novels which may be considered as moral, it might not be so bad in its results. It overleaps the bounds of modesty and morality, and devours with a rapid gusto, dishes that are served up in immoral and infidel Paris; for every thing that comes from Paris is fashionable, and eagerly sought after, whether it be a machine for squeezing and distorting the human frame, called a dress; or a book, filled with minute descriptions of the veriest sinks of iniquity, and highly spiced with oaths and blasphemies, called a novel.

At one time the book of mysteries comes across the waters and all the rage is for the "Mysteries of Paris," the mysteries of iniquity. The prisons and stews of Paris are dissected by one anatomist, under the pretence of giving instruction in human nature, and the curious multitude gather around to take lessons. They gaze with intense interest upon the dissected remains, and go away desirous to drink deeper of a knowledge of human nature. Their taste is aroused. The scribblers see it, and soon a host of quack anatomists spring up in our large towns, and apish-like, attempt similar dissections to gratify the public taste for a knowledge of human nature. At least this is the pretext.

Seized with a mania for such mysteries, the great and holy mysteries of the Bible are disregarded, and that to by professing Christians, to some extent. The precious moments God gives to become wise in the mysteries of his book, are squandered upon the "mysteries of Paris," and the like.

But before the eager multitude who desire to be wise about human nature, have half learned their lessons from the "mysteries," the "wandering Jew" comes along, and all rush to hear the tale he has to unfold. His pilgrimage takes all their attention; and, oh, how delighted they are. They are in ecstasies at his revelations. They exclaim with the Frenchman, "cestatque, charmont, magnifique!"

But these are not all the books that "take well." Some of the vilest creations that have sprung from the polluted imaginations of Frenchmen are sent forth, and industriously circulated, to poison and destroy. They are found in all parts of our country. The evil has become a great one. To be convinced of this, one has only to engage in circulating religious books. Then he will very soon find it out. But to stop this current, the moral and religious public must swell a counter one, that shall stay its progress, and elevate and save, instead of debasing and destroying.

PHILETUS.