

# Christian



# Visitor.

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

Rev. E. D. VERY, Editor.

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## RADIANT CLOUDS AT SUNSET.

BY MRS. L. H. SIGOURNEY.

Bright clouds! ye are gathering one by one,  
Ye are sweeping in pomp round the dying sun,  
With crimson banner and golden pall,  
Like a host to their chieftain's funeral:  
Perchance ye tread to that hallowed spot  
With a muffled dirge, though we hear it not.

But methinks ye tower with a lordlier crest,  
And a gorgeous flush as he sinks to rest.  
Not thus, in the day of his pride and wrath,  
Did ye dare to press on his glorious path;  
At his noontide glance ye have quaked with fear,  
And hasted to hide in your misty sphere.

Do you say he is dead? You exult in vain,  
With your rainbow robe and your swelling train;  
He shall rise again with his strong bright ray,  
He shall reign in power when you fade away,  
When ye darkly cower in your vapoury hall,  
Tintless, and naked, and noteless all.

The Soul! the Soul! with its eye of fire,  
Thus, thus shall it soar when its foes expire:  
It shall spread its wings o'er the ills that pained,  
The evils that shadowed, the sins that stained;  
It shall dwell where no rushing cloud hath  
sway,  
And the pageants of earth shall have melted  
away.

## An Ancient Document.

Newport, R. I., March 23, 1848.

To the Editor of the Christian Watchman.

Sir:—I send you a copy of a letter, as of record in the Church Book of the First Baptist Church in this town, received by them from the First Church in Boston, in 1679, a time when the Baptists in New England were sorely persecuted by the government of Massachusetts.—These ancient Churches of Christ appear to have held frequent correspondence during these times of difficulty. Isaac Hull and John Russell, two of the signers of the letter were both Baptist ministers of the First Church in Boston, and succeeded Thomas Gould in the ministerial office. It is well known that the Boston Church in 1778 built a house for worship in Boston, which was soon shut up by the government; a long difficulty ensued, and their leaders were frequently brought before the General Court, and fined and imprisoned. They express, in this letter, their fears that the rulers of Massachusetts will pay no regard to the commands of His Majesty, and the result proved that they did not.—The express charge from the King was, "requiring that liberty of conscience should be allowed to all protestants, so as that they might not be discountenanced from sharing in the government, much less, that no good subject of his, for not agreeing in the Congregational way, should, by law, be subjected to fines and forfeitures, or other incapacities for the same." On receipt of the King's command to the rulers of Massachusetts, the church ventured again to hold meetings in their meeting-house, but they were turned out, and the doors nailed up.

I have sent you this copy of a relic of antiquity, which, if acceptable, you can publish.—It shows the deep sympathy of the Baptists in Rhode Island for their brethren whom they had left in the power of the Massachusetts government, and the meek, yet firm determination of the church in Boston, to contend for religious liberty, although surrounded by difficulties and dangers.

B. B. HOWLANE.

Boston, ye 25th day of ye 11th month,  
(called January,) 1679.

The Church of Christ assembled at Boston,  
unto the Church of Christ at Newport.

DEAR BRETHREN,—We salute you in the  
Lord, wishing grace, mercy, and peace to be  
multiplied unto you from God our Father, and

from ye Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself  
for us, to whom be glory forever, Amen.

We received your letter, dated ye 16th of ye  
10th month, wherein we observe the working of  
your affections towards us, bearing us in your  
prayers, for which we heartily thank you: and  
desire to bless ye Lord, who granteth us such  
a favour as to find room in ye hearts of any of  
his people.

Dear Brethren, as you have desired of us yt,  
we would continue our prayers to the Lord for  
you, so we heartily desire the continuance of  
your prayers and supplications to the Lord for  
us, (who are a poor, weak handfull, called forth  
in the front and face of ye country to make pro-  
fession of ye truth of God, where it meets with  
such great opposition, where we have many eyes  
on us, observing of us, many watching and wait-  
ing for our halting) yt. the Lord would be pleas-  
ed to pour down more abundantly of his spirit on  
us, (which is a spirit of wisdom and counsel,) yt.  
thereby we may be led and guided into all  
truth and enabled to steer a steady course, fol-  
lowing ye steps of our Lord and Master, who  
was constantly exercised in doing ye will of  
his heavenly Father, and yt. we may always be  
endeavoring to answer our profession by a holy  
and Godly conversation, and the Lord grant yt,  
both you and us may be enabled to walk one to-  
wards another, and towards all men so as that  
we may honor ye gospel and the holy name of  
God, by the which we are called.

Beloved Brethren, these are times wherein  
many are taking up their rest on this side Can-  
aan, sheltering themselves under ye shapes  
and terms of Religion, thinking themselves there-  
in and yt. all is well with them in yt. they have  
gotten ye name of Christians, concluding yt.  
God and Christ and heaven is theirs, because  
they are gotten into such a form, crying ye tem-  
ple of ye Lord are these, and think no evil shall  
come nigh them, and live allowedly in their  
abominations, walking after their own wills and  
lusts: O how few are there to be found among  
these that are called by ye name of ye Lord yt.  
live on him and live to him, and have him liv-  
ing in them: O how many who only take hold  
of Christ by an external profession desiring to  
be called by his name to take away their reproach,  
but they will live of themselves and to  
themselves. O let us be advancing towards ye  
heavenly Canaan, endeavoring more after a lively  
conformity to Christ our head, to know and  
experience more the powerful effect of the Death,  
Burial and Resurrection of Christ in us, yt. by  
be virtue and power of his Spirit dwelling in us,  
we may be enabled to live in ye life and power  
of Godlyness, shining forth in ye exercise of  
grace, shewing forth ye praises of him yt. hath  
called us out of darkness into his marvellous  
light, renouncing all ye unfruitful works of  
darkness and putting on ye armour of light,  
standing continually on our watch with our loins  
girt and our lamps burning (being continually  
fed with fresh oil from Christ our head and root)  
waiting for his coming, yt. we may be continually  
counted worthy to stand before him at his  
appearing; for as you do express your sensible-  
ness of a storm approaching by the thick clouds  
you observe to be gathering, so we also believe  
that there is such a storm a breeding, the force  
of which will drive all such out of shelters and  
refuges, yt. have no Christ for their refuge, and  
wash down all such buildings yt. have not Christ  
for their foundation, let them seem never so fair-  
ly built, therefore it is good for him yt. thinketh  
he standeth to take heed lest he fall; the Lord  
fit us all for wt. he may call us too, and try us  
wth. and keep us by his mighty power through  
faith unto salvation.

Now whereas, you desire an account how it  
faired with our Brethren at Court, we shall give  
you this short account. Our Brother Russell  
was not sent for, but several of our brethren and  
sisters were, and did appear, who meet with  
many hard censorious speeches, and several of  
them were fined 20 S. a piece and court charges,  
and others were admonished, and to pay court  
charges, but did not stand committed, but an ex-  
press is sent up to ye constables to distress their  
fines, but it is not yet done, there being no spirit  
in ye constables to hasten ye business, but rather  
to shift it off if they can find a way.

Also whereas, you desire an account of wt.  
news we have from England, &c., we have cer-  
tain intelligence both by letter from our friends  
in London, to whom we wrote, and also from  
some intelligent friends here, yt. there is express  
charge from his Majesty come over wch. acquaints  
yt. we shall have our liberty and yt. we must be  
privileged. But whether it will be accepted by  
our Rulers we know not, for we understand it  
is ye minds of some to withstand it, but how it  
will be we know not, there is a Genl Court cal-  
led to sit ye 4th of the next month, and then we  
shall see wt. will be done, and when we see how  
things go we shall endeavour to give you an ac-  
count, and therefore say no more at present, but  
commending you to the Lord, desiring both you  
and us may by him be kept blameless and harm-  
less unto ye day of his appearing, we subscribe  
ourselves

Your affectionate Brethren  
in Gospel Relation.

ISAAC HULL,  
JOHN RUSSELL,  
THOMAS SKINNER.

In ye name of the Rest.

## Dr. Doddridge's Dream.

Dr. Doddridge was on terms of very intimate  
friendship with Dr. Samuel Clarke, and in religious  
conversation they spent very many happy hours  
together. Among other matters, a very favorite  
topic was the intermediate state of the soul, and the  
probability that at the instant of dissolution, it was  
not introduced into the presence of all the heavenly  
hosts, and the splendors around the throne of God.  
One evening, after a conversation of this nature,  
Dr. D. retired to rest with his mind full of the sub-  
ject discussed, and in "the visions of the night,"  
his ideas were shaped into the following beautiful  
form. He dreamed that he was at the house of a  
friend, when he was suddenly taken dangerously ill.  
By degrees he seemed to grow worse and worse,  
and at last to expire. In an instant he was sen-  
sible that he had exchanged the prison-house and  
suffering of mortality, for a state of liberty and hap-  
piness. Embodied in a slender aerial form, he  
seemed to float in a region of pure light. Beneath  
him lay the earth, but not a glittering city or a  
village, the forest or the sea was visible. There  
was nought to be seen below, save the melancholy  
group of his friends, weeping around his lifeless  
remains. Himself thrilled with delight, he was  
surprised at their tears, and attempted to inform  
them of his happy change, but by some mysterious  
power, utterance was denied, and as he anxiously  
leaned over the mourning circle, gazed fondly upon  
them and struggled to speak, he rose silently upon  
the air, their forms became more and more indis-  
tinct, and gradually melted away from his sight.  
Reposing upon golden clouds, he found himself  
swiftly mounting the skies, with a venerable figure  
at his side, guiding his mysterious movements, and  
in whose countenance he remarked the lineaments  
of youth and age blended together with an intimate  
harmony and majestic sweetness.

They travelled together through a vast region of  
empty space, until at length the battlements of a

glorious edifice shone in the distance, and as its  
form rose brilliant and distinct among the far-off  
shadows that flitted athwart their path, the guide  
informed him, that the palace he beheld, for the  
present, was his mansion of rest. Gazing upon its  
splendor he replied, that while on earth, he had  
often heard that the eye had not seen, nor had the  
ear heard, nor could it enter into the heart of man  
to conceive the things which God had prepared for  
those who love him; but notwithstanding the  
building to which they were then rapidly approach-  
ing was superior to anything which he had actually  
beheld, yet its grandeur had not exceeded the con-  
ceptions he had formed. The guide made no re-  
ply; they were already at the door, and entered.  
The guide, introducing him into a spacious apart-  
ment, at the extremity of which stood a table, cover-  
ed with a snow white cloth, a golden cup and a  
cluster of grapes, and then said that he must now  
leave him, but that he must remain, for he would  
receive, in a short time, a visit from the lord of the  
mansion, and that during the interval before his  
arrival, the apartment would furnish him with  
sufficient entertainment and instruction. The  
guide vanished, and he was left alone. He began  
to examine the decorations of the room, and  
observed that the walls were adorned with a  
number of pictures. Upon nearer inspection, he  
found to his astonishment, that they formed a com-  
plete biography of his own life. Here he saw upon  
the canvas, that angels, though unseen, had ever  
been his familiar attendants; and, sent by God, they  
had sometimes preserved him from imminent peril.  
He beheld himself first as an infant just expiring,  
when his life was prolonged by an angel gently  
breathing into his nostrils. Most of the occurrences  
here delineated were perfectly familiar to his recol-  
lection, and unfolded many things which he had  
never before understood, and which had perplexed  
him with many doubts and much uneasiness. Among  
others, he was particularly struck with a picture in  
which he was represented as falling from his horse,  
when death would have been inevitable, had not an  
angel received him in his arms, and broken the force  
of his descent. These merciful interpositions of God  
filled him with joy and gratitude, and his heart over-  
flowed with love, as he surveyed in them all an ex-  
hibition of goodness and mercy far beyond all that  
he had imagined.

Suddenly his attention was arrested by a rap at  
the door. The lord of the mansion had arrived—  
the door opened, and he entered. So powerful and  
so overwhelming, and withal of such singular beauty  
was his appearance, that he sunk down at his feet,  
completely overcome by his majestic appearance.—  
His lord gently raised him from the ground, and  
taking his hand, led him forward to the table. He  
pressed with his fingers the juice of the grapes into  
the golden cup, and after having himself drank, he  
presented to him saying, "This is the new wine in  
my Father's kingdom." No sooner had he partaken  
than all uneasy sensations vanished; perfect love  
had now cast out fear, and he conversed with the  
Savior as an intimate friend. Like the silver rip-  
pling of a summer sea, he heard fall from his lips  
the grateful approbation, "Thy labors are over, thy  
work is approved, rich and glorious is the reward."  
Thrilled with an unspeakable bliss, that glided over  
his soul, he suddenly saw glories upon glories burst-  
ing upon his view. The Doctor awoke. Tears of  
rapture from this joyful interview were rolling down  
his cheeks. Long did the lively impression of this  
charming dream remain upon his mind, and never  
could he speak of it without emotions of joy and  
tenderness.—Churchman.

DWELLERS ON THE SEA.—It is estimated that  
the number of men whose home is on the deep  
is between three and four million. It is sup-  
posed that two hundred and fifty thousand men  
are employed in American vessels. From the  
peculiar privations this class of men endure, it  
is ascertained that the length of a generation is  
but fifteen years, and that at least six thousand  
perish annually from shipwreck.