

scribe, and the more closely he follows the bent of his own mind, the better; he may not be a Paul or an Apollas, a Chalmers or a Dwight; but he will be himself; and in that most natural and appropriate of all characters, he will be likely to do his master's work in the best manner, and with the greatest success.—*Dr. Sprague's Sermon.*

## THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

SAINT JOHN, JANUARY 5, 1847.

### TRIAL OF OUR GRACES.

In our last as a suitable thought for the close of the year, we noticed the fact that during the past year we had been under a constant course of trial, through which God had been making our real character manifest. The several conditions in which we have been placed, and the several demands which have been made upon us, for christian or benevolent effort, have been as a mirror placed before us every hour, in which we might look and discover our true moral character just as God sees it. As we have since mused upon this solemn fact we have thought our reflections might not be unprofitable to our readers, especially to such of them as make the New Year a season for rigid self scrutiny, we would therefore suggest how we regard this trial to have been prosecuted on the part of God so far as relates to a few of the most important graces which go to constitute christian character.

1st. In regard to Faith. Have we faith? If so, what kind of faith is it? Is it a dead faith or a living faith? Is it merely an intellectual assent to what God has declared as true? or is it a filial confidence in God, a reliance upon his truth, a firm persuasion that it cannot fail? "True Faith," as the Apostle says, "works by law and purifies the heart and overcomes the world;" it is active and efficient. This is the only faith that is of any worth. Any other faith Devils may have, and of course, therefore, the most depraved and abandoned of men. The dead faith James defines as the "faith without works." Now God's daily and hourly dispensations operate to try and test our faith of what kind it is. He has tried our hearts towards Him and He knows, and we ought to know, whether we have true faith. Every day and every hour we repeat, has been trying our faith whether it was without works; whether we have wished the poor comfortable, without making any efforts or contributing of our substance to make them so; whether we have wished well to missions without giving anything for their support; whether we have wished well to the Sabbath School without making any effort to gather scholars, or teach those who come, or even give them the countenance of our presence; whether we have wished the conversion of our impenitent friends, without ever seeking affectionately to warn or reprove or exhort them; whether we wish well to social meetings, without attempting to sustain them, or scarce ever to attend them; whether we love communion with God, without cultivating secret prayer; whether we are hoping for heaven, and yet so living that we would not dare to die; whether we profess to make God our portion and religion the chief end of our life, and the attainment of grace the chiefest treasure, and yet so occupied otherways that we can find no time to devote a careful attention to either. God knows if I am disposed to feed the poor or support missions, or any other benevolent object I can do it, if I haven't the immediate means, I can do as many a converted heathen and devoted poor person does, work and economise, and save my time and strength which God gave me for that purpose and lay by enough to give liberally, and the poorest widow may have her two mites; and he knows if I am disposed in my heart to encourage the Sabbath School, or the social meetings, or to save men's souls, or cultivate my graces, and prepare for heaven, I can do it; there is time enough to everybody for all proper works, and these are the chief objects for which God gives us life, and it is only when I love my own works better than his, that I cannot find time for His. In these ways, by these means and opportunities for usefulness, God is constantly trying our faith, and he is deceived who thinks himself a christian with nothing but a dead faith; and he must be inexcusably blind who does not know whether he has a faith that works by love and purifies his heart and overcomes the world, or a dead faith without works—a form of piety without its life or power.

2d. In regard to Patience. Have we patience?

and if so, is it the result of natural temperament? or is it from outward restraint? or is it the fruit of the Spirit. Patience is the calm endurance of what is imposed upon us, or what we are called to suffer, without murmuring, and the determined continuance in what we believe to be the right way without being turned aside by any temptations or opposition. Impatience implies a disposition to fret and murmur unless things accord with our wishes; a disposition to resent injuries and return again evil for evil to those who harm us, and an inclination to follow an easy path through wrong, rather than a right one if it is dangerous or difficult. Now patience may in a great degree be the result of natural temperament, but this is easily distinguishable from the christian grace. Patience resulting from temperament is but another name for indifference, nor is this affected by the fact that some are naturally more amiable than others, for if a person is really sensitive and sensible as others are of the trials and troubles and injuries to which we are incident, and yet submissive to all, it displays a reconciliation to the discipline and government of God which can be the result only of Grace. Where people would be naturally patient or indifferent or reckless, he whose patience is the fruit of the Spirit feels sensible of the burden or trial, but discerns the hand of God and bears quietly with this deep and abiding impression, that all which he receives is but little of what he deserves, and that even when God deals most severely, he exercises abundant compassion and goodness. The spiritually patient instead of brooding upon his trials till they enter like iron into his soul, looks upon the many blessings and bounties that are allowed in connection with the trial, and finds occasion to magnify the grace of God in that all his favours and his mercy are not gone. Spiritual patience results then, from a proper view of the character of God as righteous, just, and merciful, and proper views of our own character as a guilty offender against God. Is such an one poor, he is not envious of the rich, he is not seeing pride and covetousness in every body but himself; he is not continually goaded by imagined slights and neglects, but glorifies God by a quiet submission to poverty and its incidental disabilities and inconveniences. So there is the same quietness under sickness, under reproaches and false accusations. So according to the definition we have given of patience, it includes a setting of the Lord always before us; to walk in his precepts and in the way of his commandments. It is not the mere popularity of a cause, or a church, or a minister, that holds him on his even way, but truth and right; in company with these, or in pursuit of these, he goes through floods or flames where'er they lead the way; if men applaud, well,—if not, it is well; for conscience within and God are pleased, and he who can keep peace with his conscience and God, is a happy man, let all else go as they may. Now every hour brings its trials of patience in greater or less, annoyances, disappointments, and vexations, and in more or less important duties; and every one knows, as God knows, whether he is quiet and submissive, and keeps a conscience void of offence, or is angry and frets, ill natured and resents, and subject constantly to reproofs, within, and so held in a perpetual bondage of fear.

In the 3d place. Our Love in the same way is under a constant trial; and circumstances are constantly proving whether the love we profess is for person, or for sect, or forms included in our peculiar service; or whether it is for Christ and his truth, and the interests of His kingdom, and His image in His people. If it is the right kind of love, we shall be constantly jealous of ourselves lest we bring a reproach upon His worthy name; we shall endeavor to keep a constant sense of His presence; we shall endeavor to adorn his doctrines, and so commend them to men; we shall rejoice in the success of his cause every where, among all denominations which show an interest for the conversion of men from sin; we shall not seek the company and court the praises of ungodly men, because they are rich, or fashionable, or learned; nor despise one of the little ones of Christ's kingdom, because ignorant or poor. If our love is of the right kind, we shall not take up a reproach against our neighbour, nor be uncharitable in the construction of their words or actions; we shall not rejoice in the downfall of others merely because they do not follow after us; "it wisheth no ill to its neighbour"; "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but

rejoiceth in the truth." Situated as we are in our several communities, having intercourse with various denominations, and an interest of our own to promote, and with different conditions, the object of our love, its quality and strength may be very easily determined, and is often proved to us without our aim or effort; and it is not the love of persons, or sect, or forms, that entitles us to a christian's hope, but love to Christ, to truth, to godliness, and to whoever bears the image of Christ, of whatever name, for Christ's sake.

It were better for a man that he had never been born, than to hate, despise or offend one of Christ's little ones; that holy and lovely image should consecrate in our estimation and exalt in our affections, whoever wears it, of whatever name, or creed, or bond or free.

4th. Our Zeal or devotedness in the Cause of Christ are subject to frequent tests which demonstrate to us whether it be a rash and impetuous temper, or an occasional animal excitement, or to be seen of men, or if it be such a permanent and deep-rooted principle as will hold out under all circumstances? Real christian zeal arises from a settled conviction of the worth and importance of religion. The Poet well expresses it—

"Zeal is that pure and heavenly flame,  
The fire of Love supplies."  
Whilst that which often bears the name,  
Is "self in a disguise."

And as religion never changes for the worse, but only in a certain sense for the better, as the Apostles says: "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed," so if we have true zeal to-day, it is impossible it should be extinguished to-morrow; to be right, it must be according to knowledge, and knowledge is something which cannot be effaced in a day, or a week, or a month. Once fixed in the mind, especially in regard to such practical matters as religion it is always there. But the selfish zeal which would attract like Jehu's, the attention of men is a sordid and base propensity, and the animal excitement which revives and languishes with every change of the animal spirit, or in sympathy with the crowd about us, is an involuntary emotion, and consequently not a proper subject for commendation, but more likely requiring reproof for its indiscreet exhibition. He has zeal who is always alive to the honour of the Church, and all that pertains to it, and like the member of a body is sensitive to feel and suffer with every suffering member. Though what is thus presented is far short of justice to this important subject, it is to be hoped the general idea is made intelligible; and that these hints may be pursued at length by those interested in them. And let us charge those who read to abide the decision of conscience on these tests, for they are infallible; they present us with just that view of our characters which God takes, and which we must meet at his bar in the great day; and the clinging to a hope of acceptance with God, because we once thought we were christians, if we cannot abide these tests, will only prevent our obtaining a good hope, and increase our confusion in that great day when every hypocrite's hope shall perish.

Letters received since our last from Mrs. Joanna Good, Rev. J. Ring, Rev. W. D. Fitch, Rev. J. Walker, Rev. S. Elder, Mr. F. A. Wilson, J. V. Taber.

Our Paper is necessarily delayed an hour to day that we may give the English News which arrived this morning. It will consequently fail to reach some of our distant subscribers by this day's Mail; but we hope the English News will compensate the delay.

SAINT JOHN DIVISION, No. 20, S. of T.—This Division was opened on New Year's night, at the Long Room in the South Wing of the Custom House Building by D. G. W. P. Lawrence and D. G. C. Gaynor, assisted by officers and Brothers of Gurney, Victoria, Portland, and Albion Divisions, to the number of about 400. The following officers having been elected, were duly installed: Thomas G. Hatheway Esq. W. P.; R. C. Frost, W. A.; J. R. Currey, R. S.; G. W. Ellison, A. R. S.; J. Foster, F. S.; Stephen Gerow, T.; Joseph Mercer, C.; James Clark, A. C.; Geo. Thomson, J. S.; Robt. Coleman, O. S.; W. A. Wiggins was appointed P. W. P. This Division commences with 40 members, 35 of whom, were installed on the evening of opening.

ACCIDENT.—On Friday evening last, an interesting child, aged 2 years and 8 months, only daughter of Mr. George W. Currey, died from the effects of a severe burn, occasioned by her clothes taking fire while playing in front of a Franklin stove. She lived but twenty-four hours after the accident occurred.—*Mail.*

## CORRESPONDENCE.

For the Christian Visitor.

### CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

BROTHER EDITOR:—I have been during the last nine or ten years, a constant reader and supporter of the Christian Messenger; and it was with no ordinary pleasure that I observed the deep interest manifested by its conductors, in the Churches of our order in this Province; by their readiness to publish any good tidings from us, and to communicate through their columns such christian instruction and general information, as would tend to increase our piety and usefulness in our respective communities. On this account, I in common with my friends in this vicinity, have been not a little surprised at their almost total silence respecting the existence and character of the "Christian Visitor," except such as amounted to a prohibition of its entering the field, and occupying an humble part in promoting more effectually the interests of the religious public in this Province; though it promises to be an able coadjutor in the advocacy of the doctrines and institutions of Christianity, and in every other respect adapted to the peculiar circumstances of our churches. My apprehensions that some misunderstanding had taken place between yourself or some of the other brethren of the Committee of publication, and the Editors of that paper, were particularly excited on looking over the Christian Messenger of the 24th inst., and observing that they noticed the death of the late Deacon Pettingill from the *Courier*, rather than from the Christian Visitor, in which it appeared, and which, I am informed, was in their possession, before the *Courier* was published in St. John.

Being almost daily questioned by my neighbours in this part of the country, respecting the cause of your cotemporary's apparent coolness towards your unassuming Visitor, I thought that probably you could give us some information respecting the real cause, if any exist. The fact that no other religious paper is published in this Province, except a small "Monthly Pamphlet," and the favourable reception which the Visitor has hitherto met with in every community where it has been introduced, is, I think, sufficient to justify the course taken by the Committee of our Association. The Lord strengthen thy hands, and may you ever increase in the confidence and favour of all the people.

Yours, very sincerely,

OBSERVER.

Dec. 29, 1847.

The above enquiries coming from one who has from the beginning manifested a lively interest for the Visitor, we are disposed to give them a place; and we do not regret the occasion of a reply, because we presume the same enquiries may have arisen in other minds. We notice a still more marked neglect in the Editorial of Friday last, in which the Editors remark that they "have ever sympathised with our New Brunswick brethren in all their toils and troubles;" also "that it is their fervent prayer that this harmony among the brethren may remain firm and uninterrupted;" and yet, though the special object of the piece is a review of the privileges and prospects of the Denomination in both Provinces, not the remotest hint is given that an enterprise so imperiously required by our people and the whole Province, one which has engaged the attention of so many of the Ministers and Churches for so long a time, and is now so successfully making its way to the remotest parts of the Province, has ever been conceived. Really if young converts should expect or receive such an introduction to our churches, if young ministers and licentiates should find such a reception among ministers now in the field, if our good brother Burpe should receive in such a manner a coadjutor in his distant field, what delightful prospects should we have, and how surely would our harmony remain firm and uninterrupted. It is certainly a little singular, that a coadjutor in the great field where the labourers are so few, one introduced furthermore by the general desire of so large a part of our Denomination in New Brunswick, according to a vote of the Association, and by the unanimous recommendation of all the Deacons, and leading brethren that could be collected about St. John, should not receive a little more cordial welcome, and a little attention, if ever so small, for appearance sake, from a cotemporary whose field, when its strictest bounds are set, will be twice the extent of our own for support. We feel confident that with our 5000 communicants, we can well sustain a Baptist paper in this Province; and, of course, we cannot feel serious alarm for a paper, if a proper policy is pursued, which has, as our cotemporary in Nova Scotia has, 10,000 communicants to depend upon. We can imagine no other reason for the neglect with which our effort in this Province is regarded, except that it limits the field for the Messenger. We are glad to say we have and know of no animosity or variance. We are pledged to the same objects they have in view, and we only allude to the case, or admit the above enquiries for the purpose of making this avowal. For our own part we feel confident of being in the way of duty, and most fully satisfied that the Denomination would be doing the greatest injustice to itself in