

[From the Correspondent of the Christian Watchman and Reflector.]

MINISTERS AND CHURCHES IN LIVERPOOL, ENG.

Messrs. Editors.—An Atlantic voyage has been described so often, that even a landsman may become in a measure familiar with old ocean—the dreary vastness—the waste of waters—“the roaring multitude of waves.” This familiarity derived from books and letters, in my case, prevented an attack of sea-sickness; for I remembered the advice, “keep the deck,” and escaped. I would repeat it for the benefit of others. After a passage of twenty-four days, I reached Liverpool. Approaching England, I experienced none of that “awe-inspiring solemnity,” we read of; nor did I feel that ecstasy so often described. True, I had reached a land full of associations of the deepest interest, and long cherished anticipations were soon to be realized; yet it was a land of strangers.

Liverpool, like Brooklyn, New-York, may be called a “city of churches;” or rather, since I am in England, I should say churches and chapels. There are no churches here, saving those connected with the Establishment; these may have steeples and bells, dissenting chapels may not. It is amusing to see how near a chapel will come to having a steeple, and miss it; a short tower, a very tall gable end, everything but the spire. Dr. Raffles’ chapel, one of the finest in the city, has columns in front, arranged in a semi-circle, and very heavy walls within, which support a dome, surmounted by something which looks like a steeple driven in. Other chapels are arranged in the same way; ready to take a steeple in “the good time coming.”

I attended Dr. Raffles’ chapel on Sunday morning, and was so fortunate as to hear the Doctor himself. His text will be found in Ezekiel xx. 37—“I will cause you to pass under the rod and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.” After an appropriate introduction directing the attention particularly to the emphatic *I*, that it is the Lord himself that works in man; he spoke of the nature of a bond, that two parties are held, and drew the conclusion that God was under certain obligations to man. Let it be spoken reverently, said he, God has bound himself voluntarily to man. What encouragement! The bond and the rod. I. The bond of the covenant. In this the Lord pledges himself, 1st, To be a father, and such a father. Behold the prodigal! 2nd, To pardon, how freely! 3d, To justify and sanctify. These promises were sealed with blood. Millions have known them precious. II. The rod. By this is meant the rod or crook of the shepherd. 1st, It is a rod of discrimination, which is evident from God’s promises, and dealings. 2nd, A rod of authority—the rod of the shepherd becomes the sceptre of the king. 3d, The rod of discipline—to restrain the wayward, to animate the slothful, to lead the flock to the fold. 4th, The rod of succor and support—in life—in death. Blessed is the man who has God for his portion in life—in death—who can say in death “thy rod and thy staff they comfort me,”—“who shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.” Excellent as the discourse was, I confess I was disappointed. I had read and heard so much of Dr. R. that my expectations were raised too high. He is a fine, portly looking man of about 60 years of age; in his delivery he is quite calm, not dull, however, and his gestures are very appropriate.—He seems to restrain himself continually. After the sermon, the Doctor came down from the pulpit and announced that he was about to administer the *divinely appointed ordinance of infant baptism*. After appearing to excuse himself for doing what he was not commanded, and attempting to show that baptism was in place of circumcision, he stated that the children of professing Christians only, were entitled to the *privilege*. Twelve little innocents were then handed to him in succession upon whom the ceremony was performed, the parents promising to train them up in the ways of the Lord.

In the afternoon, after visiting three Baptist chapels, where there was no service, I dropped into a church, where a young minister with gloves on his hands, delivered a discourse on the *sinfulness of being anxious to die*; he announced this as his theme, from our Lord’s prayer, “Not that thou shouldst take them out of the world.”

In the evening, I attended the Baptist chapel in Hope-street, one of the most beautiful church edifices I ever saw, pointed gothic.—The church meeting here, formerly worshipped in Lime-street, where the venerable bro-

ther James Lester, ministered so many years. Rev. Stowell Brown, his assistant, lectured from the 2nd chapter of Acts, from the 37th to the 47th verses. The lecture was one of a course. Its design was to urge the duties of repentance and baptism; especially baptism on those whom he believed was converted to God. The discourse was excellent; the sentiments sounded strange, coming from an advocate of open communion. Hear him; it sounded so orthodox; so like home, I made a note of it. Baptism is commanded by God.—Man’s duty then is evident. *We dare not lower the Divine standard, and admit to the privileges of the Christian church, those who are disobedient.* Shade of Robert Hall! is the Lord’s Supper a privilege or not? How can baptism be a non-essential? Mr. B. is a very fluent speaker, at times very eloquent; entirely free from that barbarous pronunciation very many Englishmen have; in fact he speaks English well enough to pass for an American. Speaking of Mr. Brown, I read the address he delivered before the English Baptist Home Mission Society, in which he uses this expression, “England has not been gospelized.” Gospelized! why not gospelized. One who preaches the gospel and meets with success gospelizes; of course then; those legal preachers of whom we hear, law-ize. A very excellent minister in New-York used to speak of our Saviour “mission-ating throughout Judea, and the apostles following the Master’s example *missionated* throughout the world.” Gospelize and missionate I hope, will be dropped. Mr. Brown closed his discourse by speaking of what we should be willing to suffer, if necessary, for the sake of Christ; and then drew a comparison between the *first* and *last* persecution. In both cases, a minister is commanded by a high priest, “not to speak at all or teach in the name of Jesus.” In both cases the minister obeys God rather than man. One was Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ, and the high priest was Annas—the other the Rev. James Shore now in jail; the high priest, the Lord Bishop of Exeter.

There is a difference, in the form of conducting worship, between the English and American brethren, of which I was not aware. In England the Minister rises and announces the hymn, merely giving the number, and then seats himself—the organist performs the tune, the minister rises again, reads the first verse only, and announces the portions of the hymn to be sung; when all rise and sing. The choir seems to lead rather than perform.—Another peculiarity is, nearly every person in the church has a pocket Bible in his hand, and follows the minister in his quotations. Mr. Brown began his discourse by requesting the congregation to open their Bibles. One or two Bibles in each pew in New-England is often thought enough. Another peculiarity is, the people bow or kneel as the benediction is pronounced, and seem in no hurry to depart; no looking for hats, opening pew doors, pulling on gloves, and then a rush, at the word, Amen. This last English peculiarity is worthy of imitation, for if there is one part of worship more solemn than another, it is this concluding supplication.

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VISIBLE CHRISTIAN UNION.

If, then, the visible manifestations of this unity be in itself so desirable, it is an object for which we are bound to make sacrifices.—We should sacrifice to it our love of sectarian aggrandisement, our desire to control the opinions of our brethren, our strife for ecclesiastical power, and even, if it be necessary, the good opinion of the members of our own sect. Christ, and the members of his spiritual body, should be dearer to us than any human organization. If it be not so, where is our love of Christ? And if it be asked, how far shall this sacrifice be carried? I answer, up to the point of sacrifice of principle. We cannot, for the sake of unity, do wrong, or be parties to wrong doing; we cannot declare that to be true which we believe to be false; or perform, as an ordinance of Christ, what we do not believe that Christ has commanded. When this limit meets us, we can go no farther. To go farther than this would be to surrender up a conscience void of offence, and to value union with men more than union with Christ. But so far as this, it is our duty to go. We should testify our love to our real brethren in Christ, by uniting with them in everything, so far as we can do it without the surrender of truth and a good conscience.—When this limit has been reached, we must separate; but we should separate, not in un-

kindness, but in mutual love: co-operating in all, and always “keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.” He who is not willing to do this, has much yet to learn of the spirit of Christ. He who is willing to render wider the apparent breaches which already exist between the various persuasions of Christians, and, by magnifying their points of difference, withdraw them farther and farther from each other, is wounding Christ in the house of his friends, and holding up the Church of Christ to the merited reproach of a thoughtless and gainsaying world.

And if it be demanded, in what way may we cultivate in our own hearts, and make manifest to others, this spirit of universal love to the whole body of Christ, the answer, from what has been already said, is obvious. We cannot do it by striving to convert all men to our individual opinions. To do this is manifestly impossible, when men enjoy freedom of discussion and investigation. Why should we wish to do it until we ourselves become omniscient and infallible? Nor should we strive to bring all men to imitate our particular practice. Differences in action must follow from the necessary differences of opinion. Why should we judge another man’s servant? “To his own master he standeth or falleth.” After faithfully and kindly setting forth the reasons of our belief and practice, we should rest.—But we must go farther. Having done this, we must still strive for unity. We must do this by cultivating in our own hearts a more fervent love to Christ; and just in proportion to our love to him, will be our love to his image, as it is displayed in the members of his spiritual body. Over-looking the narrow limits of sect and party, we should cultivate a spirit of universal love to the whole assembly of the redeemed of every age, of every sect, and of every variety of social condition. Wherever the spirit of Christ manifests itself, there it should be sure of our sympathy. Whenever our brethren are in adversity, we should proffer them our aid; whenever they are in prosperity, we should rejoice in their success.—Wherever they are laboring to advance the interests of truth and righteousness, we should remember them, without ceasing, at the throne of grace, and unite our efforts with theirs, as we may have opportunity. It is thus that we shall bring the spirit of heaven down upon earth and it shall be seen that God is in the midst of us of a truth. Though separated in matters of opinion, as must be the case with honest, independent men, the disciples of Christ will still be one, and the world will believe that he is the Messiah sent by the Father.—*Dr. Wayland.*

AM I A GROWING CHRISTIAN.

Regeneration is the beginning of a good work in the heart, but it is not a complete preparation for the kingdom of heaven. The young convert is required to “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Paul the Apostle prayed for the Christians of Philippi, “that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.” To the Colossians he writes—“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful unto every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

One invariable evidence of true piety is the desire for higher degrees of knowledge and Holiness. How repeatedly and earnestly does the Psalmist in the 119th Psalm, express the desire of more thorough acquaintance with the word of God. “Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law: yea, I shall observe it with all my heart.” “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.”

The desire of holiness is one of the most clearly developed feelings of the pious heart. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” To be satisfied with our present attainments in piety is to be satisfied with sin; for “in many things we all offend.” What are some of the evidences of our growth in grace?

1. Growth in grace will manifest itself by clearer views of Divine things. Depravity

blinds the mind to moral purity. To the unregenerate Jesus Christ is a root out of dry ground, having no beauty. In proportion to our growth in grace do we “behold the beauty of the Lord,” and better understand spiritual truth.

2. Growth in grace will manifest itself by more *humbling* views of ourselves. Depravity makes men think of themselves more highly than they ought, and fills them with pride.—Divine grace gives them correct views of themselves, and leads them to say with Paul—“By the grace of God I am what I am.” It induces them in lowliness of mind to esteem others better than themselves.

“The more thy glories strike mine eye,
The humbler I shall lie.”

3. Growth in grace will manifest itself in increasing pleasure in private devotion and public ordinances. “It is good for me to draw nigh to God.” Sin draws from God; holiness attracts to him. The more we hear of true holiness, the greater pleasure we shall find in communion with God. “One day in thy courts is better than a thousand.” When trifling excuses will detain us from the prayer-meeting and the house of God, there is sad evidence of backsliding.

4. Growth in grace will be attended with a growing interest in the cause of Christ. He who loves Christ, of course loves his kingdom, and desires to see it established in the world. And precisely in proportion to that love, will be the self-denial he will be willing to make for its promotion. “Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion; build up the walls of Jerusalem.” “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

5. Growth in grace will show itself in increasing meekness. Depravity begets resentment and revenge. Grace enables us to return good for evil, blessing for cursing—to pray with the martyr Stephen,—“Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” Meekness is a lovely grace, most unlike depraved human nature.

6. Growth in grace is attended with increasing cheerfulness. “We walk by faith,” and in proportion to the strength of faith is the assurance that “all things work together for good to them that love God!” “Rejoice evermore.”—*Presbyterian of the West.*

THE SABBATH MORN.

The following eloquent and striking picture of morning on the day of rest, is extracted from the essay “On the Temporal Advantages of the Sabbath to the Labouring Classes,” by John A. Quinton, compositor, Ipswich, and which obtained for its gifted author the first of the three prizes offered for the best essays written by working men:—

“The flocks are wandering and gambolling in the dells; the cattle are grazing on the hill-side; and the beasts of burden, freed from their yoke, are feeding on the open plains.—The plough stands where it halted in its course across the furrows, but the husbandman is gone home to cultivate his soul. The sound of the axe has ceased from the forest, and the prostrate trees lie as they fell, but the woodman is gone away to ponder on the sudden death-stroke that may lay him low, or is on his way to the place where the keen axe of truth will be levelled at the roots of his stubborn sins. The mills are at rest on every hill-top, but their inmates are retired to the habitations, to garner up the corn of heaven. Few men are seen abroad; they are chiefly at home—by the domestic hearth, beside the family altar, teaching groups of children, watching at the couch of sickness, or soothing the pillow, and pouring balmy speech in the ear of the dying. Again behold and rejoice over the glorious benefits of Sabbath rest!”

“Turn next towards the great city, rearing its roofs, chimneys, steeples, monuments, and huge masses of masonry, in an atmosphere less murky and impure than that which broods over it on the other days of the week. The swarms of industry are now hived. The mingled hum of busy multitudes, the heavy tramp of traffic, the rush of enterprise, the clamour of human passions, the noise of innumerable tools and implements of handicraft, the fierce pantings of engines, the ringing of anvils, and the furious racings of machinery; the shouts of crowds, the brawls of drunkenness, and the plaints of mendicant misery, are all sunk into silence, and disturb not with a ripple of agitation the still Sabbath air. The huge factories and workshops that girdle the city, and which are the fountains of its prosperity, are empty and dumb; and the swarms that carry on their earthly burrowings in those warrens of industry,