

CHRISTIAN



VISITOR.

A Family Newspaper: devoted to

Religious & General Intelligence.

REV'DS I. E. BILL & R. THOMSON,

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

EDITORS.

Volume V. SAINT JOHN, NEW-BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY, AUGUST 27, 1852.

Number 32.

ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND.

The flowers of earth are budding brightly forth
To fill with fragrance the soft balmy air
The tiny petals filled with morning dew
So frailly delicate, so purely fair—
But thou, loved one! hast left the clay-cold sod,
To bloom with beauty in the Garden of our God.

The birds of Spring are carolling their lays,
Rejoicing that the winter's frost is past;
Their clear sweet music gushing gladly forth—
Now Spring's soft breezes have returned at last:
Thy winter past—thy spirit now above
Sings the glad song of a Redeemer's love.

We see the signs of gladness all around;
We hear the sounds of laughter and of mirth—
We meet the joyous glance of happy ones,
Whose hearts are fettered not with cares of earth:
And yet our hearts are desolately lone,
Knowing, loved one! thou art forever gone.

Gone!—from the love so tender, fond and true;
Gone, from the smiles that watched thy coming here,
Gone, from the cherished haunts, now dark and lone,

Gone, from the joyous home, left sad and drear,
Gone, from the griefs and trials of this earth,
Where joys celestial have in Heaven their birth.

We weep in sadness for our bitter loss;
We mourn the setting of thy life's bright sun;
We grieve o'er hopes once bright and gaily fair,
So swiftly vanished and so fleetly flown;
Yet for ourselves, and not for thee, we weep,
For thou art now, where all the weary sleep.

A bird, let loose from out its prison home,
A flower, transplanted to a milder clime;
A soul, unfettered by the toils of earth
At peace beyond the bounds of space and time.
Such art thou now, with all the sanctified,
A happy spirit, freed and glorified.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.]

MEMOIR

OF THE LATE

REV. SAMUEL ELDER,

OF FREDERICTON, N. B.

(Continued.)

The pastoral qualifications of Mr. Elder were early developed, and increased experience gave them additional value. This department of his labours was highly prized by his people, and will be long and affectionately remembered. No portion of a Minister's duty is more difficult, none more endears him to a Church, when it is faithfully discharged.

What can be more irksome than to listen to the puerile complaints of grown up children, directed against the whole church, or some particular member? What more painful to a sensitive mind than to be the recognized public channel through which the spleen of an ill regulated mind discharges itself when suffering under real or imaginary wrongs? In churches where the greatest harmony prevails, little things will constantly occur between fellow members, which sorely tries the patience of the pastor; for he must hear the whole from both parties and thus bear a double laceration; yet he is never expected to evince any other than the most saintly feelings himself. The perfect self control, the mildness of speech, the gentle gravity of manner, possessed by Mr. Elder, eminently fitted him to cope with trials such as these, which must be expected in this imperfect state.

He would pour oil upon the rough waves of strife; he would especially dwell upon the pain which such a state of things occasioned to himself; and this was more potent than any other consideration in hushing the storm; for when the passions have been allowed to explode, relief is felt, at once, and then a degree of calmness returns; at that moment the thought of the anxiety which such a display

of mundane weakness must give to the mind of him who watched over his charge as one who must render an account of his stewardship, would probably be the prelude to the return of forgiveness and peace.

In this way, and in others too numerous to mention, he both preserved harmony among the brethren, attached them strongly to his own person, and acquired a powerful influence for good.

The pastoral duty of visiting was also one in which he sedulously engaged. A portion of every day was religiously devoted to this service, as appears from his journal. None of the members were overlooked, but those who lived in humble circumstances enjoyed the larger share of his attention. That he was fully alive to the danger of allowing such visits to degenerate into mere gossiping calls, and painfully felt the difficulty of rendering them useful, is manifest from many entries in his Journal,—of which the following are examples:

"The conversation was more religious than on some other occasions, but still deficient on this score. It is so easy to dodge a serious subject, and we do it often unconsciously, owing to prevailing irreligiosity of mind."

Speaking of one whom he visited in sickness, he says,—

"I read a portion of Scripture, and prayed with her. I also conversed with her on religion, as a personal concern, and dwelt especially on its importance as the only genuine source of consolation, and only sufficient preparation for another world. She manifested much tenderness of feeling at my remarks, but could not be induced to declare the state of her mind in relation to this subject. This shrinking of mind from a disclosure of its religious feelings is common to all persons, but some possess it in a degree amounting to an incapability of uttering themselves. In such cases I never urge the individual so as to give them pain, from a conviction that it would be unkind and injurious. It is better to wait till their confidence strengthens, and they can reveal their hopes with freedom."

Most assiduous was he in his visits to the sick and dying; nor did he confine his solicitude to the members of his own church; they received his first attentions, and then any who were sick, belonging to other denominations, or to none at all, were the objects of his care. Long will his kindness in affliction be remembered by many families; and this course of conduct more than any other thing, rendered him dear to his people; for when sorrow weighs down the spirit, it is more seriously alive to kindness; and there is something pre-eminently unselfish and Christ-like in visits paid to the sick chamber,—in sympathy shown to the afflicted.

For the strong sense of duty which he possessed on this point, he was perhaps much indebted to a valued sister of the church, who having long sustained the christian character, and gained experience with years, knew the incalculable value of pastoral visits in sickness to the families of church members. During a severe illness which brought her to the brink of the grave, at the early period of his settlement with the church, she encouraged him to visit her so constantly, and so forcibly pressed upon him the duty of such services, that it had a most beneficial effect upon his subsequent career. He acquired the experience which is the prerogative of age, while yet a tyro in his vocation.

One object of this slight memorial of our departed brother, is to incite the living to emulate whatever appears laudable in his character or practice; may I be allowed therefore to direct the especial attention of my brethren to this trait in his ministerial character;

he was emphatically "a son of consolation," to those who made him welcome; and it lies within the compass of each one's ability to imitate him in this particular. There is a danger lest this service should be neglected; a duty so quiet and unostentatious may be easily jostled aside by more public and stirring exercises: this tendency must be counteracted by a firm conviction of the permanent value of ministerial visits in sickness, not only to the afflicted member of a family, but to all the others; and by a determination conscientiously to discharge so sacred a duty, and to allow no interference with it. As a general rule, reading the Scriptures, and prayer, should be introduced; for such exercises are always appropriate, and generally expected.

Another department of duty in which he perseveringly engaged, was the superintendence of the Sabbath School. The papers written by him on this subject, will be in the recollection of many; the exhortations they contained were seconded by his own example; he was evidently much interested in this work and continued to preside over the school from the time he undertook the duty of superintendence until the last; although it required his presence at the vestry in the afternoon, in addition to the morning and evening public services. Indeed it may be observed that he never spared himself as long as his health allowed; and when that failed, his spirit was often willing beyond the capabilities of his powers. In connexion with the Sabbath School, an interesting trait in his character was incidentally revealed, and that was the pleasure he took in seeing the innocent recreation of children, and the trouble he would give himself to promote their enjoyment. Prior to last year, the Sabbath School feast had been held during the winter season in the Vestry; but last year it was celebrated in the autumn, and the children were feasted in the open air. On that occasion he cheerfully bore his share of fatigue in contributing to the general happiness. In reference to this event, he says in his Journal:

"It was a pleasing sight to see so many little ones, gay with innocent and healthful delight, bounding and laughing in the golden sunshine. The collation was spread upon the grass beneath the shade of noble trees, and exercise in the free air gave vigorous appetite to all who partook of the rich abundance provided by the ladies. After the children's feast, the Teachers and others partook of a social repast. Nothing occurred to mar the enjoyment of the occasion, and the day ended with entire satisfaction."

The debt on the chapel was a source of much anxiety during a long period of his ministry; the obligation of raising an annual sum for several years, kept the subject perpetually pressing upon the minds of the Brethren; and in the various efforts made to realize the required sum, he took his full share of labour and responsibility: he visited the United States in 1850, to collect funds for this object, and proceeded as far as Philadelphia. His journal proves how trying and irksome this service was, for the object was one that failed to enlist the sympathy of strangers. The description of Philadelphia, written during this visit, derives additional interest from the circumstance that his remains are interred in the burial place of that city.

"Oct. 19th, 1850.—Walked extensively through the city for the purpose of seeing as much of it as possible. It is larger than I had imagined—covers nearly, perhaps quite as much ground as New York. The uniformity of its buildings detracts from its impressiveness. If, as in New York, there were more variety in the ranges and groups of buildings they would more easily and strongly arrest

the attention. As it is, one street is so like another, and each so uniform throughout, that we lose the variety of impression which is one of the chief elements of effect. In the new and fashionable quarters of the city, however, this fault is avoided. Masses of grand houses are seen, which by a difference of material and form, more strikingly and pleasingly fix the eye. The Philadelphians are very proud of their city, and keenly contend for its equality in population and dimensions with the Empire City. They are confident that the present census, which is now being taken, will show the inhabitants here to be 500,000. I should think, however large the population of Philadelphia may be, that of New York is larger considerably. And in other respects there can be certainly no competition. The commerce of New York is greater, and the number of visitors must be at least double. There are many things, however, which tend to make the Quaker city only second to New York. It has a large number of inhabitants, and appears to increase in as great a ratio as the other city. The regularity of its plan,—its broad, well paved and clean streets, with their fine side walks, bordered with trees, the general air of neatness, quietness and enjoyment,—the more equal diffusion of its population, by which an inconvenient crowd is avoided at any point;—these and other advantages give it, in the opinion of many, a preference to the Empire city. I am better pleased with New York. Not to mention more important matters, it has ten times more of poetry than Philadelphia,—more of those facts and incidents which stir the heart and kindle the imagination. There is far more to wonder at in New York,—to muse and dream over. Life is presented there in highly varied, contrasted and picturesque forms."

Though not so successful as he had anticipated in his mission to the States, the object was accomplished on his return, through the liberality of friends nearer home. He lived therefore to see the chapel relieved from this burden, and to know that the remainder of the debt would not be a cause of anxiety if rightly managed.

The number of converts whom it was his privilege to baptize and add to the church, was not large, and his want of success in this particular, weighed heavily on his spirits, especially during the few latter years of his life. This circumstance induced him to listen to proposals from the German Street Church in St. John, to take the pastoral oversight of them; various causes, however, among them the strongly expressed wish of many members of the Fredericton Church, backed by an increase of subscription, which did them honor, and proved their sincerity, combined to lead him finally to decline the invitation which was offered.

The strong attachment he felt towards those whom he had baptized will appear from the following extract:—

"Aug. 6th, 1851.—I feel a tender interest in this brother, having baptized him, and received him into the church, and he manifests towards myself a peculiar attachment. In regard to those who have been converted or added to the church through my ministry, I feel that paternal affection of which Paul speaks to the Corinthians. For in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the Gospel; an affection common to all ministers in relation to their converts, and which is one of the most endearing and precious kind."

[To be Continued.]

RELIGION.—Man, in whatever state he may be considered, as well as in every period and vicissitude of life, experiences in religion an efficacious antidote against the ills which oppress him, a shield that blunts the darts of his enemies, and an asylum into which they never enter.