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The Christian Visitor.

SAINT JOHN, FRIDAY, MAY 13, 1853.

The Benevolence of Christianity.

Covetousness is the controlling element in the history of human rebellion—the master spirit of a fallen world. It strives to subjugate to itself all the resources of humanity and all the blessings of Jehovah;—it aims at nothing short of effacing from the universe every vestige of pure benevolence. Its awful deeds of darkness stain all the records of time, and place man in a position of deep abasement in the estimation of all holy intelligencies. One barrier alone stands in the way of its universal triumphs, and that is to be found in the spirit of christianity as unfolded in the cross of Christ.

The gospel system was originally arranged upon a scale of infinite benevolence, and its object was to restore to the covetous soul of man the principle which he had lost by transgression. Upon this enterprise of unmerited mercy Jehovah expended the limitless treasures of his grace. The triune Deity moved in the great work of the world's redemption. The eternal Father "so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son." What an infinity of love; "he so loved the world," that nothing could satisfy his love: but a gift that should embody in itself all the wealth of the Godhead. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." Having placed all in the hands of his Son, he sent him forth as the almoner of his bounty to a fallen race.

The Son of God, in all his relations with humanity, was actuated by the same principle of beneficence. He appeared in our guilty world as a perfect type of the love of God. He was the "express image" of that love. His deeds were all deeds of love. Inspiration graphically describes his character in this one short sentence: "He went about doing good." Selfishness, in all its diversified forms, was incessantly reprov'd by his numberless acts of charity and good will to the children of men. His entire history from the cradle to the cross was one continuous manifestation of unbounded goodness. "He who was rich for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." His death was the most illustrious exhibition of divine benevolence which men or angels had ever witnessed; and it opened a broad channel in which this celestial tide should flow on through all successive ages, rising higher and still higher, until like a mighty flood it should break over all barriers, and baptize the world in the element of unmixed love.

When Jesus Christ had finished his work on earth he returned to his native dwelling place, to carry forward the reign of eternal mercy, and for this purpose he sent forth his spirit to write the law of love upon hearts hitherto steeped in supreme selfishness. The third personage in the adorable Trinity came with a sovereign majesty that no finite power could resist; and no sooner was his saving energy felt than the most determined obduracy gave way, and the soul was brought under the overpowering influence of heavenly love. Hence we see that the work of redemption, as accomplished by the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is a work of infinite love. Christianity, therefore, is founded in benevolence.

The early Christians gave evidence that they so understood the matter—they knew that they were the subjects of a mighty transformation, which had been effected by the riches of divine grace, and having experienced the happiness which flows from the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, they were stirred with a holy impulse to impart it to others. Instead, therefore, of yielding any longer to the dictates of covetousness, they came with their all and cast it at the foot of the cross. "All that believed were together and had all things common. And

sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need."

Thus we see the primitive disciples, who had received their instructions fresh from the lips of their divine master, and who had experienced the baptism of the Eternal Spirit, acting in accordance with the spirit of benevolence as unfolded in their own redemption.

What then, we ask, is Christianity, but benevolence embodied in the principles and actions of the people of God. It is the vital element of the renewed nature—the ruling power of the regenerate heart. All true disciples of the Saviour can say, "the love of Christ constraineth us." It impels to devotion, to self-sacrifice in the cause of the Redeemer, and converts the resources of wisdom, of talent, of wealth, and of influence, into agencies of mercy, to bless the world. The Christian Missionary is moved by this, to turn his back upon the endearments of his country and his home, to traverse trackless oceans, to visit inhospitable climes to toil, to suffer and to die, that he may win poor sinners to Christ, exclaiming as he goes, "O, that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." The rich are touched by this influence, and they come with their stores of wealth, and cast them into the treasury of the Lord of Hosts, and the poor widow, aroused by the same hallowed impulse, comes with her two mites, (her little all), presenting them as an humble offering upon the altar of the cross, saying—

"It means thy praise, however poor,
An Angel's song can do no more."

Such then is the benevolence of the Christianity of the New Testament. The religion of the cross, and covetousness are exactly the opposite, and can no more be blended than light and darkness, or holiness and sin. The former had its origin in the infinite love of heaven, the latter in the eternal malignity of hell.

If this view be correct, the legitimate inference is, that we are truly Christian in our character, just in proportion as we are inspired by the spirit of genuine benevolence; and let us remember, that by this standard we shall be judged at the last day. "I was an hungered and ye gave me meat," &c., or "I was an hungered and ye gave me no meat," &c. O, how will the great mass of professing Christians stand when brought up to this solemn test? May God have mercy upon the professed Christian world!

Personal Assurance of the Truth of Scripture.

Every Christian knows, from his own experience, Christianity is divine. A well-taught and a well-practiced Christian—an intelligent and obedient disciple of Jesus Christ, can no more doubt the truth of Christianity than he can doubt his own consciousness, or his own feelings. The Christian first believes, and then knows Christianity to be divine. But this can be no proof to a sceptic, nor to an opponent. Why, then, urge it? True, I cannot prove that I fear or love any person, by a mere declaration. To those only who believe my testimony, this will be proof. But I cannot prove my assertion, if it can only be done by giving them my consciousness or my feelings. They may say, when I tell them I know Christianity to be divine, that, no doubt, I think so, but they think that I am mistaken. There is one advantage, however, which the Christian can have, and does possess, above the sceptic in this matter: the sceptic never can disprove, even to his own satisfaction, much less to any other person's, that my experience, or any other person's, is not what it purports to be. He can never say, with any regard to the meaning of words, that he has experienced Christianity to be false. The Christian is in this, as well as in every other respect, greatly exalted above him. He has proved that Christianity is true by his own experience; and the sceptic can never, by his experience, prove it to be false.

Christianity submits itself to the test—it challenges every man to prove it true from his own experience. This can be better illustrated by a reference to a single passage in the New Testament, than by any other means. For example: Jesus once spoke, saying—"Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Now, if a physician should say to his patient, after he had failed to convince him by argument, Take this medicine, Sir, and you will assuredly find ease to your pain, and relief to your disease, does he not submit all his pretensions to the test of EXPERIMENT? He puts it in the power of his patient to prove, from his own experience, that all his pretensions are well or ill founded. Thus the Saviour of the world submits his pretensions to all. Some take his medicine and are cured; others ridicule his pretensions, reject his medicine, and die. But the experience of one cured person, who has submitted himself to his guidance, cannot be set aside by all the objections, reasons, and arguments, of all the sceptics and sophists on earth.

Thus the true Christian can say, I know and am assured that Christianity is true and divine. Hence it comes to pass that millions who can barely read the Holy Scriptures, who cannot debate or argue with the sceptic, are, nevertheless, unshaken in their confidence, when the sceptic has shot the last arrow in his quiver at them. I believe, I know, and am sure, says the genuine Christian, that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God, the Saviour of men. Let the sceptics know, then, that Jesus the Lord, has put it in their power to prove by experience the truth of all that he taught, and all that he promised.

We, then, who submit to the government and guidance of Jesus Christ, have all these advantages over the sceptics. We have reason, true philosophy, and experience on our side. We enjoy this present life much better than they can enjoy it; for, as Paul says, "Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of the life which is to come." Rich or poor, noble or ignoble, in the world's reckoning, we can always eat our food with gladness, sleep sweetly, and contemplate nature with adoration. The consciousness that we have the eye of God always upon us, and his arms encircling us, is worth infinitely more than all the promises of all the atheists, deists, sceptics and free-thinkers upon earth. On their philosophy, too, we have nothing to fear. We are happier while we live; if Christians, incomparably happier; and on their principles, cannot fail to be as happy as they, after death. But, on our principles, they can promise themselves only the happiness of a stall-fed ox here, and everlasting destruction hereafter. This is a fair contrast of the systems. We have the present and the future. They have the present only in part, and nothing in future but utter darkness and everlasting night. If Religion be worth any thing, it is worth EVERY THING which imagination can grasp. This is the difference between the two systems: Animal gratification and DEATH—Jesus Christ and IMMORTALITY. The materialist will choose the former; but the rational philosopher and the man of common sense will choose the latter.

We think "BEREAN" has misunderstood the Brother to whom he has written. We shall be glad to converse with him upon the subject.

We are so pressed just now with matter, that for a few weeks we must request our friends to keep back their poetic effusions.

We have to acknowledge the courtesy of the Publisher of the Reformer, in forwarding us his new organ. We desire the prosperity of every paper that advocates Truth and Justice.

How can we sufficiently thank Mr. Godey for his unremitting endeavors to please the ladies—and to gratify the gentlemen in putting it in their power to present to their fair companions so much good matter? He says he intends in future numbers to give "coloured Fashions." WHAT NEXT?

MONEY LETTERS RECEIVED.—John S. Trites, Salisbury, 10s.; W. H. Rogers, Pugwash, £1.

Never before, we believe, in the history of the Province has such a scarcity of labour been felt as now prevails. In every department of business and trade wages have been advanced to an extent much greater, we fear, than ordinary profits will afford; and shipyards, mills and lumbering establishments have absorbed so much of the ordinary labour of the country, that scarcely a man can be got to assist in putting in the crops.—Mechanics and farm labourers in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island would, we think, find a much better market for their labour here than in the United States.—[Cour.

Correspondence.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.]

St. John, May 6, 1853.

Dear Brother Thomson.—I just sit down to give you an account of a visit I have made to the Parish of Harvey, Albert County. Having received a letter from some of the members of that Church to visit them, telling me of their destitute state since Bro. Foshay left them; and my mind being solemnly impressed to respond to the call. I left home on the 1st March, went to Eastport and thence to Deer Island, where I saw Bro. Rideout baptize one man—the day before he baptized eleven. I rejoice to see that God was pouring out his spirit on this island of the sea. I remained there and preached a funeral sermon for William C. Garvison. It was a solemn time. I preached three times that week, and heard some speak concerning their souls, that had not spoken before. On Saturday I went to Eastport, and preached in the Baptist Meeting House. Had a good time. God is pouring out his spirit on that town, and blessing the labours of our Bro. Butler. I preached on Lord's day, forenoon for him, and he in the afternoon; and in the interval he baptized five willing converts. Glory to God for his kindness to fallen man! I laboured with this brother until Wednesday, and found a vessel about to sail for Harvey, and at 3 o'clock left Eastport, and at 6 o'clock the next morning, landed at Herring Cove, where I held a meeting that same night. I travelled and preached every day for seven weeks, only four days excepted, and held three meetings on the Sabbath. I was three weeks at Salmon River, two at Rochea, and one at New Horton, and one at the Bank. I do not know that I was ever better satisfied, for I saw backsliders come home weeping, and sinners enquiring the way to Zion; and old and young engaged in attending meetings, and providing for strangers, which they did willingly. I enjoyed my mind as well as ever I did, and I baptized five willing converts, which gave great joy to the Churches, two at Salmon River, three at Rochea. "Bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name!" I saw our aged Bro. Cleveland and wife, and received great kindness from them and their son John. I heard them exhort sinners to repent and turn to God, that their souls might be saved. Bro. Aston assisted me at Rochea, in a God-like manner, for which I give thanks. I left the Bank last Monday, and came to Hopewell, and the next day visited the Coal Mines at Hillsborough, and preached to the Miners, and stopped with them that night; and on Tuesday went to the settlement and attended with the "Sons of Temperance," and at 6 o'clock, took the steam boat and arrived here in St. John, on my journey home.

Yours truly,
JAMES WALKER.

We rejoice to read this interesting letter, and hope our dear Father Walker, who also preached in Brussels Street Church on Lord's day morning, will be spared many years yet to labor in the Lord's vineyard. We were thankful to see him looking so well. Eds.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.]

The Promises.

The Bible contains many great and precious promises, which impart much consolation to God's afflicted people. There is no situation in which they can be placed, but there is some portion of scripture to meet that case. In order for them to advance in the divine life, it is necessary they should seek, by prayer and the study of the scriptures, that wisdom which will enable them to take such portions as will suit their peculiar case, and not wrest the Word of God to their destruction. Nothing conduces more to the spiritual growth of God's people than His promises, when properly understood and applied; and God designs them to lean upon them when discharging their duties. He says: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." See also, Isaiah xl. 29-31; Psalm xxx. 5. If God's children are exposed to temptations and persecutions, He says, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passeth through the waters I will be with thee, and through