

# CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

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REV. I. E. BILL,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward Men."

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[Written for the Visitor.]

On the death of the infant of Mr. & Mrs. J. Cahill.

[Written by request.]

Rest, little sufferer rest,  
Thy dream of life is o'er,  
Another's anxious tears  
Can favor thee no more.

Too fragile was thy bark,  
To storm life's stormy wave;  
Ere ope'd thy dawn of life,  
Thou'rt fitted for the grave.

How highly blessed art thou  
To escape the growing cares,  
That mark man's pathway to the grave  
Increasing with his years.

How sweetly dost thou rest,  
How placid seems thy brow;  
Rest, gentle spirit, rest!  
We may not claim thee now.

Alas! too much of earth  
Already hast thou known,  
Sorrow and pain were all  
That thou couldst call thine own.

A Saviour's hand has set  
Upon thy brow so fair,  
A signet of thy happiness,  
An emblem of His care.

Rest! precious boon of Heaven!  
But lent awhile to cheer  
Our hearts, and lead the way to Heaven,  
Where falls no parting tear.

Hampton, Aug. 16th, 1854.

## CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR HIS DISCIPLES.

"Take them not out of the World."

The Convention Sermon, delivered at Brussels Street Meeting House, Oct. 9, 1854.

BY REV. J. DAVIS.

[Published at the special request of the Convention.]

John xvii. 15.—"I pray not, that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil."

[CONTINUED.]

One leading consideration more—The petition of the text was dictated.

### III. By zeal for the glory of the Father.

The continuance of the disciples of Christ here for a season subserves the glory of God in two ways.

First—God's claim to this earth is thus maintained.

Satan vaunts as if the world were all his own—and flings his vaunt in the face of heaven itself. It was to the Lord of the universe that he dared to say, "All this power is delivered unto me!" Inspiration itself calls him the prince and god of this world; thus at once intimating what he would have, and whereunto he has attained. But his lordship shall not last for ever; and while it does last the futility of his boast must still be exposed. Hence the petition of Christ,—"I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world."

If God were to act upon the contrary plan, if he always made haste to take his people home, it would look as if here Satan were too strong for him—as though he were driven to seek refuge for his cause in other worlds. Another effect might follow;—the Evil One might be encouraged to seek the extension of his empire. Earth secured, he might begin to aim at the conquest of new provinces. But such inferences must not be allowed; such enterprizes must not be set on foot. Satan is not above the Most High. The creature, exalted as he is, the very first perhaps of the works of God, is but a creature—a creature waging hopeless warfare against his Creator. God is able to take care of his own—to preserve them amid all the machinations and mysteries of iniquity with which earth abounds,—the traps and gins, and snares of the great Enemy. Never yet has he lost one of his flock. Nor

will he lose them. Such as already call him Lord he will keep safely to his heavenly kingdom. And more—He will still add to their number—He will break up the reign of the adversary, narrowing his boundaries,—and stripping him of his usurpations, driving him away from earth, and shutting him up in hell. Thus will he vindicate his claims against Satan; and instead of retiring before him, as though unable to cope with his might and mastery, he will finally crush him under foot, and manifest his glory as "King of kings, and Lord of lords," and head of ALL principalities and powers. He only delays the decisive blow, that he may lift it the higher, and drive it the deeper, and the more illustriously display his own supremacy.

This, then, is one of the ways in which the continuance of the people of God here subserves the glory of the Father. Then,

Second.—The extent of the Divine resources is thus developed.

### 1. In what God does for his people.

Observe the condition in which he finds them,—treading this earth, enamoured of worldly things, "led captive by Satan at his will—dead in trespasses and sins." But he "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness" shines into their hearts, "old things pass away; all things become new." The sinners are transformed into saints. They are not removed from the world, indeed—not so much as withdrawn from its ordinary associations. But they rise above those associations; they gaze upon spiritual realities, and are absorbed by them; they cast off the yoke of their tyrant; they come forth from their graves abhorring former pollutions, and aspiring to the purity of God himself. Entering upon their career, they find themselves engaged in deadly conflict; beset by foes without, and betrayed by foes within. But He who has summoned them to the battle does not forsake them in the field. He "teaches their hands to war, and their fingers to fight—gives power to the faint, and to them that have no might increaseth strength—a worm threshes the mountains, and beats them small, and makes the hills as chaff." The feeblest of men "tread upon the high places of the earth"—laugh to scorn all the forces of hell—and with the shout of victory go up to heaven.

The great God displays his resources.

### 2. In what he effects by his people.

While they contend for themselves, they contend for him also—"Go," says he, "and subdue the world to the obedience of the faith"—That world is everywhere in arms against its Maker, while its prince and ruler holds it in strong, in all but impregnable possession. Such was its aspect when the Gospel commission was first given: The religion of the Jews was then most deeply sunk in superstition, in formality, in unbelief. Gentile idolatry was at its highest point both of refinement and of power. The enemy seemed to have it almost wholly his own way. And still he has a mighty hold upon this earth of ours. While the Gospel, particularly within the last century, has been putting forth fresh energies among those who have long been acquainted with its power, and winning fresh trophies among the heathen, evil has manifested itself in new and more deadly forms. Never was Popery, as a spiritual power, more rampant than now. Never was infidelity more insidious, or more daring. The resources of hell, not yet exhausted, are still played off against the wisdom and love of heaven, in dread and desperate rivalry. And look at the war in the East; whose avowed object is, the liberty of the Greek church—whose real one, the obstruction of the march of the church of Christ. Oh! there is a fearful meaning in the language of Paul—"We wrestle, not against flesh and blood but, against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wicked-

ness in high places." Who, then, are we, to hope for success in the enterprize which our God has assigned us? Shall giants be attacked by shepherd-boys, and slain with smooth stones? Shall mighty hosts be discomfited with potsherd and torches? Shall fishermen obtain the ear of an empire, and lead captive the hearts of myriads of its subjects? Yes, brethren! yes! such things have been, and are now, and yet shall be. For the heavenly "treasure" is placed "in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." And He who gave Goliath to David, and the Midianites to Gideon, and the Roman Empire to the Apostles; in each instance securing all the glory to himself, will give to the church in these latter days, yea, already has begun to give it,—the mastery of the whole earth, and thus win to himself vastly accumulated honours. For this, therefore, is the church continued till now. Not that she may boast a prowess which she has not, and victories which she has never won; but that her future history may supply new and extended illustrations of the greatness of Him who works the mightiest wonders by the poorest instrumentality. So that the church of Christ, like the church of Moses, will still and ever be constrained to sing, "We got not the land in possession by our own sword, neither did our own arm save us; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto us—Not unto us, O Lord! not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake!"

Nothing more fitting, then, on this ground, than the petition which Christ here presents to his Father. In addition to considerations before adduced, touching his love to the world, and his love for his people, here we have a paramount motive,—a motive surpassing and swallowing up all others. For, the glory of the Father ever lay nearest to the heart of his Son. How often was the sentiment upon his lips, and how did his whole course illustrate the sentiment, "My meat is, to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work!" The will of the Father, that is, the glory of the Supreme God, is in fact the most important object in the universe. Mark the order of topics in the song of the angelic hosts at the birth of Christ. It is first glory to God in the highest; then "peace on earth, good will towards men." Listen also to the Apocalyptic anthem, sung by "the four and twenty elders," before the throne of the Father;—"Thou art worthy O Lord! to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Nothing, then, can stand in competition with the glory of the Most High God. All beings, and all worlds are placed in subservience to that glory. Sooner shall they all perish and pass away, than the splendours of the Divine glory shall be for one moment obscured. Worlds have been made and unmade, to display the grandeur of our God. Angels have been lifted to the highest heavens, and plunged into the deepest hell, for the honour of his great name. For this his own Son humbled himself, yea, was humiliated by his own hand to earth, to the cross, to the tomb. And, in the words before us, in pleading for his people, "Father! Father!" he seems to say, "I love them much; but I love thee more. I would that they should be happy; but I would rather that thou shouldst be glorious. Therefore, I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world. No! let them stay here as long as thou pleasest. Scatter them—humble them—afflict them—consign them to dungeons, or to death in its sharpest forms. Only keep them from sin; and I leave all the rest to thee, even as I submit myself—glorify thyself in my sorrows; and let them fill up that which is behind of my afflictions. I know that for them, as for

me, all will be well at last. Meanwhile bring them as low as seemeth good in thy sight; and take not the cup of sorrow which thou hast filled for them out of their hands, till they have drained it to the dregs. Then,—THEY, I will, but not one moment sooner, that they be with me where I am, to behold my glory, and partake of my joy."

And now, "brethren, suffer the word of exhortation—"We want you to observe,

1. The direction given by the text to our own prayers and watchfulness.

Notice, we intreat you that one thing against which Christ here pleads;—that is, SIN. "Father! keep them from evil." Not from suffering, you perceive, but from sin. We, alas! are apt to be less afraid of sin than of suffering. But let us try to imbibe more of the spirit of the text. For truly sin is the only thing in the universe of which we need really to be afraid. For what is sin? and what has it wrought? And what is suffering? and what are its fruits? Suffering, indeed, is the offspring of sin, and from sin follows all its bitterness. Yet has it been converted by our God into an antidote to sin, and a precious means of grace. Thus there arise many striking contrasts between sin, on the one hand, and suffering on the other. Sin separates us from God; suffering brings us back to him. Sin is enmity against God; suffering trains us to his love. Sin enstamps upon us the image of Satan; suffering, sanctified suffering, transforms us into the likeness of God. Sin would have spoiled the work of the Son of God; and into sin, therefore, the enemy strove to seduce him. "Through sufferings the Captain of our salvation was made perfect." By the same process does our Father discipline all his sons to usefulness; and especially brace up his heroes and great ones to do and to dare for him. "The pleasures of sin, which are but for a season," work out the pains of the second death. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceedingly and eternal weight of glory." Sin finds no quarters in heaven. But in heaven—God wipes away every tear from the eye of every sufferer. Sin, therefore, is evil.—unmixed evil—always evil. First in the catalogue of providential blessings, may we count up our sufferings. Sin turns earth's best blessings into curses, and imparts to the memory of those blessings in the future state an inconceivable sting. See it—feel it in that word of Abraham—to the rich man in hell,—"Son! remember—REMEMBER, that thou, in thy lifetime, receivedst thy good things. On the contrary, next to the blood of Christ, and the spirit of Christ, saints in glory will celebrate the sufferings which here they endure. Who does not recall David's testimony, "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word. And Oh! the truth and sweetness of Newton's strain:—

"Since all that I meet shall work for my good,  
The bitter is sweet, the medicine is food;  
Though painful at present, 'twill cease before long,  
And then, Oh! how pleasant the conqueror's song!"

Is there not, then, a deep meaning, a meaning overflowing with wisdom and love, in the petition of the text? And shall we not learn that meaning, and govern ourselves by it? Brethren! be this our prayer;—"Lord! ANY THING RATHER THAN SIN. Pierce our hearts as thou wilt with sorrow; but let us not pierce thine with our sins. Wherefore, we pray not that thou shouldst take us out of the world; but this one thing only,—that thou wouldst keep us from evil;—from an evil world—from the snares of the Evil One—and above all from the world of evil that we bear about with us in our own bosoms!"

Finally, important instruction, and precious encouragement here offer themselves.