

The Christian

A FAMILY NEWSPAPER: DEVOTED TO RELIGION AND MORALITY.

REV. I. E. BILL,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth

GEO. W. DAY, Printer.

SAINT JOHN, NEW-BRUNSWICK, W.I.

Poetry.

Light from Heaven.

"The light that led astray
Was light from heaven?"

It could not be; no light from heaven
Has ever led astray:
Its constant stars to guide are given,
And never to betray.
The meteor in the marshy bled
May lure the foot afar,
But never wayfarer misled
Would say it was a star.

When passion drives to wild excess,
And folly wakes to shame,
It cannot make the madness less
To cast on heaven the blame.
Oh, blindly wander if thou wilt!
And break from virtue's rule,
But add not blasphemy to guilt,
And doubly play the fool.

The light that seemed to shine on high,
And led thee on to sin,
Was but reflected to thine eye
From passion's fire within.
And Conscience warned thee of the deed,
And Reason raised her voice,—
Thou wert not forced to turn aside
But freely mad'st the choice.

Thy Will its false enchantment drew
Before thy clearer sight,
And round the hovering tempter threw
An angel's robe of light.
And thus from virtue's peaceful way
So far by passion driven,
How could the light that led astray
Be light that shone from heaven?

Why, reckless of its native aim,
Should genius, throned so high,
E'er lend the sanction of his name
To consecrate a lie;
If not that a corrupted heart
Degrades the noblest mind,
And turns to shame the glorious art
That should have blessed mankind?
Oh, spurn the guilty thought away!
Eternity will tell
That every light that led astray
Was light that shone from hell.

J. D. BURNS.

The following interesting article is extracted from the English Baptist Freeman.

Glimpses of the Past.

A BACH OF HISTORIANS.

As for "this sect it is everywhere spoken against." For ages every man's hand was against us, and every one's tongue was at liberty to utter, without restraint, violent things. No one could speak well of the Baptists. We have seen already how their character was aspersed, their principles misrepresented, their proceedings misjudged, and we may now add, their history abused. Upon the continent and in England we have had historians. They have professed to write our history, but with a pen of iron, dipped in gall. Sleidan, Viscomtes, Mashovius, Bayle, and others on the continent, and Lewis in this country, have kindly engaged in this work. From such men we could expect no sympathy. Professedly the friends of truth, yet they sacrificed her on the altar of ignorance, or immolated her at the shrine of bigotry. Facts from their pen would have been their own condemnation. History, truthfully written, would have exposed the wickedness of the system with which they were identified, and the persecuting church of which they formed a part. From Rome we can never look for justice. We may suspect ourselves, if any approach to fraternization is ever manifested in that quarter. From the advocates of church establishments, be they Episcopal or Presbyterian, we have had but little. Opposites cannot unite. Infant baptism presents an element which can link itself, more or less, with all ecclesiastical platforms; but it has nothing in common with us. Our church polity is unique, and separates us from all other christian communities; and our early brethren put it forth with a distinctness, and held to it with a tenacity, which aroused the ire and called forth the worst feelings of, otherwise, good men. In calmer times, and in more favorable circumstances, we might have hoped that justice would have triumphed. But it is not so. The pages of Calamy, Neal, and more recent writers (the distinguished author of the "History of the Reformation" cannot be fully excepted from this list) have been sullied by a bitterness, which tries to elevate itself by lowering the character of another. None more fearlessly court investigation, or have sacrificed more for the truth, yet no sect has been more thoroughly abused, and their history more perverted, than ours. Justice has not yet been done to the men of the past, either by ourselves or others. Wrong apparently triumphs for a while, but truth will ultimately rise above the clouds and thick mists which have veiled her, and shine in all her unsullied majesty.

To vindicate the character of our brethren, and to supply a just account of their proceedings, historians of our own have written; and we propose in this, the closing paper on the early English Baptists, to advert to these as briefly as possible.

First on our list, and if not the most elegant and philosophic of historians, yet in many respects the most valuable of our writers in this department is Thomas Crosby. His "History of the English Baptists" is in four volumes, and was published at intervals. The first volume bears the date of 1738, and the last, 1740. He married a daughter of B. Keach, and, with the office of a schoolmaster combined the trade of a general dealer. His relative position brought him into intimate connexion with most of the leading men of those times, and from them he obtained information of the most valuable kind. Besides this, the excellent B. Stanton had long been employed collecting materials for a similar work, but declining health, and probably other causes, interfered with the accomplishment of the task. The whole of his MS. was placed in Mr. Crosby's hands. It was well known that about this time Mr. Neal was preparing

his now well-known, but partial "History of the Puritans." All the information which had thus been accumulated, was placed in his hands, with the hope that he would do justice to the English Baptists, and render unnecessary for a time, a separate history of that body of christians. The appearance of his work showed how delusive were their hopes. His account was meagre in the extreme, and marked by prejudices and mistakes of the very worst kind. To supply these defects, Mr. Crosby recommenced his labours, avowedly to render that justice to his brethren which was denied them by others. Such was the occasion of his history. We are not reviewing it, but only indicating its character, and the place it should occupy in this department of our literature. Mr. Crosby was not the most competent man for his undertaking. His learning was neither large nor varied; yet his information was considerable, and his diligence very praiseworthy. No one need expect to find the calm, philosophic, christian historian in him. His work is marked, we think, with great and serious defects; some of them, perhaps, inseparable from the circumstances in which he was placed. His narrative embraces the proceedings of, both sections of Baptists, and has a large amount of matter belonging to our national, rather than to our denominational, history. It begins with the earliest appearance of Baptists in this country, and closes with the third year of George I. Its value is considerable, as a depository of many facts and documents of the highest importance to correct views of the progress of our principles in this country. Subsequent writers have not felt the pages of Crosby unnecessary to the man who would attain to anything like an accurate acquaintance with the early periods of our history. In this respect it is a mine, the gold of which some skilful artist will work up into articles of worth and beauty.

Judging the work "badly written" and "very scarce," the laborious Joseph Ivimey undertook to render the History of Crosby more attractive, and to continue it down to his own times. Ultimately his work swelled to four ponderous volumes, containing nearly 3,000 closely printed pages. The first of these was published in 1811, the last in 1830. It was the labour of more than twenty years. Like his predecessor, Mr. Ivimey, has traced the history of Baptists from an early period, then noticed their rise and proceedings in this country, and combined, with these, notices of many churches in most parts of the empire. In the periods over which Crosby travels, Mr. Ivimey gives us very little additional information. The materials of the former are very freely used, and notwithstanding the badness of the writing, paragraph after paragraph is transferred to Mr. Ivimey's pages. We may fairly award to Mr. Ivimey the merit of great diligence, but his volumes want much which is requisite to render his work popular with the body, whilst it is marked by inaccuracies which detract greatly from its value.

Dissatisfied with these efforts, and feeling that the plan of illustrating the history of the two bodies unitedly did not give that prominence to the General Baptists which they deserved, Mr. Adam Taylor sought to remedy this defect. His work, "The History of the English General Baptists," accordingly appeared in two volumes, in 1818. Beginning with the origin of Christianity, he sketches their appearance in various countries till the Reformation. Their rise and operations in this country follow. He presents us with a melancholy picture of the departure from the faith, and sinking of many of the churches, from various causes, into Arrianism, to say the least. The rise of the New Connexion follows. This was by far the most complete view of this section of the body which had been given. The records of many early churches, which have been preserved with great care, were freely used, and from them and other sources Mr. Taylor presents us with a rather graphic outline of the men and their doings. Their doctrines, their modes of worship, their discipline, their labours, and various sufferings, are portrayed with clearness and success. Take him as a whole, he is accurate and trust-worthy.

Feeling that there was still room for another work, Mr. J. H. Wood issued, in 1847, a "Condensed History of the General Baptists of the New Connexion; preceded by Historical Sketches of the early Baptists." Mr. Wood, we believe, is a minister of the General Baptist body, and has laboured, with very commendable zeal, to execute his task. The former part of his volume repeats what we find in older writers, in a more fragmentary form, without much, if any, new information. His sketch of the Particular Baptists is very scanty; but then it is as much as we had a right to expect; whilst the proceedings of the New Connexion are given with such a fulness of detail as scarcely leave anything more to be desired. The origin, the principles, the progress of the body in this country, its missionary operations abroad, especially in India, with short notices of some of its eminent ministers, give it a completeness which will be found in no other work. There is a large amount of statistical information, and very much which will instruct and interest all who read it; whilst the occasional notices of the difficulties and sufferings of our forefathers, will invest it with a peculiar charm to many. Our young readers will find it an excellent compendium of facts and principles, and particularly of that section of the body to which it is chiefly devoted.

Our readers will have no difficulty in discovering, that hitherto we have no history which corresponds with what we think a history of the Baptist body should be. That work is still a desideratum. All honour to

those who have attempted it. They have gathered rich materials, but have not used them in the best way. Still they remain. The metal only wants pressing down, and casting into a better mould. We should like to see some one do for us what Dr. Price has done for Nonconformity in general. A man with deep and intense sympathy with the noble-minded men of the past,—with a calm and philosophic mind, thoroughly conversant with the details of their history, would be needed. Would that such a one could be induced to enter upon the task!

In prosecuting such an enterprise the labour would be onerous. The whole literature of the period should be examined. In the works of our brethren, and in those of their opponents, much valued information is hidden, whilst the national records would supply many important details. No man has yet thoroughly explored the one or examined the other. The mine is inviting, it is rich, and will amply repay the toil which may be expended upon it. We venture to express the conviction that materials exist for producing a work which will exhibit men in advance of their age, and who by the loftiness of their principles, the calm dignity of their sufferings, their devotedness to truth and the Saviour, and their blameless and holy life, may be compared with those of any community in the world. The times demand such a work, our young people need it, and it would confer upon the church of Christ untold obligations.

The Hard Christian.

BY REV. D. KELLY, M. A.

"Whether we name thee charity, or love,
Chief grace below, and all in all above;
Who seeks to praise thee, and to make thee known
To other hearts, must have thee in their own."
—Cowper.

It is an unfavourable symptom of the spirit and temper of the times that a name has lately come into general use as descriptive of a certain class of persons of the "hard Christians." Whatever may have been thought of the professors of serious godliness in the last age, whatever stigmas may have been thrown upon them, they certainly were not known as "hard men." On the contrary, an ever-tenderness, a too-easy credulity, a too-confiding simplicity, and a liability to be imposed on, often provoked a smile at their expense. But certainly these are not the characteristics of many in the religious world at the present day. A marked change seems to have passed on them. Whatever this be owing to, whether to the reproach of singularity, which once attached to a profession of religion, having in a great degree passed away, inasmuch that religion may now be said to be almost the fashion; or to the great increase in the number of "serious people," and to the consequent greater inducement to join a party including so many of the rich, and intelligent, and influential, from self-interested motives; whatever be the cause, certain it is that you now not unfrequently find, among the professors of religion, qualities which enable them to foil the cleverest, the most astute of the worldly-minded, with their own weapons. Hence has originated the seemingly self-contradictory epithet of "hard Christians." In such a character we find perhaps many qualities which we cannot but admire and commend—truth, zeal, probity, soundness of doctrinal views, industry, untiring devotion to duty. The Roman stoic himself could not be more rigorous and self-sacrificing.

Such a one may be, no doubt, a useful auxiliary to any public cause; for he commonly attaches himself to some object of public interest, and devotes his time, talents, and energies to this with a zeal and perseverance which never slackens. He is one that does not spare himself. He works, indeed, with all his might and main. But here our praise must end. He seems to have discarded all the softness and amenities of the Christian from his code. Thro' a perverted taste, it seems to be his ambition to form himself on the model of the hard, astute man of the world. Everything like feeling, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, he repudiates, and seems to pride himself on his superiority to such weakness.—Such a one may have much of the wisdom of the serpent; he has little of the gentleness of the dove. You find him proud, severe, exclusive, jealous of his supposed consequence, and tenacious of his position, irritable, harsh in judgment, illiberal, narrow minded, without bowels of mercy, spiteful, bitter, censorious, prompt at the disparaging remark, the injurious insinuation, the harsh construction. Such a one repels confidential intercourse; you would never think of repairing to him for sympathy; on the contrary, you enter his presence with fear; and you feel it necessary to be as much on your guard with him as you have need to be with the systematic, the avowed man of the world; and, in fact, if he had not the reputation of being a good man, and a religious man, you would pronounce him to be a hard man of the world. He is one that makes no allowance for the weaknesses of human nature; he never throws the mantle of love upon a brother's infirmities; his judgment is as severe, and the construction he puts upon acts as harsh as the most cynical and bitter can put on them.

The great ambition of such a one seems to be to acquire a reputation for cleverness, tact, judgment; to gain extensive influence, to know everything, to be everywhere, to make his power felt in all quarters, and to mould all men to his purposes. Such a man may doubtless do good service to any cause he espouses, because he brings to it indefatigable industry and zeal. But is he a Christian formed on the model sketched for us by the pen of inspiration? Alas! we might

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who can read, even cursorily, the epistles of St. Paul, without being impressed with the conviction that he was the kindest, the most amiable, and tender-hearted, and sympathising of men?

And is it not the same qualities we should look to find in every true disciple of the Saviour? We admire and applaud zeal, and activity, and integrity of life, and devotion to duty; but if these be the only qualities one can boast, how many of the most beautiful and attractive virtues of the Christian character do we miss! how many of those qualities which bind him closest to our heart! Ah! who can speak the secret, resistless power of true tenderness of spirit? of the melting eye, of the persuasive accents, and all those other indications of what is termed "genuine goodness?" O the charm of that frankness of manner, and of that manly simplicity which put you at once at your ease: of the real unaffected humility that disarms you of every jealous or distrustful feeling; of that free and unrestrained communicativeness which makes you see the breast like a transparency, and invites the fullest confidence, so that you unobscure your secret thoughts, your anxieties, your griefs, your fears and apprehensions, as you would to the fondest brother! Ah! the sweetness of that sympathy which they only can exercise who have themselves felt the anguish of the "wounded spirit;" who, having mourned in secret, and wept and repented themselves, and having been forgiven "the debt of ten thousand talents," have learned to forgive the debt of "the hundred pence," and to look with pity and tenderness upon all. O the secret charm of that gentle, confiding, playful manner, which can smile you out of your foibles, or which, if it reproves, reproves so gently, so kindly and good-naturedly, (the look and the manner healing the wounds which the words may inflict) that you exclaim with the psalmist, "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." How admirable that spirit, found in some who seem to live and move in an atmosphere of charity, who are ever prompt to put the best construction upon the motives and actions of others, who willingly listen to unkind observations, who, if they are not able to speak well of one, will say nothing—the true peace-makers! Surely, it is one of a spirit like this whose life and conduct best accord with the Scriptural delineation of the true Christian. This is the individual who invites your confidence, who wins your regard. You may applaud and admire others; but you stand aloof from them: this is the individual who draws you to him. You prefer his society; you seek his counsel, his sympathy, his prayers; and when he is gone from among us his name is embalmed in the grateful memory of survivors. When others quit the scene, you may join, indeed, the mighty throng in honouring them, and in raising the splendid monument to them; but this is he to whose grave you go in secret to weep there; the remembrance of whom causes the tear to start, and elicits the fervid exclamation "We ne'er shall look upon his like again."—*Ch. of Eng. Mag.*

Milwaukee, the big town of Wisconsin, is only twenty years old, and has a population of forty thousand. It was laid out in 1835. In 1838, the population was 700; in 1847, 14,000; in 1850, 20,000; in 1855, 40,000.—Banking capital amounts to \$750,000; but they say the business requires \$3,000,000. The manufactures last year amounted in value to \$4,600,000, against \$2,100,000 in 1853, showing that the amount has doubled in two years. The imports were \$11,000,000; the exports \$6,769,000.