

# The Christian Visitor.

A FAMILY NEWSPAPER: DEVOTED TO RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

REV. I. E. BILL,

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

EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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## Correspondence.

### Reminiscences of the Past.

APPENDIX C.

At the time of my first acquaintance with the Baptists, and for many years after, there existed a warm controversy between them and the pedo-baptists. As during the last fifteen or twenty years this contest has in a great measure ceased, those who have become members of our churches within that time, are not very well posted up on the history of this watery war. As there were many curious incidents connected with this debate, and many extraordinary applications of scripture introduced, it may afford some little information to the younger members of our churches, if we briefly advert to a few things which were introduced.

One of the inexplicable paradoxes connected with infant baptism, introduced into the church many years ago, and which principally prevailed in New England, was the half-way covenant. The church of England and other national churches, baptize anybody's children. But the pedo-baptists of America not being national in their character, limited the ordinance to church members and their offspring. Many persons of their congregations, but not of their churches, wishing their children to be baptized, it became a serious question with their Ministers, how they should deal with such cases. It was concluded, finally, that if such persons would acknowledge the articles of faith, and the christia validity of the Abrahamic covenant, their children might be baptized, and received in the bosom of the church. This anomalous system, which receives children into covenant with the church, on the ground of their parents' faith, while it shuts out the parents themselves, for the want of faith, has been one of the greatest puzzles to Baptists of any thought that has come under their observation. It has not been continued without creating perplexity and disagreement amongst the ministers who practised infant baptism. It has been the means of calling up the attention of some of them to the subject, which has resulted in their renouncing the infant system altogether. This was the case with Dr. Stephen Chapin, late president of Columbia College, Washington, U. S. About the year 1819 he came over to the Baptist side, and lived and died amongst them. I have never seen a serious argument used by any of the Baptist writers, against this half-way covenant system. Another thing allied to this, was the baptism of children, when only one of the parents was a believer. The dispute was, which must be, the father or mother?

The Baptists have generally passed over these strange questions in silence, or treated them in a casual manner. John Leland, a very notable Baptist preacher, wrote a Satire on these singular (but now obsolete) pedo-baptist notions, and introduced a plain country boy, who used to reason in a very consistent manner on what he heard and saw from time to time of this kind of baptism. The following is a short specimen of his reasoning on this subject. "Another thing also confounded my thoughts, when men and women would bring their children to the minister to be baptized, if but one of them was a believer, and it was supposed that the faith of the parents was sufficient to initiate the child. My uncle Benson had a son named Ned. He was a believer, but aunt was not. I had a great query in my mind to find out which parent the soul proceeded. Uncle Benson said, Peter came into the world a Christian, and therefore had a right to baptism; but uncle Ned insisted upon it that it was baptism that made him a Christian, and confirmed his sentiments by observing that the name given him in baptism was his Christian name, that is, a name given him when he was made a Christian; but others declared that the child came half from each parent; then, said I, Peter ought to have but half his face sprinkled, for half of it came from his heathen mother.

"I went to the meeting, and how was I surprised to see a man and his wife stand in the broad aisle, owning the baptismal covenant, as they called it. I had read of baptism being a command—a fulfilment of righteousness—the answer of a good conscience, but never heard of it being called a covenant before. What was next? said I within myself. But here I soon found that neither the man nor his wife were believers; that they had never given themselves to God, nor yet they were offering their child to him.

If these people, said I, loved their child as well as they love themselves, they'd never trust it where they durst dot trust themselves. But when the priest had read what he had written for them, and they had consented by a bow and a courtesy, he declared that they had a right to all the privileges of the church, except the Lord's Supper. \* \* \* And so the child, notwithstanding all his struggles and screams, had the name of the Trinity called over him, and was somehow or other, shut up in the pale of the church. Is this Christian liberty? thought I, more than a hundred times!"

Sometimes such strange and ludicrous notions were advanced, that satirical poems were written in reply. We will give two or three samples.

The lovely Jesus when baptized,  
Who then our practice patronized—  
Went straightway up out of the water;  
Ergo, our infant son and daughter,  
Should to and from the font be brought,  
Without a will, without a thought.

Dr. Guys, in his paraphrases, Vol. I., p. 13, had very foolishly said about John's baptizing the great multitudes in Jordan, that it appeared to him that the people stood in ranks, near to, or by the edge of the river, and John passing along before them, cast water upon their heads or faces, with some proper instrument, by which means he might easily baptize thousands in a day.

This new invention was treated as follows:  
"The Jews in Jordan were baptized;  
Ergo, ingenious John devised  
A scoop, or squirt, or some such thing,  
With which some water he might fling  
Upon the long-extended rank  
Of candidates that lined the bank;  
Be careful John, some drops may fall  
From your rare instrument on all;  
But put your engine, ne'ertheless,  
Let no revilers in the crowd,  
The holy sprinkling be allowed."

A Mr. De Courcy, of Shrewsbury, Shropshire England, wrote a pamphlet against the Baptists, who had a very flourishing church in that City. This pamphlet was advertised in the papers, in a very pompous style. A writer, calling himself John the Dipper, turned the book, advertisement and all into poetry.

The following is his imitation of this pompous advertisement.

Just published from the press,  
Three shillings price, the world to bless,  
A bouncing answer, sharp as nitre,  
To every Anabaptist whar;

Which Charley proves the word baptizing  
Doth not mean dipping but rantizing."

It seems a pity that even controversy on religion should ever be treated with levity. But, some cases are of such a character, that no course seems left but to apply Solomon's proverb; "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." I have often heard it advanced, in dispute on this subject, that John could not have immersed in Jordan, for there was not water enough for this purpose! What a bold and reckless man must he be who could stake his credit on such a falsehood, with the Bible in his hand! When Joshua led Israel to the banks of this river, it was necessary to work a miracle to secure them a passage to the other side. When Naaman was cleansed of his leprosy he had to dip seven times in Jordan. And yet it was not deep enough for John to dip persons in when baptized!

In like manner it has often been said, that there was not water enough in Jerusalem to immerse three thousand on the day of pentecost! There was a brazen sea and many baths in the Temple, as well as hundreds of public and private, within that city. Besides all these, there was at least the pool of Bethesda, and the pool of Bethesda. Either baptizing pools contained water enough to christen a million. Now when men, aye, and descend to their cause, and ministers of religion, can be so trifled with as these to sustain them? or do they have any hope of convincing a serious argument deserve to be met by as I have given a speedy other than such as it has been asserted of?

It has been asserted, that in infant baptism, that infants have no report of infant should be baptized. This, and therefore to support the infant cause, has been got up as too absurd for the present to expound. D'Anvers and Tombs, two Baptists of the seventeenth century, had to combat the most ridiculous assertion. They give the most amusing account of the way in which this idea was explained. They say, "infants have faith of the sacrament. This was the notion of the ancients. The Catholics say, that the faith of the church; the Lutherans say, they have a proper faith, and so baptize all, whether the parents be good or bad. Besides, according to D'Anvers's account, they have

an imputed faith, a justifying, seminal, dogmatical, physical, meta-physical faith, &c." About these fancies, we may say with Bishop Taylor, "whether infants have faith or no, is a question to be disputed by persons that care not how much they say, and how little they prove!"

A Papias, in London, going to a dispute about infant baptism, told his friend he was going to hear a miracle, viz.: infant baptism, to be proved by the holy scriptures."

But of all the extravagant notions which the fruitful imagination of man ever produced, none will exceed that of an old African bishop of the third century, in support of infant baptism. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, issued an order to the priests under his jurisdiction, to baptize children, for it was newly discovered, that baptism was essential to salvation. One Fadus, a priest, wrote to Cyprian, to inquire "at what age he must baptize children?" for it seems he could not determine the question from his Bible. The bishop replied after this fashion, "when Elijah raised from death the child of the woman of Zarephath, he stretched himself upon it, and put his mouth upon the child's mouth, and his hands upon the child's hands, &c., therefore, as a child is equal to a man, it ought to be baptized at any age."

But the practice of infant baptism is daily involving its friends in inconsistencies. For instance, they baptize their children because they are holy and in the covenant of grace, yet, afterward, preach that they must be converted and born again, and in case of unbelief, reject them as reprobates! How strange; how absurd, to hold up these contradictory doctrines! Persons interested in the everlasting covenant, a covenant which insures their eternal salvation, and they themselves holy because their fathers were sanctified by their mothers, and yet these sanctified, covenant children, in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and going to perdition!

Let us cast off these self-contradictions, and be thankful that, according to an inspired authority, "we have a more sure word of prophecy, unto which we do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts."

D. NETTLE.

Shutesbury, Mass. Nov. 26, 1856.  
MR. EDITOR.—My promise (that of occasionally devoting an hour "to enrich or impoverish" the columns of the Visitor) as yet, remains unfulfilled. Circumstances over which I had no control, together with my pastoral duties have claimed all my time and attention. "Better late than never"—and especially as relates to unfulfilled promises. As to "enriching" the columns of your excellent paper with my unpolished pen, is quite out of the question, or at least, remains a mere matter of experiment on the one hand, and of criticism on the other.

"Country cousins!" who does not consider them boring unwelcome visitors? not so however to self and better half is our "Visitor" from over the water. Among our papers none finds a more ready welcome than the St. John's "Christian Visitor."

I learn through its columns that the Convention have concluded to send a missionary to Australia. A most praiseworthy step and one which must have the confidence and Christian sympathy of the churches of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. May the great head of the Church smile upon the effort, thus made to extend his kingdom.

Well, our Presidential Election is over—some doubtless you are aware. Never, since the recognition of the independence of these United States, has there been an election claiming so deep a heart-feeling of freedom—of Northern—of Christian men, as the Election just past. The issues and issues of old parties were forgotten. Democracy and Whiggery and all other dominant parties of the Old School of politics were forgotten, and the great issues of the present campaign—the principles to be maintained or combated were, "Slavery or freedom, Southern Oligarchy—or Northern Freedom."

The Republican party—Anti-Slavery extension—were most sanguine of success. They were determined to the right, the justice of their cause and principles they advocated, for which they were ready to stand at the ballot-box. They trusted to the victory of Christian men—northern freemen, and the north have those calling who vote for freedom—yes, Christians and defunct Democratic ticket. So blinded were the men to party and sect

some vital issue or principle advocated by their party—sooner than forsake the venerable name of their party, they will continue to be its willing vassal. The old Democratic party were composed of our best, most conscientious and freedom-loving men, but the present administration with Franklin Pierce its Executive, having been elected by the Democratic vote of the country, that party back him up in his despotic course with the people of Kansas. He having acted so nobly the part of the friend of the South they, both Whig and Democrat claim to be one with his (Democratic) party. Thus the whole South have merged into this one party, and under the democratic flag marched on to battle. Everything but the mere name—every principle of true democracy having been expunged from their platform.

Well, the South by Northern votes have gained a victory, but, such a one in my humble opinion as will in the end astound them. It is well that God reigns, that he worketh and no man can hinder.

A few years since—only last year, there were comparatively few pulpits in our Massachusetts in which a minister dare animadvert on the "peculiar institution" of our country; "politics"—"politics"—"priestcraft" would at once be the cry from the people. "Let the South alone, their rights must, and shall be respected." "Slavery is an evil, entailed, it cannot now be got rid of—time will work things right, and slavery will die a natural death." Such was the language of the Conservative Northern Christians, and that Minister who dare denounce Southern slavery from a Northern pulpit would have it hurled in his face "you must not preach political sermons—you are agitating a subject you cannot better—but adding brands to the fire of Abolitionism, and the end must be a rupture—a dissevering of the Union; and that result surely would be worse to us as a people—to the world, who look upon this republic as an experiment—and to the slave himself. Now there is truth, much truth, in such fears; yet what are these considerations in the face of the real principle involved? "Slavery die out!" by what mathematical calculation, or philosophic exercise such a conclusion can be arrived at, none as yet, I believe have informed us. The base assertion of conservatism is, "let it alone, don't agitate the subject, do not chafe and fret our Southern brethren into acts of disloyalty to the Union;—and the institution of slavery will eventually die out." Northern men heard this cry so long and so oft, with Daniel Webster as its leading trumpeter, that they with him, doubtless became honestly convinced that the only safety for a perpetual union was in ceasing to agitate or countenance agitation of the already vexed question of slavery. Hence, the course of the majority of Northerners in discountenancing Abolitionists. Not that the north were in favor of slavery, but while looking upon it as an evil, their patriotism and love of the Union outweighed every other consideration, every other principle involved. Believing, as they did, and as a minority now do, that the union would be dissolved if the north continued to irritate the South by agitating the subject of slavery—and with a dissolution would come a civil war, such as Christian men dare not be instrumental in bringing about—which they were convinced would be laid to their charge by high heaven, it necessary to agitation and ultimate disunion.

While Northern Christians are, by no means excusable for the neutral and inactive part they have manifested on the subject of American slavery, they claim to some extent the charity of the world for the fear which overawed and unmanned them to act as freemen of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is a law of man's nature, that, in proportion as he trifles with a besetting sin—though heinous at first—will he cease to look upon the act as sin—not only so, but so perverted does his judgment become that the act becomes a necessary—yea justifiable one.

So with this question of slavery—and our Northern and Southern Christians. Slavery upon all hands was admitted an evil—it took the phase of a necessary evil, and eventually a justifiable evil; because disunion, and a civil war would be a greater. Our churches, our freedom loving men were asleep over this matter, while the South have been strengthening and widening her bounds. Stealthily she has been acquiring and foisting under various new territory—new States; striving to have the great majority represented in Congress, and to perpetuate slavery to the latest ages. They aim to monopolize all the offices in the gift of the Government, to offi-

cer our army and navy, and thus secure, not only the power, but the sympathy of all in authority and power. One new state—through their intrigue—after another have been added. The unholy war with Mexico was the work of a southern oligarchy consequent upon the acquisition of Texas, and now the eyes of the North have been opened to the gigantic agis of the South, which is fast spreading over this land. The voice of Senator Toombs, declaring that he would ere long call the roll of his slaves under Bunker Hill Monument, only called forth the laugh of derision.

But God interposes to open the eyes of the North. Her chosen Senator, her idolized and classic Sumner, must be the victim. For the utterance of those manly and heaven inspired principles of truth, of righteousness, of freedom, which fell from his lips in the Halls of Congress, he, like a brute is stricken down by the South, yes by the whole South, for they have acknowledged the deed as theirs. Oh! now like the distant boom of the minute gun from the sea—or the surge of the rolling waves in the distance, is heard the deep, down-hearted feeling of Northern freemen. The scales are falling from their eyes, the spirit of the patriarch fathers begins to kindle, and one long loud anathema goes up from millions of freemen swearing eternal vengeance against slavery, now and forever.

Well, the result has been that Fremont the pride of his party, of the good and the true, has had conferred on him an honor that none, save George Washington, ever won, that of a vote of the whole New England States for President of the United States.

But, God in his wise providence, has seen fit to give victory to the South. Well, my firm convictions are that their victory will but help on the cause of freedom.

Is it not often the case that the Almighty permits the worst features of an evil to be seen and felt before that evil can be realized in all its deformity, before its heinousness is made so palpably plain that men will see and act? The reaction then becomes a thousand fold more intense from indifference and inaction, the dormant energies of the mind become active and vigorous; so in the instance of American Slavery, a sleepy, half-sympathising, indifferent, Dollar-seeking and speculative people have their eyes opened, their better natures called into action by a stricken Sumner,—then a bleeding Kansas. But yet the enormity of this sin must be held out in brighter perspective, its worst features made still more conspicuous, and its blighting and withering influence more fully felt, and felt too by the north ere its death knell will peal forth from the million hearts of freemen of New England—of the whole country. I say then that the present Southern victory is a victory for freedom. Am I right? time will tell!

Buchanan is of course sold to the South, his antecedents are known and understood, he will carry out to the letter so far as he can, Southern principles. He is committed to "filibuster" Cuba into the Union; (if Spain will not sell the Island), perhaps Nicaragua next, of course the object being the acquisition (not so much territory as) of more Slave States.

The course of this administration will be to develop the worst features of Slavery. Freemen will be fully aroused, and in 1860 John Charles Fremont as President, and a Republican majority in Congress, will humble the arrogance of the Southern oligarchy, and execute as traitors every Southern leader who dare strike for disunion.

NETTLES.

For the Christian Visitor.

## Prohibition & Anti-Prohibition.

NO. III.

MR. EDITOR.—In Mr. Tupper's third letter he again misrepresents me, when he asserts that I advocate "the admission of all kinds of alcoholic drinks free of duty." If the reader will refer to my pamphlet, he will find (p. 10), that I merely intimated an opinion, that in the course of time, revenue would be raised in all enlightened countries by direct taxation—and that then, as a matter of course, every commodity, wine not excepted, would be admitted free of duty; and as a remedy for the sale of "deleterious compounds," I proposed that every person should be allowed to sell wine, &c. without reserve—that is, without reserve in regard to persons authorized to sell. I did not mean, and my words will not bear the construction, that the seller should be allowed to sell to every person without reserve, as that would be conceding the right to sell to a drunkard, a child, or a maniac.

In the very same sentence, I also proposed the imposition of very heavy penalties on

those who kept disorderly houses, &c., and this should apply also to sales of alcoholic drinks to such persons as are known to seriously injure themselves by their improper use. The same remark will apply to gunpowder, and many other articles. I ask any impartial reader, who will compare the passage in my pamphlet, with Mr. Tupper's remarks on it, whether he or myself is most deserving of the charge of "misrepresentation."

I hope indeed to be pardoned for not discerning the fitness of some of the Rev. gentleman's far fetched "illustrations," as he calls them; but I never attempted to offer any excuse for "drunkenness;" on the contrary, I have conceded "distinctly" not only its "principle," but in plain language, "the propriety of coercion" being employed against this and any other crime; but I can not admit the "propriety of coercion and a prohibitory enactment" to punish sober and industrious men for the crimes of those of a contrary character. Though, perhaps, in Mr. Tupper's opinion, no man can be sober and industrious but the prohibitionists.

I presume it will not be difficult to find any place in Nova Scotia where the people have not "ready access to intoxicating drinks," and a prohibitory law has never been in force in that province; yet I unhesitatingly assert that drunkenness is not "now alarmingly on the increase" throughout the Province generally. I say that whatever may be Mr. T's opinion as to its spreading in some particular districts, it is a well known fact, well known and "apparent to all unprejudiced minds"—to all who take the trouble to observe carefully, impartially, that drunkenness is on the decrease, and that the moral habits of the people of these Provinces have been greatly improved within the last 20 years.

It is a well known fact that laudable efforts have been made within that period to check the vice of intemperance; and it is equally well known that such efforts are founded on true Christian principle, viz. the principle of Love, and are conducted, in accordance with the Word of God, (not founded on intolerance and bigotry, and carried on by prohibition and civil penalties,) have not been "generally unavailing;" but have been eminently "successful."

I must ask Mr. Tupper to point out one passage in all my letters denying that numerous instances would be found of families being reduced from affluence to poverty by intoxication, or the right or expediency of passing laws for the prevention of drunkenness and the other evils Mr. T. refers to. Where does he collect that I propose to wait "till the mass of the people become insatiable drinkers of spirituous liquors" before any legislative reform be attempted? It is the immoderate use of stimulants that leads to these evils; and I am as much opposed to such immoderate use as he is. Why then does Mr. Tupper, throughout all his letters, most unfairly use language calculated to induce those who are unacquainted with my sentiments, that I am advocating principles which, he must know I repudiate as strongly as he can do?

It may suit the Rev. Gentleman's argument to attribute the crimes to drunkenness (and no doubt many do follow in its train) and all pauperism to intemperance. I shall not follow him in this argument, because I care not how strong he points to the evils of that abuse of what is in itself harmless, which I repudiate as strongly as any one. At the same time there is great deal of exaggeration, a great deal of false coloring, and allow me to say, a great deal of nonsense in the calculations of the prohibitionists as to the revenue.

It seems that the Rev. Gentleman when unable to meet my argument fairly, catches at words. Flour is in some respects different from other articles, inasmuch as bread, the staff of life, is the material article of support, but let him take any one of the other articles enumerated by me, and his "illustration" instead of benefiting him will demonstrate the truth of my argument. For instance, if the liquor law were in force, a person who sold a single glass of ale to a man in need of refreshment would be subject to fine and imprisonment. Let us then put tea in juxtaposition with ale, and Mr. T's "illustration" would read thus—"Let it be supposed then for illustration, that of two men each sends abroad ten pounds, the one for tea, the other for ale, wholly for home consumption." "A child can easily see" that the man who purchases the ale would get the most real nutriment.

I never argued directly or indirectly "that the more of a drunkard's drink is used in these Provinces the better for their interest"—nor did I ever intimate that "ruinous consequences" would follow if this branch of the revenue were completely cut off; but while the revenue continues to be raised by indirect taxation, I consider it impolitic in the highest degree, to pass a law taxing heavily the necessaries of life, and at the same time holding out inducements sufficient (as has been found by experience) to fill the country with intoxicating drinks of the very worst description.

Mr. Tupper's "political economy" does not accord with the sentiment expressed in the Resolution referred to; for the Prohibitory Law provides for "the sale of ardent spirits"—Besides, those "so-called Temperance Societies" have a political economy, as they have a religious faith of their own. It is to be regretted that the wealthy man referred to by Mr. Tupper had, on little self-