

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

Spiritualism.

BY N. N.

Continued.

The proceeding then assumed a different nature and the stout lady, who still kept the pre-eminence, favoured us with reading the most recent communications from the SPIRIT WORLD.

She prefaced the reading by stating that she was not a poet, had never written a line, and did not know how to; but that what she would read had been written through her and was excellent poetry, a statement whose truth her friends could decide upon for themselves.

She also proceeded to state that she was not a common medium. She seldom held ordinary intercourse with the spirit world for the sake of others, although constantly doing so for herself. Her chief employment was to explain the laws of God, to which task she had been directed, and prepared by direct inspiration from a band of the choicest intellects in the spirit world. They had told her what to do, and she had given herself up to them. For two years she had devoted herself to her work so assiduously she had never crossed the threshold of her chamber. The result was that she had explained a very large portion of the Bible which book she confessed to her eyes as though seeking for some one. Her arms were closed, the muscles of her face rigid, she seemed in the abnormal state called Somnambulism. There was something exciting in the sight, and perhaps fearful also, for we saw the ladies crowding away from her, each one dreading to be the one after whom the medium searched. The tall lady felt all around; we discreetly followed the example of the others and retired to the back ground; the tall lady moved on, and at length to our dismay, when she reached the spot where we had stood previous to moving, she exclaimed in a wailing tone—"The one I sought has moved! Then she came directly towards us. We were standing in the front row of a crowd of people who had fled from the grasp of the "Somnambulist." We heard murmurs around us—addressed to us. Our heart told us that we were her prey. "She's after you! she's after you!" they said. We could not move away, we looked all around, but there was no escape—at last we made a quick movement forward with the intention of sliding by the tall lady and thus eluding her, for there was something terrible to us in being grasped by a possessed one before all the company. We sprang forward,—but alas! at the very moment when we thought that we were safe, the tall lady turned suddenly, struck her hand with a quick and certain movement on our arm, and cried out:

"Ah! ha! I've got him! This is He!—Come!"

And with a grasp that could not be escaped, she led us up to the head of the room. Then turning us around and placing one hand on the top of our head she was fairly in the midst of a long communication before we had recovered from our agitation. Around us we saw the crowds of visitors looking at us with awe and admiration, whispering that we were a "chosen vessel," and considering us evidently the objects of extraordinary honor in thus being singled out by supernatural means for a spiritual message. As near as we can recollect from the confused memories of that particular period, the tall lady spoke thus: her manner being very solemn, her tone high and spiritual, her face overspread with a glow of enthusiasm:

"Friend! go not hence in lightness! Thou camest here to look—perchance to scoff! but stay—I have a message for thee from thy FATHER, to which thou wilt do well to listen. Thou camest here—but thou wert led by unseen influences! It was to guide thee to Eternal Truth that thou wert led among us. Friend, thy heart—thy longings—hopes—and struggles! I know that thou hast tried the world and found it wanting. Say—has thy soul as yet been led to Him who only can direct, to Him, the blessed, holy, loving FATHER? Say, in thy heart hast thou that heavenly flame, that love, which only, only can guide thee up to Him? Hast thou that flame? Thou hast! and here I tell thee how to make it brighter! Look well around thee here! This here, to-day, Thy Father calls thee! He has led thee here, and here his spirits hold communion with his saints! He calls thee now! Friend! let thy heart be softened to impressions, enclose it not in prejudice. Tear off the garb of pride and scorn which may surround it. Examine well and let the truth direct thee."

"Friend!"—and then the lady went on to give general advice with regard to the manner in which we should live. It was not however for we had read the original of her words in the Bible. In the strain described above she continued for almost half an hour, and then after informing us that the one who spoke to us had never known us in the flesh, but was a spirit who felt a general interest in us, we were released and the communication ended.

It ended for but a moment however, almost immediately the tall lady was again under the influence. This time she grew ecstatic, she looked up, she stretched out her arms, she clasped her hands, she seemed to see a vision of Heaven opened, and burst into a rapturous description of "the flood of glory

which was hursting in upon her soul!" A solemn silence surrounded her as she spoke and her words had a potent effect on the other mediums. As she ended her vision, others began to fall into trances, and soon there were several talking together all in confusion. Our attention was drawn to the lady of the house who was describing the present state of affairs in Italy by "clairvoyance." But I was again attracted by a crowd at the farther corner of the room. Hurrying over there we saw a ring formed by the indefatigable tall lady, who to our amazement had grasped our French friend and was exhorted him as she had exhorted us. Her words however were this time of a mystic nature, and abounded in allusions to interviews in the past. It purported to come from a departed friend who had become his guardian angel.

To be Concluded.

For the Christian Visitor:
Prohibition and Anti-Prohibition.
[No. 3.]

MR. EDITOR:—Those who attentively examine and compare Mr. Bent's third letter, (pamphlet, p. 26.) in which he endeavors to vindicate the liquor traffic on the ground of the Revenue derived from it, with my reply, (C. V. July 16th.) and his rejoinder, (Dec. 3d.) will readily perceive, that he now feels himself compelled withal, to abandon this plea. Unwilling, however, to acknowledge this distinctly, he attempts to qualify the language which he formerly used; and occupies a great proportion of his present third letter with unfounded complaints of misrepresentation.

But, desirous as he evidently appears to do it, he cannot recall his own words, it may be seen by comparison, I have quoted them correctly, taken them in their usual and obvious sense, and fairly deduced natural inferences from them.

In the expression of an opinion, (p. 10.) that in all enlightened countries every commodity, with rare exceptions, would be admitted free of duty, the use of the word "enlightened" implies approval; and "every commodity" includes "all kinds of alcoholic drinks." This view is confirmed by his "proposing," in exact accordance with it, "that every person should be allowed to sell wines, or other liquors, without reserve." I did not construe words "without reserve" as purporting that the seller should be allowed to sell to every person; but immediately subjoined the remainder of his sentence, (C. V. July 2nd) "but very heavy penalties be imposed upon such as kept disorderly houses, or sold poison and called it wine, gin, brandy, &c., as is too often the case among tavern keepers under the present system." In this case, therefore, as in all others, his charge of "misrepresentation" is obviously groundless.

The reader will observe, however, that Mr. B. has here expressed disapproval of "the present system," or, as he afterwards calls it, "the old license system." This he might well do; but has he proposed a better? He does not attempt to meet my insuperable objections against his scheme of the general importation and sale of intoxicating drinks, without either duty or charge for license. So manifestly inconsistent is this with his plea for the liquor traffic on the ground of its aiding the revenue, that he now seems disposed to ignore it, and to return to the "old license system," bad as he has acknowledged it to be.

Mr. B. says, (p. 27.) that if the inhabitants of each of these Provinces were little better than a nation of drunkards, neglecting their business, spending their money, destroying their health and their reason, and starving their families, no sacrifice of revenue, nor privation of comfort to the well-disposed few, no enactment on the part of government, would be thought too great or too stringent to effect a reform." Is not this a distinct admission, that, under the circumstances supposed, a prohibitory liquor law would be proper. The principle, then, is conceded by Mr. Bent. As he now proposes such an enactment, is it not a natural and fair inference, that, according to his view, we must wait before such a law be enacted, "till the mass of the people become insatiable drinkers of spirituous liquors?" It must be obvious to all, as is remarked in effect, that when such a law would become requisite in his estimation, it would be impossible to obtain it, or, if it were obtained, to have it enforced.

Mr. B. undeniably advocated the legalizing of the traffic in the drunkard's drink, (p. 28.) in order that the revenue might be thereby augmented. While he affirmed, "the deficiency of the revenue must be made up," he also maintained that this could be consistently done by any other means. As he deems it necessary for the interests of the Province that its revenue should be increased in this way, and as this increase will be in proportion to the quantity of intoxicating liquors used, on which duty is paid, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that, according to his view, "the more of the drunkard's drink is used in these Provinces, the better it is for their interests."

As he now seems disposed to repudiate this view, he evidently ought to adopt its opposite, namely: the more of the drunkard's drink is used in these Provinces, the worse it is, and the less the better for their interests. That this view which sustains the prohibitory principle is correct, I have fully shown; and Mr. B. declines attempting to meet the decisive proof adduced.

That the scheme of endeavoring to secure a present temporary increase of revenue, by

legalizing, and consequently encouraging the liquor traffic, is exceedingly unwise policy, and highly detrimental to the interests of the state, has been abundantly demonstrated by the learned Dr. Lees. A few extracts from his able work must suffice. In the report on drunkenness—the product of the traffic—published by the Parliament of Great Britain, in 1834, under the head of "CONSEQUENCES TO THE NATIONAL WELFARE," are specified; "The destruction of grain, given by a bountiful Providence for the food of man, which is converted by distillation into a poison," by which there is "an immense amount of human food destroyed." "The loss of productive labor, by which the wealth of the country is retarded or suppressed, to the extent of one million out of every six that is produced." "Extensive loss of property by sea, from shipwrecks, foundering, and fires, clearly traceable to drunkenness." "Increase of pauperism in its most fearful shape." "The spread of crime, by which the goals and prisons are filled with inmates," and "the retardation of all improvement." Apart from the immense sums expended in the purchase of liquors, the Committee, after extensive and thorough investigation, arrive at the conclusion, "That the mere pecuniary loss to the nation, from the several causes already enumerated, may be fairly estimated at little less than fifty millions of pounds sterling per annum."

Our author cites from Dr. Oliver Goldsmith, who was an extensive and observant traveller, the following statement:—"In all the towns and countries I have been, I never saw a city or village yet whose miseries were not in proportion to the number of its public houses." The Rev. Dr. Thomas Chalmers, author of Civic Economy, and thoroughly acquainted with the subject, says, "The public house is most deleterious, and by far the most abundant source of pauperism."

Dr. Lees states, that in 1783, "The king of Sweden, Gustavus, in order to increase the revenue, not merely permitted that distillation which has since so deeply injured a noble people, but encouraged the establishment of houses for its sale. This revenue was augmented, but his outgoings likewise; for every where pauperism, disease, and crime increased so fast, that he was obliged to annul his measures, and level penalties against the fruit of his mistake."

The Doctor shews, that "In the year of Father Matthew's greatest Temperance triumphs in Ireland, while the revenue from whiskey was vastly reduced, the total revenue had increased eighty thousand pounds above its average." "In reference to the prohibition of distillation in 1796, in Ireland, an account of the scarcity of grain, he produces the testimony of Mr. Colquhoun, "That the poor were apparently more comfortable, paid their rents more regularly, and were better fed than at any period for some years before."

In accordance with this testimony, Dr. Lees, from a careful inspection of authentic documents relative to the same country, arrives fairly at the conclusion, "that a year of scarcity, with prohibition, is better than a year of plenty without it." (There a Prohibitory Liquor Law was enforced, with manifestly good effects.)

From the "Edinburgh Review" he quotes:—"The Liquor traffic impairs the national resources—it indirectly causes three-fourths of the taxation required by pauperism, and criminal prosecutions and prison expenses."

After attentive examination, with extensive means of accurate information on the subject, this able and cautious writer estimates, that, "supposing a Maine Law removed only three fourths of the present drinking system," it would effect an annual saving to England of "one hundred millions of pounds." (See "Argument for Legislative Prohibition," pp. 19, 20, 36, 108, 112, 113, 138, 139, 151, 155.)

Is it, then, wise legislation to encourage a traffic which is so manifestly ruinous, not only to the morals and general welfare of the people, but also to the financial interests of the state.

To serious people that cause must present an unfavorable aspect, which seems to require its abettor to represent it as "making intoxicating drinks," encouraging the present demoralizing traffic in them, and by "This decree" rendering it "impossible" to prevent the putting of them in the way of man for a "temptation." This view would lead to the sanctioning of gambling-houses and brothels, as well as licensed taverns, in order to aid in accomplishing the Divine purposes by presenting "temptations" to men "in a state of probation."

But God's desires are not the rule of man's conduct. They neither interfere with the freedom of his actions, nor diminish his responsibility. They furnish no excuse either for wrong doing, or for the neglect of efforts to do good. (See Deut. xxix. 29. Acts ii. 23. James i. 13-15. iv. 17.)

We cannot, indeed, wholly prevent the rise and extension of contagious and infectious diseases. But ought we, therefore, to promote the spread of them? Is it not obviously our duty to do all in our power to prevent it? The direction to pray for deliverance from "temptation," because "the flesh is weak," (Matt. vi. 13; xxvi. 41.) plainly implies, that we ought to aid in preserving others from it. Not only do the inspired writers strongly condemn the "putting of a stumbling in the way" (Lev. xx. 14; Rom. xiv. 13; 1 Cor. viii. 9; Numbers xxv. 1, 2, 9; xxxi. 16; Rev. ii. 14-20.) But our Lord has denounced a most fearful doom on any per-

son that "offends," that is, ensnares or drags into sin, one of His "little ones" or disciples. (Mark ix. 42-45.)

I never intimated that a drunkard might plead insatiable inclinations . . . before the judgment seat." But will the man who, "for filthy lucre," "giveth his neighbour drink, putteth his bottle to him, and maketh him drunken," and thus lays a fatal stumbling block before him, and craves the possession of an inclination, "escape the judgment of God?" (Hab. ii. 15; 2 Peter ii. 13, 14, 15, 17, 18; Rom. ii. 3.)

With obvious propriety the British law, which prohibits the coining of money, prohibits also the fabrication and sale of dies for coining. Why is this done? For the prudent and benign purpose of removing, or withholding the facility and the temptation which would be presented by the possession of the implements or means. Since drunkenness is at least nominally prohibited, why should not the Liquor traffic, which, as Mr. B. distinctly admits, presents a temptation to drunkenness, be removed, or prohibited, by a similar prudent and beneficent law?

Unhallowed influences have, indeed, effected the repeal of this law in New Brunswick, before opportunity was afforded to test its value. I am persuaded, however, that the time is coming when the mass of the people will see that an error has been committed; and, as has been done in Maine, where the worth of the law was known, will elect, with overwhelming majorities, Legislators who will restore to them this inestimable boon.

Mr. B. may as well say no more about "orchards" and gun-powder," until he is prepared to maintain, that in these Provinces they do more harm than good; or else, that alcoholic drinks do more good than harm. To intelligent and unprejudiced minds, the employment of such arguments, with that drawn from the Divine decrees, cannot fail to convince, that the cause which requires them must be desperate.

Yours in Gospel bonds,
C. TUPPER.

Aylesford, Dec. 31, 1856.

corded—the instances amounting to four—not a single infant was to be found. It is possible, it is almost absurdly improbable.

The supposed positive argument against infant baptism founded on the requirements and acts of the converts then stands by itself—that is, as far as the baptismal records are concerned. In addition to the proofs already advanced against this argument, we produce the following one, which dissipates it, as well as the argument founded on the commission, to the winds. The greater part of the book of Deuteronomy, containing the occurrences to be believed, the command to be obeyed, the duties to be performed, the covenant to Israel—to the "little ones" as well as to the adults. That book commences with these words—"These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel;" and in the 29th chap., 9th,—13th verses, it is written, "Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them that ye may prosper in all that ye do; ye stand this day, all of you before the Lord your God—your Captains of your tribes, your Elders and your officers, with all the men of Israel, YOUR LITTLE ONES, your wives, with the stranger that is within thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood to the drawer of thy water; that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into it, this day, the Lord thy God, and into it, this day, that he may establish thee for a people unto himself, that he may be unto thee a God." Now here are the little ones—a term which surely comprehends even the infants—for all Israel was there, the mothers and the servants were there, and it cannot be argued that the infants were left in the tents without any one to care for them, and they with their fathers and mothers enter into the covenant and oath, and God takes them equally with their parents, as his children, but, according to the Visitor's reasoning, this is absurd and impossible. They are equally, of themselves, incapable of entering into a covenant, or doing anything commanded to the whole congregation of Israel, as they are to believe or repent, or to continue in Apostolic doctrine, or to do any other duty which an adult can. What a pity the Visitor was not in existence in those days to instruct Moses. We can fancy the Visitor at the Prophet's elbow volunteering his advice, and uttering his rationalism in the terms of his article of last week. O! Moses, what a wrod you say, "Can little babies perform these functions of spiritual life? Can they enter into the covenant of the Lord, and the oath of the Lord? How absurd Moses." Yet apply the Visitor's argument in regard to the commission and its fulfillment, and it will condemn Moses, and the Spirit by whom he spoke. Might not Moses reply, "Friend or brother Visitor, the God who sent me to Israel as a prophet, deals with mankind in families. He binds himself to be a God, not only to the faithful but to their seed, even to their little ones, and though they are not yet capable of rational contract, yet it is his will that they be personally present, and contracted for to Him. He includes them in the oath, he binds them in his covenant, and he sets upon their person the seal of the faith.

And what would the Visitor retort? Would it be in the form of a sneer at the little babies? As to what the Visitor says regarding "all flesh," comprehending Atheists, Infidels, Blasphemers, &c., we have just to say that when God pours out his spirit on such characters, as we find he does upon some children, we can see no reason why they should not be baptized. Our argument was not that all infants should be baptized, any more than that all Atheists or blasphemers should be baptized, but only such of all classes as we have reason to think the Spirit of God may have acted upon, and we have reason to believe that God does in most, if not all, cases pour out his Spirit upon those children who are dedicated to him in the spirit of prayerful reliance on his promise, and if many children who have been presented in baptism do not receive the spirit, we believe it is just for the same reason that many Baptist adults do not receive it—namely, the want of genuine faith. It is not because God fails in his promise, but because man fails to take hold of it.

The Visitor says that the promise is limited to all old enough to partake of the Holy Ghost. Would he be so kind as to tell us how old that is? The Spirit of God tells that a child newly born is capable of it, but as we must deny God's teachings to receive the Visitor's instruction, we hope he will give us his date.

But then he says in we are to prove that the child had the Spirit ere we baptize it.—We fear this would puzzle the Visitor in the case of his adults. Let him not require of us what he could not do himself in the case of his adults.

As to the child whom Jesus set in the midst and took in his arms, he said, according to Matthew, whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me, and whosoever shall receive one such little one which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea; and that there should be no playing with the word such, as if it only meant persons having the likeness of little children who were to be received, Luke says, "whosoever receiveth this child in my name, receiveth me, and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." Now what is it to receive a little child in Christ's name. Is it not to receive it as a member of Christ's church, and if to receive it as a member of Christ's church, is it not to be received in the usual way. If not, then in some other way—we suppose according to the usage of the Baptist church—bringing it into the church to be baptized. Indeed the Baptists find the dilemma in which they are placed by refusing to receive children by baptism, yet must try to avoid the condemnation of Christ on all who refuse to receive them, and consequently, in some cases at least, bring them for laying on of hands and blessing. But we would remind our Baptist friends that their minister's blessing is not the same as Christ's blessing, and in order that Christ may bless them they should be presented to Christ. And as to the enquiry of the Visitor why Christ did not order them to be baptized, we have to reply, just for the same reason that he did not order to be baptized the man whose eyes he opened, or the demagogue, or the paralytic, or Lazarus, or any of the others upon whom he performed wonderful miracles, and when the Visitor tells us the why of the one case, we, perhaps, may give him the wherefore of the other. We would advise him not to ask questions which are sure to land him in dilemmas, out of which there is no hope of his escaping. It is mere waste of space, and only makes his argument ridiculous.

That the little one whom Jesus took as an ex-