

# The Christian Visitor.

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A FAMILY NEWS PAPER, DEVOTED TO RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE

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Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward Men.  
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## DEACON GRUM. A CHARCOAL SKETCH.

Deacon Grum is a truly pious man. It cannot be doubted. He loves God and is on his way to heaven. But temperance is a great thing. A shrewd observer once said, "It is temperance that makes a great man." It certainly makes some little ones, and, withal, some very queer ones. Deacon Grum is constitutionally gloomy and desponding. He was dipped in nature's bluest dye. And the tinge, as is apt to be the case passed to his religion. He has no bump of hope where it ought to be; it may certainly be found phrenology has a shred of truth in it, a deep expression. It is hard for him to hope, even as a Christian.

While the present is very dark for him, the future is still darker. All things, he fancies, are going to ruin. There was something of piety in days gone by. There was some residuum of it in his own earlier days. He believes in the revivals and the good men of twenty or thirty years ago. He especially refers to the times of Edwards and Brainerd, and the holy Baxter, times not colored by the atrabiliary hues of his own nature. But many a Jeremiaid does he pour forth over the worldliness and inefficiency of the modern church. He knows not what things will come to. He trembles as he thinks of posterity.

Deacon Grum is slow to enter into any measures for the advancement of religion. He sees difficulties that others do not see. He calculates nicely all the possibilities of evil. He sees all the wrong principles that may be involved. He is fearful about motives. He has his difficulties with all the possibilities suggested. They are too narrow, or they are too broad. They are too timid, or they are too bold. They are too slow, or more likely they are too fast. He is afraid of running before he is sent; of going before the Spirit, instead of following; of having too much human agency, and then, again, of having too little. Propose as you will, he shakes his head doubtfully. He is always in a position to say, if a plan does not succeed, "I told you so."

Deacon Grum never sees any token of good in the church to which he belongs. What others regard as a star of promise, is to him only a meteoric flash—a phosphoric gleam—or perhaps a pure fancy. If few attend meetings, that, of course, is bad—most unpromising. If many go, he does not think much of it. It may be a mere matter of form. He fears it is. It is the heart God wants. It is no great thing to go to meeting. If there is manifest feeling in church, he takes no encouragement from it. It may be only animal feeling. It is not that feeling, he is sure, that opens the windows of heaven—such as they had in the good old times. If he hears of conversions, he says, with a despairing look and a peculiar inflection, that he hopes they are sound ones—he hopes they will hold out. If he talks with the converts, they are not apt to satisfy him. They are not like those of the days of Nettleton.

It is in a time of declension that you hear from Deacon Grum. He talks in meeting then. He is eloquent then. He has a theme then, suited to his peculiar mood. He expatiates upon it, making his darkness shine; so that men listening to him begin to think all good persons hypocrites, and religion a phantom. But in time of revival, he is comparatively silent; that sunny, glad occasion seems not to suit his idiosyncrasy. He touches not the chords of his mournful lyre. Be patient with Deacon Grum. DO NOT WAIT FOR HIM. Go onward in the way of all duty. But deal gently with him. When weary of his lamentations, oburgations, and vaticinations, think of the "humor which his mother gave him." As I said, he is on his way to heaven. True, it has been conjectured that he will find something out of joint even there. Something in the foundation gates, key, note, &c., &c. But no! Grace will have purified him.—Beauty of Holiness.

## THE REV. HUGH STOWELL ON FEMALE FINERY.

The Rev. Canon Stowell, M.A., delivered at the Corn Exchange, Manchester, a short time since a lecture entitled "Christian Thoughts on the Arts of Exhibition." In the course of his remarks he made the following pertinent observations on the finery displayed by the ladies:—"And let my female friends forgive me if I say that a further accompaniment to that exhibition to which I must deprecate was the indulgence in dress, and the extravagant display of the love of ornament, that anything but added to their refinement and respectability, and called upon them the not very flattering attention—I have been told—of royal personages themselves. (Hear, hear.) It is true that it was an occasion when little more than common ornament and attention to personal adornment was allowable. I am not a cynic, nor am I going to blame where blame is not called for. I would allow a certain measure of latitude to female taste—I will not call it vanity—on such an occasion as that; but making every allowance that the broadest charity, and the most unyielding gallantry can make, I must say I think the perpetual change of dress and extravagance of ornament, and variety

and opulence of apparel reflected little credit on the sobriety and upon the proper economy of many of our Manchester ladies. (Applause.) There seemed to be a rivalry amongst them in dress which was anything but beautiful. And then they carried the fashion to such an extreme, that they outdid the fashion itself. (Laughter.) As for bonnets, they sometimes dwindled into bows—(loud laughter)—and as to under-garments they swelled into hogsheds. (Great laughter.) It will be well, in this time of depression, many of the fathers and husbands do not find the Christmas bill rather a melancholy sequel to Art Treasures Exhibition. It will be well if the mercers and the milliners, the jewellers and the confectioners, find their bills as promptly paid as they have been largely run up; and I do trust that those who have incurred those bills will remember that the tradesman at the approaching close of the year will be very hard run, and that trade with him will be very gloomy; and I hope, if they have incurred these debts thoughtlessly, they will not be so thoughtless as not to pay them promptly. (Hear, hear.) Far be it from me to throw out any indiscriminate or general censure on a sex whose advocate and champion I have felt every good man must be. (Applause.) There were many, very many, splendid exceptions; I would hope, indeed, that modesty and moderation were rather the rule, and that these extravagancies were the exceptions. But let me throw out a hint to my fair sisters—follow the example of your own beloved Queen, and you will not go wrong in your dress. (Rounds of applause.) I watched her narrowly as she stood on the dais, and her dress, while rich as it ought to be, was strikingly plain, and ornament of any kind I could hardly detect; and as for her bonnet, instead of one of those little bits of things stuck on the back of the head—(Laughter)—it reminded me of one of the good old coal-box shaped bonnets. (Applause and laughter.) I think the ladies of Manchester, ay, and the ladies of England, too, had a silent but eloquent reproof from their Queen, and I trust that they will lay it to heart. It will be far more noble to follow the example of their own modest matronly Queen than the example of a foreign potentate, who is not of royal birth, and is not distinguished, like our own Queen, for the matronliness of her appearance. (Applause.) But I leave the tender topic, on which I hope I have touched tenderly, and rather in playfulness than in severity, and sure I am that my Christian female friends before me will forgive me, for I do not think that the lecture I have been giving will belong to them."

## NO GETTING AWAY FROM PRAYERS.

A gentleman in our office a day or two since related an interesting incident which was substantially as follows:—In a town near Portland, some years since, an irreligious and profane young man became united in marriage to a young woman whose father was a devout and consistent Christian. The young couple either resided with or in the vicinity of the wife's father, so that the young man was frequently brought in contact with his father-in-law. This soon became disagreeable to him. The godly example, which was a continued reproof, the occasional word of exhortation and the prayers to which he was sometimes obliged to listen, excited in his heart such disgust, that he determined to leave the place. He proposed to his wife that they should remove to the eastern part of the State, assigning as one reason for the step, that he wished "to get away from her old orthodox father." To which the wife replied, "You may go away from him, but you can't get away from his prayers."

They left the place and settled in a town some distance eastward; but the wife's remark had made an ineffaceable impression on the husband's mind. He had indeed separated himself from the society of his father-in-law, but he felt that he could not get away from his prayers. He knew that those prayers were daily ascending to heaven for blessings upon him, and especially for his salvation. The thought haunted him for years. He could not get rid of it. At last, in connection with other influences, it was the means of bringing him to offer prayer for himself. He became a believer and has since died in the Christian hope.

In this little incident we are shown how small a thing is often made in the hands of the Spirit, the means of bringing a stout-hearted opposer of religion to the cross of Christ. It may also serve to remind those who avoid the society of Christian people, either from disgust at their religion, or from fear lest they shall hear something from them that will disturb their sinful complacency, that although they may escape from contact with such persons, they cannot get beyond the reach of their prayers.

It should also remind Christians of the importance, not only of offering prayer for their unconverted friends, but also of letting them understand that they are prayed for. It should teach us, too, that distance offers no bar to effectual intercession; it should not lessen the faith nor the frequency of our petitions. Though the object of our solicitude be removed from us by half the circuit of the globe, it is to the omnipresent Spirit whose blessing we would invoke upon him, as though he were at our right hand.

## THANK THE PREACHER!

How often are the feelings of ministers pained for want of a little thought and a little courtesy on the part of elders and church members. Through the absence or sickness of a pastor, at

stranger is asked to supply the pulpit that would otherwise be vacant. He goes, it may be, at the cost of no little self-denial; he preaches to the best of his ability; he prays with and for the congregation; he seeks to do them good; and, having invoked the blessing of God upon them, he descends the pulpit steps. There he stands whilst the audience pass out of the Church, and not one individual takes him by the hand to cheer him with one word of thanks. He is pained, not because he has done a great thing for them, and without a grateful recognition on their part—but, he is conscious of having sought to do them good; he feels the imperfection of his performance; and he craves an expression of sympathy and kindly feeling. In its absence he is pained. Will not elders especially think of this? It costs little to take the stranger by the hand and thank him for this labour of love. You need not praise his sermon—it may have been a poor one—but you can acknowledge gratefully the effort on his part to serve you and the church. Nor should the members of the church overlook it. They need not fear that the minister will be offended by a kindly salutation, though they have no personal acquaintance with him. Give him a kindly greeting. Let him feel that you thank him for his services. And, one thing more, invite him to your house for rest and refreshment. It will often be the case that the invitation will be most acceptable. "Given to hospitality," is a mark of the child of God. It is related of a clergyman who had travelled some distance to preach to a strange congregation, that, at the conclusion of the morning service, he waited for some one to invite him to dinner. One by one, however, the congregation departed without noticing him. Finally, when nearly all had gone, he walked up to an elderly gentleman, and gravely said, "Will you go home and dine with me to-day, brother?" "Where do you live?" "About twenty miles away, sir." "No," said the man, colouring,—"but you must go with me." Do not let this happen in your church.—American Presbyterian.

## FAMILY PRAYER—ANECDOTE OF A GOOD WIFE.

It is no uncommon thing for Christian people, under the pressure of worldly business, to neglect family prayer. The Christian Herald states that many years ago, when the Country about Cincinnati was new, a Christian farmer who had employed a number of hands to aid him in clearing his lands, took it into his head that he would not have family prayer in the morning, because the time he would spend on so many hands was more, he thought, than he could afford to lose. He had made up his mind to get rich in haste, and determined that religion should bend to business. When he informed his pious wife of his purpose, she expostulated with him, but in vain. Morning came, and the workmen were hurried to breakfast, and hurried out to work without a breath of prayer.

The next morning the farmer and his men went out, as usual, to their work. The sun began to climb up the sky, but no breakfast horn was heard. They grew angry, and looked anxiously toward the house; they listened, but still the expected summons did not come. After waiting an hour or two beyond the usual time, they went to the house. No table was set, no coffee was boiling on the fire, no food was cooking over or before it. The good wife was knitting quietly with the big Bible open on her lap.

"What does this mean?" cried the husband; "why is not our breakfast ready?" "I thought you were in such a hurry about your work that you would not have time to eat it." "Have time to eat it! Do you think we can live without eating?" "You can live without eating as well as without praying. The spirit needs the bread of heaven as much as the body needs the bread of earth."

"Well, well," said the farmer, "get us some breakfast, and we will have prayers again every morning; no matter how busy we are, or how many workmen I have."

She got the breakfast, and he kept his word. The lesson was a good one, and was never forgotten.

## SUNSHINE AND CLOUD.

Without any colouring or romance, of any exaggeration of fancy, it is so. Some real lives do—for some certain days or years—actually anticipate the happiness of Heaven. and, I believe, if such perfect happiness is once felt by good people (to the wicked it never comes), its sweet effect is never wholly lost. Whatever trials follow whatever pains of sickness or shades of death, the glory precedent still shines through, cheering the keen anguish, and tinging the deep cloud. I will go farther. I do believe there are some human beings so born, so reared, so guided from a soft cradle to a calm and late grave, that no excessive suffering penetrates their lot, and no tempestuous blackness overcasts their journey. And often, these are not pampered, selfish beings, but Nature's elect, harmonious and benign; men and women mild with charity, kind agents of God's kind attributes. But it is not so for all. What then? his will be done, as done it surely will be, wether we humble ourselves to resignation or not. The impulse of creation forwards it; the strength of powers seen and unseen, has its fulfilment in charge. In proof of a life to come must that proof be written. In fire and in blood do we

trace the record throughout nature. In fire and in blood does it cross our own experience. Sufferer, faint not through terror of this burning evidence. Tired wayfarer, gird up thy loins, look upward, march onward. Pilgrims and brother mourners, join in friendly company. Dark though the wilderness of this world stretches the way for most of us; equal and steady be our tread; be our cross our banner. For staff we have His promise whose "word is tried; whose way is perfect"; for present hope His promise, "who gives the shield of salvation, whose gentleness makes great;" for final home His bosom, who "dwells in the height of Heaven;" for crowning prize a glory, exceeding eternal. Let us so run that we may obtain; let us endure hardness as good soldiers; let us finish our course, and keep the faith, reliant in the issue to come off more than conquerors: "Art thou not from everlasting mine Holy One? WE SHALL NOT DIE!"—Charlotte Brontë.

## A PRIEST MISTAKEN.

A priest was looking for a Roman Catholic family whose children he heard were attending the mission school; and being misdirected entered the house of a respectable, humble Protestant. Thinking he was in the presence of the person he sought, the priest began to scold and abuse the poor woman in the most violent manner, for sending the children to the mission school. Mrs. ——— mildly informed him that he must be under some mistake, as she had no children. The priest contradicted her, telling her that she lied. "It is no lie," she indignantly replied, "and, besides, I am a Protestant myself, even if I had children, it is to a Protestant school I would naturally send them." "That's a barefaced lie, too, said the priest, "you are no Protestant, but a turncoat; I can see the marks of Antichrist on your forehead." A crowd of people attracted by the angry words, and the loud tone of voice in which they were uttered, had collected about the door by this time, and some cried out, "Oh, your reverence, that's a real Protestant, you are mistaken; Mrs. ——— was always a Protestant." "Mrs. ———," the priest replied, "is your name Mrs. ———? Why, bless my soul, I have made some mistake, surely, and I am very sorry. I am looking for a person by the name of ———; do you happen to know her?" "I do, well," replied the woman; "but as you told me you saw the mark of Antichrist on my forehead, you must listen now to what the Scriptures say upon the subject. She then proceeded to quote 1. Tim. iv. 1, 8, which the priest did not relish, particularly in the presence of so many Roman Catholics, who had the door blocked up so completely as to destroy all hope of the hasty departure which he evidently wished to accomplish at the moment. Meanwhile the insulted women continued quoting and commenting upon the passage of Scripture alluded to. At length the priest became perfectly furious, and making a great dash through the crowded doorway, ran off shouting 'for mercy's sake, let me away from this heretic.'

## "DON'T TELL FATHER!"

There is many a good mother who plans the ruin of the child she dearly loves—teaching it the first lesson of wrong-doing, by simply saying, "Now don't tell your father." Surely mothers do it thoughtlessly, ignorantly, not considering that it is a first lesson in deception. It is not at all strange that gamblers and liars and thieves and hypocrites and distrustful, evil minded people so abound, when weak, loving mothers, with honeyed words and caresses, sweeten the little teaching that so soon ripens into all kind of meanness and unprincipled rascality. I heard a kind well meaning mother say to the pretty baby in her arms, "Well, bierd shall have its good candy every day; but papa shan't know it—see how it love it!" and little thing, whose reach of life had not whole winter in it, snatched at the bright red and blue coloured poison, and made as many glad motions, as though it took its whole body to suck it with. The poor little thing had been fed on candy, almost, and fretted for more whenever her mouth wasn't filled. Even the nourishment nature provided didn't wholly satisfy it, for wasn't as sweet as candy. I thought it was no wonder, if children were taught even in babyhood that papa was bad and ugly and unkind, that in youth they should call him a "snob," and the "old man;" and the mother, when they had learned by experience had no stability of character, and was capable of deception, not strange they should so little respect her as to call her the "old woman." I shudder when I hear the frequent words drop from young lips, "O, I must not let father know that!" The father may be a stern man, rigid in his way of bringing up his children, but he has a heart somewhere—and surely, truthful, honest, loving words from his own child, will find that warm place. So it is best never to deceive him in anything, but keep his confidence whole and unshaken, and the whiteness of the soul unstained by that loathsome sin, deception. "Father don't allow me to read novels," said a young lady to me lately. "but mother does, and so we two read all we can get, and he never knows it." And she giggled as though they were very cunning and worthy of praise, for so completely deceiving poor, good father! My soul sickened at the idea of a wife daring to teach her children to disobey their father—the daughter, vain and unprincipled, with such a mother to teach and guide her.