

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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BAPTIST HISTORY Of these Lower Provinces.

COUNTY OF DIGBY.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Years rolled away subsequently to the Revival, with a description of which we closed our last Chapter; and a spirit of apathy was too prevalent in the Sissiboo Church. While the faithful few, strong in faith and mature in piety, were punctual to all the appointments of the Church, many, forgetful of their baptismal vows, had become lamentably chilled by worldly influences, and had apparently lost their former interest in the welfare of Zion. If professors of religion did not frouly reproach the cause of Christ by gross and flagrant acts of startling immorality, it was mournfully certain that many of them were seldom found in the prayer and conference meetings, and that those pious affections, which they once evinced, were less ardent and hallowing than they formerly were. Their names still remained on the records of the Church; but their seats were vacated, and the duties devolving upon them were not performed. The spiritual declension to which we refer, is attributable, no doubt, to an unguarded intercourse with worldlings in the social circle. The piety of youthful christians is seldom proof against the spirit of the world, if they mingle freely amongst those who are strangers to grace. Social companionship exercises a powerful effect, either for good or for evil, upon the moral and spiritual destiny of all who come within the scope of its influence. Strong, indeed, in the exercise of christian faith is that young convert, who can associate with the ungodly, and escape the seductive power of "evil communications." Few are sufficiently fortified by grace to pass such a perilous ordeal uncontaminated.—Social parties may have an air of respectability—and "innocent amusements" may be talked of and patronized; but religious professors should shun every circle, which is not congenial with vital godliness, and from which prayer is excluded.

It was by too frequent and unrestricted intercourse with irreligious companions that many of the youthful members of the Sissiboo Church, were gradually allured from the pathway of christian consistency at the period to which we refer. There were others, however, who, to be young in years, that remained true to their profession, and firmly maintained their christian integrity. At this period, the older members of the Church continued steadfast. If there were lacking copious showers of mercy, the refreshing dew of grace descended upon this interesting hill of Zion. Although the Church was not blessed, increased and strengthened by special manifestations of grace, many of the Members exhibited all the healthy characteristics of christian consistency and perseverance. During these years, they erected two edifices, which, (if they have not with episcopal pomp and ceremony been formally "consecrated" for religious worship,) are as holy in the view of the Divine Head of the Church as are the most magnificent cathedrals in Rome or in London. One of these Meeting-houses stands in the pleasant neighbourhood of Weymouth Bridge. Its exterior is well finished; and though its interior requires the hands of the carpenter and the mason to render it complete, a temporary pulpit and temporary seats afford rude and comfortable accommodation to the minister and congregation. The other sacred building is situated midway between Weymouth and Gilbert's Cove. It is a spacious and elegant structure, tastefully finished, and is a monument of the religious zeal, liberality and taste of the christian community, in the midst of which it stands. This building was completed in the Autumn of 1857.

It is a pleasing fact that soon after it was opened, it was illuminated by the manifested presence of God. Almost the first prayer, to which its walls echoed, was answered in the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the congregation. During the Winter and Spring it was the scene of a mighty religious Revival. Those Church members who had "lost their first love," and to whom allusion was made in a previous paragraph, had their consciences re-awakened, and with penitential hearts, confessed their backslidings. Others, who had hitherto been wholly impenitent, were constrained to cry for mercy—nor did they cry in vain. If it was a time of soul-agony on account of the consciousness of sin, it was also a season of spiritual disenthralment—a joyful day of deliverance. Converts were multiplied and crowded the gates of Zion. Baptism after baptism succeeded this delightful display of regenerating power. On one occasion, no less than twenty willing believers thus obeyed, (and followed the example of) their Lord.

Although we shall have something more to say of Brother Randall when we come to notice the other Churches, which he was instrumental in calling into existence, and of which he is still the efficient Pastor, it may not here be out of place to give a sketch of him as a man—a christian—and a minister of the Gospel.

Considered intellectually, he exhibits none of those dazzling powers of mind, which elicit sudden and enthusiastic admiration. He has none of that force of imagination, which is essential to excellence in oratory or poetry. He has that, however, which is vastly more valuable and important, and which capacitates him for the duties

devolving upon him in the useful sphere that he has been called to occupy in the world and in the Church. By nature he is endowed with a large share of common sense. His understanding is clear and vigorous—his memory retentive—and his argumentative powers are energetic, analytical and discriminating. If he has less fluency of speech, less readiness in declamation, than some of his clerical cotemporaries, he is inferior to none of them in prompt and accurate apprehension—in intuitive sagacity—and in the power of rapid ratiocination. In the pulpit, if he is seldom brilliant, he is never obscure, dull, or prosy. He never attempts oratorical effect. His desire is not to elicit admiration, but to impart instruction. While his language is generally chaste, explicit, and expressive, there is never an affectation of high sounding and florid phraseology. Every sentence is lucid, and, for the most part, every word appropriate. At the close of one of his sermons, nobody can call to mind any passage remarkable for magnificence of thought, or splendor of elucidation; but every attentive hearer has been interested—instructed—and, perhaps, spiritually benefited. While, in his discourses, the great cardinal doctrines of the Bible are never lost sight of, the general tendency of most of his sermons is to lead men to contemplate religion in an experimental and practical aspect. He well knows that the theory of christianity, without personal application, is wholly unavailing. Being well acquainted with the human heart, which is "deceitful above all things," he is well qualified to depict its desperate wickedness—to strip it of its disguises—to unmask its hypocrisy, and to show the necessity for its moral renovation by the new birth. If Brother Randall's pulp talents are not of the highest order, few of his more gifted and better educated brethren preach sermons, which are better received and more useful than his.

It is not only in the pulpit, however, that he makes religious impressions upon the minds of his people. He visits them from house to house converses with them freely—and thus becomes familiar with the emotions of their hearts—the workings of their inner life. A Pastor, though he may preach with the energy of an angel, will do little good, unless he devote much of his time in the domestic circles of his congregation. In closing this Chapter, we may say that Brother Randall, in promoting the interests of Temperance and Education, in his intercourse with those by whom he is surrounded, and in the unostentatious exercise of habitual hospitality, has become endeared to multitudes of all classes and denominations; and no man in the County of Digby is better known or more generally esteemed and respected. However distasteful to some may be his religious proclivities and teachings, he is almost universally regarded with feelings of friendship and good will. By his clerical brethren, too, he is highly estimated. In times of trouble and difficulty, they have recourse to him for sympathy and council. His long experience in the the ministry, coupled with a judgement that is seldom at fault, has fitted him to act and advise in cases of trying emergency. As a proof of his standing among his fellow-watchman on the walls of Zion, twice within five years has he presided over the Western Association. Although scarcely passed the meridian of life, he is already regarded as one of the Baptist Fathers. M.

REVIVAL IN NEWARK, N. J.

We find in a recent No. of the New York Examiner a most interesting sketch of a very powerful and extensive revival of religion experienced recently by the first Baptist Church in Newark, N. J., under the ministry of Rev. H. C. Fish. The origin, progress, means and results of this great work are lucidly set forth in a style and manner adapted to do much good. We therefore cheerfully give it a place in our columns.—[Ed. Vis.

ORIGIN OF THE WORK.

The earliest indication of a better state of things, was an intense yearning for its existence. This was seen, particularly, in the latter part of December, by which time the Sabbath preaching and week-day evening remarks looked almost wholly to a holier and more earnest and active state of the church. As yet, however, this deep solicitude was limited to a few individuals—apparently not more than half a dozen besides the pastor, and at the first, not even to so many. Where it did exist, it was almost crushing; and particularly on one occasion, at an evening prayer-meeting, the burden of spirit was so great on the part of the leader, as to incapacitate him for the conduct of the meeting, and he sat in his chair giving way to suppressed sighs and tears, leaving the meeting to take care of itself.

About this time one extra weekly prayer-meeting was held, and after a little, two; and finally, perhaps three-score of the brethren and sisters met every evening, by common consent, to pour out their prayers to God, and to talk of the languishing state of Zion. No souls had as yet been converted, if indeed awakened; and it was often remarked that it was not desired that the brethren should sing and pray and talk too much about the conversion of sinners; they were not yet thoroughly re-converted themselves; and it was needful that the work "get roots" in their own hearts, by confession, and supplication, and exhortation, and the alternations of hope and fear. The tree would be all the more fruitful, by cropping and pruning it down severely

ly. When the church was right—at least a small part of it—then it would be time to turn attention to sinners.

Not long, however, was it possible to restrain the rising desire for the salvation of others. The longing was towards dying men; and it is remembered that one brother wished, (to use his own expression,) that the Lord would give them one kid over which to make merry. The boon was not long withheld. One soul of the few unconverted in the meetings, was awakened and renewed, and then another; others came, and others still; the meetings increased, and soon were transferred, of necessity, from the lecture-room to the body of the house. These meetings were continued every evening, till near the middle of May.

METHODS OF LABOR

When the work was reaching its greatest strength, and the audience room was crowded, even to the extra seats, it was suggested by some whether another minister might not be invited to labor with the pastor, and so economize his strength, and save him, perhaps, from entire prostration. It was concluded, however, with one mind, not to call in outside help, but look to the Lord, and pray and labor on. With the exception of a single week, when the pastor was called away to visit a sick mother, resort was not had to outside help.

The specific form of effort was the prayer-meeting. Not a solitary sermon, as such, was preached, except on Sunday, and then only two.

Even the usual weekly Lecture was dispensed with. But the exposition and enforcement of the inspired word were never more constantly brought into requisition. After the opening of the meeting, ten or fifteen, or twenty minutes, were always given to this exercise. The design was, especially, to open up, and affirm and re-affirm, in every possible way, the two great facts of theology, man a sinner, and Christ a Saviour—and to press home the duty of an immediate attention to the things of salvation. Christ was continually insisted upon and held up to view as the Saviour of the lost, and the Word of God was never more honored of God as the chosen instrument unto salvation.

Almost every Sabbath-discourse, particularly, seemed to fall with new power upon the consciences of the hearers, and the fruits were perceptible during the week, in the awakening or relief of souls.

Besides pastoral visitations, an inquiry meeting was held each evening, an hour before the ordinary meeting, in the lecture-room, where each one present was conversed with personally, and the way of salvation was minutely explained and illustrated. This means was greatly blessed. Two tracts should be mentioned as especially useful: "Don't Put it Off," and "What is it to believe on Christ." Hundreds of the latter were given away, and in scores of instances did God employ this silent messenger to bring light and relief. It should also be said that the brethren and sisters were active in exhortation and invitation, and God owned and blessed abundantly their labors.

There was not much speaking in the prayer-meetings, except in some stages, by the converts, nor much singing; praying was the main feature. Every exercise was short and spirited. Not unfrequently special prayer was offered, at the close of the meeting, for those who were oppressed with feelings as to be unable or unwilling to leave. At these seasons, six or eight of the brethren, out of the few that tarried, oftentimes prayed. When the work looked like ceasing, prayer-clusters of this kind were formed to pray to God for his continuance; and cases of awakening were always multiplied. The anxious were never invited forward, but such as desired prayers were requested, towards the close of the meeting, to arise. This act of committal was often attended with great good.

SOME OF THE RESULTS.

The number of conversions it is impossible to ascertain; probably it would reach 300, at least. 235 have been baptized, most of them recent converts. Of these, one-half were heads of families—fathers and mothers. About 100 of the 235 were males. A larger number were over forty than under twenty years of age; the average being about thirty. Two thirds or three-fourths of those added, were unacquainted before to worship with us, either attending nowhere, or holding connection with other congregations. As far as possible they have all been put at work in the Sunday School and elsewhere, and promise to be of service in the Master's kingdom. The younger portion have organized themselves into a Young Converts, Prayer-Meeting, and the older into an Adult Converts' Prayer-meeting.

As another result, the gifts of the previous members have been materially developed and improved, and new attainments have been made in the divine life. It is believed that the moral power of the church, now numbering 730 members, has been doubled within five months past. The lecture and prayer and conference meetings are now held, permanently, (until the new church edifice is completed,) in the body of the house.

CHARACTERISTICS AND INCIDENTS.

Some of the main features of this work have been the following:

1. The evident presence of the Holy Spirit. It has been of God, and not of man. The Spirit

went before, the preacher and laborer followed after.

2. The clearness and depth of conviction for sin. Moralists have suddenly seen themselves to be the chief of sinners, and stout and hard-hearted men have been made to weep like children, under a sense of their guilt and danger. In several cases have awakened men been unable to prosecute their daily business, and not unfrequently have the anxious told of their sleepless nights, and their deep burden of spirit. In one case, a man sitting up to pray until after midnight, seemed, as he said, to be sinking through the floor; and rising from his knees, could scarcely walk. In another a sturdy man, hitherto unmoved, was seen standing in the vestibule of the church, with his long beard all jewelled with the tear-drops that were rolling from his eyes. Another man declared that he had carried a "cannon ball" in his heart for days together, and that if it had been continued for three days longer, he could not have lived. He could neither sleep nor eat; and yet a few days before, he was as unmoved as a rock. In another case, a man in middle life came to see the pastor, and on entering the house, cried aloud as he told of his sins, and was so agitated that he trembled from head to foot, and could scarcely sit in his chair. Ever and anon, while he was being told what he must do to be saved, he burst out crying, and exclaimed, "O! but I have been such a sinner!" Another man wholly suspended his work, staid at home, read his Bible and prayed, and seemed to be actually waxing poor in flesh, from intense concern of mind. He was the picture of despair. All these were men in mature life, and hitherto self righteous moralists.

3. A clear insight into the way of salvation through Christ, on the part of the converts. In most cases, the sum of the answer for the hope of salvation, was "Christ died!" In most cases, it was the sight of the cross that brought relief. As a consequence, the converts were generally strong, and went on their way obeying and rejoicing. Taken as a whole, the relation of experience was satisfactory in the highest degree.

4. Its freedom from noise and excitement. No careless observer would have perceived anything remarkable. The meetings were uniformly solemn, almost like a funeral.—no audible groanings, no shouting, and the fruits were perceptible in the most fastidious could take exception.

5. The honor put upon prayer, and the ordinary means of grace. Answer to prayer was oftentimes direct and almost instantaneous. In some of the most earnest and importunate of combined supplications, the brethren were as conscious that they were heard above, as if it had been expressly revealed to them. Directness in prayer was a marked feature. Now, the one point was the awakening of sinners; now, the relief of the burdened; and then again, the efficiency of the word preached. Beyond these three things the range of prayer did not often extend, and in some cases, the wrestling rose well nigh to an agony of spirit. Lay-agency has been greatly honored, and as has been already remarked, the plain and pointed preaching of the gospel. H. C. F. Newark, N. J., June 25, 1858.

TEMPERANCE MEMORIAL.

In our last issue we referred to an address to the Ecclesiastical Bodies of Nova Scotia by the "Grand Division of the Sons," asking their cooperation in carrying forward to its ultimate triumph the glorious work so nobly commenced. The following is this address as published in the Abstainer of the 1st inst. We sincerely hope that all ministers of the gospel, and christian people of every name, will carefully read and duly ponder the facts here recorded. He who turns a deaf ear to statements so truthful and to an appeal so consistent and urgent must answer for it to his conscience in a coming day.—[Ed. C. Vis.

"A Committee of Clergymen connected with the Temperance cause in this Province having been appointed by the Grand Division of the Sons of Temperance of Nova Scotia, to prepare and present an address to each of the Ecclesiastical Bodies in this Province, asking their "sympathy and co-operation in the great work" in which that body is engaged. We beg leave to approach your reverend Assembly to solicit your consideration of the subjoined statements and your most valuable aid in advancing the Cause of Temperance.

The Committee may safely affirm that the evil for the eradication of which our united efforts are required, is one of vast and overwhelming magnitude, the desolating effects of which are visible in every village and hamlet in Nova Scotia. Few families have wholly escaped its distracting and blighting influences; and there is no Church or congregation which has not in some of its members suffered from its debasing effects. Sinners, in untold numbers, are becoming hardened by it, and weak brethren for whom Christ died are being seduced from the Allegiance which they owe to their Divine Master.

A venerable ecclesiastical body, the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, has declared of intemperance that "next to the native depravity of the human heart, in which, like all other practical evils, it has its source, and the most formidable obstacle to the success of religious instruction, and of the moral as well as the economic improvement of Society."

If this testimony be true, the subject which we submit demands the attention of every body of Christian Office Bearers, met in the name of the

Lord Jesus, and for the advancement of His kingdom; and we therefore appeal to your christian principle and feeling, and submit the inquiry, Has all been done which is within your reach as a deliberative body, and also as individuals, to discountenance Intemperance and to remove its causes?

The vacant places of deceased inebriates are, also too rapidly filled up by a never failing supply, flowing, (as it appears to us) from the conventional usages of Society, in reference to intoxicating drinks. So long as these are freely and frequently used by all classes as a common beverage their victims will be Legion, unless Science, history and experience unite in giving false testimony, strong moral power, or other counteracting agencies, may often resist successfully, but when such power is weak, and other barriers feeble, many will fall and perish. Permit us then again to raise a question to be weighed and answered. Is it right in the Church to encourage, or even by her silence to tolerate usages fraught with such pernicious consequences; and can she safely recommend to the young more especially, anything short of entire abstinence from that which inebriates?

The Church may pronounce her severest denunciations against drunkenness, and proceed to inflict her highest censures upon the intemperate. She may cut off members and cast out Office Bearers who have become vile through strong drink, but the question still recurs, and demands investigation. Is she not in a wrong position so long as she sanctions the unnecessary use of the productive source of all these evils?

In her membership we have a right to look for the "salt of the earth," and the "light of the world." What then must be our disappointment, if these are found making grain out of the corruption of Society and degradation of humanity? Is the prosecution of the liquor traffic, by the members of the Church, in these days of light, consistent with their avowed devotion to the service of God, and with the high ends of a religious Profession? And ought not the church by wholesome discipline, to declare her conviction that such traffic is inimical to the cause of christianity?

Members of this Christian Association, look for deliverance, from the Gospel of Jesus, and of the blessing of the Holy Spirit on the application of Divine truth. Assured of the perfect adaptation of the Gospel to remove this and all other moral evils under the weight of which humanity now labours, our hope rests on Divine Power and Grace. Our prayer is that this Heavenly Agency may be abundantly communicated, and it is because we believe that our own inconsistencies may deprive us of those spiritual influences which only can strengthen men to overcome the wicked one, and all his temptations, that we express our conviction, that extensive success in the application of the Gospel to the prevention and cure of Intemperance will not be realized, till its administrators themselves avoid, and teach their hearers to avoid, the unnecessary use of what has tempted, seduced and ruined myriads of our race.

Further, as we look for deliverance from the Divine blessing on Divine truth, so also we anticipate that it will come through the Church, and will correspond with her zeal, al piety and purity. Regarding her as Divine, and therefore immeasurably superior to merely human organizations, we consider the eradication of Intemperance as part of her legitimate work. Called as she is to testify against sin in all its forms, we would respectfully and earnestly invoke a more active "sympathy and co-operation," in the work of defending the young of this land from the seduction of the wine cup, and the fascination of strong drink.

May the Spirit of Wisdom, of Peace and of Love preside over all your deliberations; and on this subject guide you to such decisions as will give glory to God in the highest, produce peace on earth, and good will to men.

On behalf of the Committee.
J. M. CRAMP, Chairman.

CONVERSION OF A. M. TOPLADY.

MR. EDITOR.—Perhaps the following may be interesting to some of your readers. It is a sketch of the conversion of the Rev. A. M. Toplady, as given by his own pen, not of water baptismal regeneration as some have affirmed, but of free sovereign, invincible grace.

CHAS. H. BALMAIN.
"Ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.—"Ephesians, 11 chap 11th 13th verse.

"It was from that passage that Mr. Morris preached on the notable evening of my effectual call; by the grace of God, under his ministry, I was, I trust brought nigh by the blood of Christ, in August 1756. Strange that I, who had so long sat under the means of grace in England, should be brought nigh to God in an obscure part of Ireland, amidst a handful of God's people met together in a barn, and under the ministry of one who could hardly spell his name; surely it was the Lord's doing and is marvellous! The excellency of such power must be of God, and cannot be of man. The regenerating Spirit breathes not only on whom, but likewise when, where, and as he listeth."
A. M. TOPLADY.

My son if sinners entice the consent thou dost

TRUE PRAYER.

Would you see true prayer—would you know what prayer really is? Step into this Egyptian palace whose Benjamin stands bound,—his amazing and trembling brothers grouped around the lad. Judah advances. He bows himself before Joseph. His heart is full. His lip trembles. The tear glistens in his manly eye; and now, with tenderness thrilling in every tone, he pours forth this plea of surpassing pathos:—"Oh, my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: my lord asked his servant, saying, have ye a father or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead; and he alone is left to his mother, and his father loveth him." Thus on he goes; and every sentence goes like a knife into Joseph's heart. And then he closes and crowns his appeal with this most brave and generous proposal: "Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad, as bondsman to my lord; for how shall I go to my father, and the lad not with me, lest I see the evil that shall come upon my father?"

Joseph's heart, which has been swelling with emotion, is now ready to burst. He can stand it no longer; nor any wonder. That is prayer; and could we bring such earnestness to Jesus, oh, how would his tender, much more tender heart, melt like wax before it. Did we approach him with the fervour that glowed and burned in Judah's speech; did we plead for our own souls or those of others, with such tears, in such tones, as Judah's when he pled for Benjamin, how would a divine brother discover himself to us? Now turn from that Egyptian to this Hebrew palace. There also is prayer. Two women stand before King Solomon. In the darkness of the night, one has crept, with noiseless step, to her neighbour's bed, and while the mother slept, and the babe slept in her bosom, softly, cautiously, she steals the living child, and leaves her own cold, dead infant in its place. They carry the dispute to Solomon,—each claiming the living, and each repudiating the dead. With a skill that earned him his world-wide fame, the wise monarch summons the living child to be divided. The sword is raised,—another moment, and interference comes too late. One stands calm, firm, collected, looking on with a cool eye. With a bound that carries her to his feet, and a shriek that rings wild and high over all the palace, the other—the true mother—clasps her hands in agony, and cries "Oh, my lord, give her the living child, in no wise slay it." That is prayer. That cry, that spring, that look of anguish,—all these proclaim the mother,—how different from the cold, callous, unimpressionable frame in which, alas, the best too often present themselves at the throne of grace, as if, when we are seeking pardon, it were a matter of supreme indifference, whether our prayer were or were not answered. Oh, how should we pray that God would help us to pray, and touch our icy lips with a live coal from off his altar.—Dr. Guthrie.

MINISTERS' AND DEACONS' CHILDREN.

Rev. Asa Bullard, the indefatigable Secretary of the Massachusetts S. S. Society, has collected statistics during the past two years, to refute the oft repeated proverb that "the children of ministers and deacons are worse than other children." He sums up the result as follows:—

In 241 families of ministers and Deacons, there were 1,164 children over fifteen years of age. Of these children eight hundred and fourteen—MORE THAN THREE FOURTHS—were hopefully pious. Seven hundred and thirty-two had united with the Church. Fifty-seven had entered the ministry, or were engaged in their preparatory studies. Only fourteen were dissipated, about one-half of whom only, became so while residing with their parents.

Eleven of those families—four of them ministers' and seven deacons'—there were 123 children, of whom ALL BUT SEVEN were hopefully pious. Seven of them were deacons, and fifteen Ministers. In fifty-six of those families, there were 249 children over fifteen years of age and ALL were hopefully pious!

GHANDREUR OF MAN.—Within the range of human ken there is nothing that God has done so grand as man. He was his last and best work. The heaven and earth, the waters and the mountains, the firmament and armies of clouds, are insignificant matters in comparison with the meanest Hotentot that ever stupidly gazed upon them.

Some thoughts always find us young, and keep us so. Such a thought is the love of the universal and eternal beauty. Love is the odour of the heavenly flowers.

No character is more glorious, none more attractive of universal admiration and respect, than that of helping those who are in no condition to help themselves.

Two things are necessary to the traveller in life, as well as on the roads,—a knowledge of his way, and a perseverance in it.

Humility is a flower that prospers most when planted on the rich soil of a noble and great mind.

If dissipation does not corrupt your morals, the honor of your country will never be tarnished.