

# The Christian Visitor.

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

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**BOOK NOTICES, &c.**

**THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY** for April continues to sustain its reputation as a first class literary periodical: it is increasing in popularity. The present No. contains much highly instructive and interesting matter. For sale at the Colonial Book Store.

**HARPER'S MAGAZINE FOR APRIL.**—This universal favorite is before us, filled with rich and rare articles.—No one who wishes to keep posted up with the literature and events of the age can do without "Harper." To be had at J. & A. McMillan.

**UNITED STATES CORRESPONDENCE.**  
NEW YORK, March 26th, 1859.

DEAR VISITOR:—In two of my former letters I alluded to the daily prayer-meetings which still continue to be held here, and which indeed may be considered to have become an established institution in most of the principal cities throughout the Union. It is delightful to witness the fervor and the undoubted sincerity which characterize these gatherings; and the freedom from restraint and formality; influences so deadly to the social prayer-meeting seem unknown. Here may be met representatives from all classes of society,—the lady of rank and fashion, side by side with the humble seamstress, the man of affluence and distinction, and the mechanic each one for the time engaged in the same holy pursuit, walking in the same road to that heavenly country whither we are all hastening. Many anecdotes are told at these meetings illustrative of the power and efficacy of prayer. The story of the converted actress has been related in some of the papers—but as it has probably reached the eye of but few of your readers I will transfer it to your columns.

A seamstress who had herself experienced the love of God, was called upon one morning by a dashing young girl who wished some sewing done for her at the shortest notice. "I am rich said she, and I will pay you liberally. I have an engagement to play at a theatre in Philadelphia and must have these dresses done as quickly as possible." The poor seamstress replied, "I am in great destitution and have just been praying that God would send me aid. It has come, but in a way which I do not feel at liberty to accept. I will take this case to my Heavenly Father; she did so, and prayed that God would direct her in the right path. The actress stood and listened in astonishment while the pious girl poured out her soul in earnest supplication; presently she too knelt, and bursting into tears said—"Oh never mind praying any more about the dresses—pray for me." She did pray and the heart which had so long followed the ways of evil now desired to know the Saviour. The actress rose from her knees an altered being, and resolved on the spot to abandon the stage. "I will write to the Philadelphia manager," said she, "that I cannot play but I will pray for him."

She became a consistent Christian, and a note was read from her not long since stating that she had been instrumental in drawing two of her former companions from the stage, and influencing them to seek a higher and holier life. In the Epitome Street meeting a thrilling circumstance was lately narrated. The beautiful, accomplished and only daughter of worldly parents became impressed with the conviction of her sins before God. Hours which had been hitherto given to worldly pursuits and amusements, were now occupied in agonizing prayer. In this employment her father one day found her, he commanded her to desist and even rudely raised her from her knees. She swooned away, and on being restored to consciousness was a maniac! The united strength of four men was required to hold her, and amid the ravings of her delirium her friends could distinguish only the one mournful cry—"I am lost!" "I am lost!" Gradually, however, reason returned, but her mental and bodily powers seemed much exhausted.

ed. Some one spoke to her of Jesus, and a peaceful expression of countenance seemed to indicate that her mind was more at rest. In this condition she remained for several days. Special prayer in her behalf was finally asked of the Fulton Street Meeting, and petitions sent up to the Father amid agonizing sobs and tears showed how deep was the sympathy in this thrilling case. It is said that the young lady still continues in this sad state, but has repeatedly called upon friends around to pray for her. Surely prayer in such a case will not be in vain, God will hear and answer in his own good time.

It may appear strange, but it is nevertheless true, that no class of people seems so blinded to the truths of religion, so opposed to the influences of the Holy Spirit, as the class to which the subject of this narrative belongs—the gay and fashionable devotees of pleasure, who see no beauty in a life of holiness, no happiness in a life consecrated to the service of the Redeemer. Alas! that in so many instances, beauty, talent, affluence and every worldly advantage should be offered upon the shrine of the god of this world, whose votaries find when too late, that the object of their worship has no power to arrest disease, nor to rob death of his sting—no unfading crown to offer, no mansions prepared on high for their inheritance. How true it is that a life of worldly pleasure is no passport to a life of immortality on high.

The Academy of Music and Niblo's concert rooms are now used for Divine worship. The Rev. Kingman Nott preached at the latter place on Sabbath evening to a large and attentive audience. The people of God are turning upon the principle of carrying the gospel into those circles which generally hold themselves aloof from the ordinary means of grace. This movement of transforming places of public amusement into temples for the worship of the Most High meets with general favor, tho' there are, of course, scoffers who ridicule this as well as every other enterprise which has for its object the spread of the Redeemer's Kingdom.

You have no doubt seen in your exchanges that a new scheme is on foot among the Baptists of the United States, called the Consolidation Movement, the object of which is to diminish the number of the different benevolent societies, thereby simplifying their operations and greatly reducing their expenses. The Convention will meet at the May Anniversaries for the purpose of considering this most important subject. There will no doubt be some discussion, as there are of course two sides to the question, and on either side men of powerful minds are at work. The meetings to be held this May will probably be of more than usual interest, and a very large attendance of Ministers and delegates from all parts of the Union may be expected.

There is still a hope that Mr. Spurgeon will yet be induced to visit this country the coming season. There has been too much jingle of dollars and cents mingled with the name of this great man, for however much his friends here may desire his appearance, they do not wish his coming to be thus heralded, and certainly none than Spurgeon himself would more earnestly deprecate the idea that his visit to this country would be actuated by mercenary motives. He would do a great work in this land, and hundreds are praying for his appearance.

There are many other points of interest upon which I should like to touch, but fear I am already exceeding the limits allowed to

**YOUR OWN CORRESPONDENT**

(From the Temperance Telegraph.)

**THE EIGHTH SERMON.**

On Sunday Evening last, the Eighth Sermon was delivered by the

**Rev. E. B. DeMill**

a mere synopsis of which we give below.

The Marsh Road Church was crowded to excess, and the audience was very attentive:

**OUTLINE OF SERMON.**

TEXT.—"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."—Romans xiv: 17.

It seems that disputes had arisen in the Christian Churches respecting the use of meats and drinks.

The Jewish Christians had been trained to regard some meats as prohibited, and many of them brought their opinions into the Church. The Gentile Christians had been accustomed previously to their conversion, to dedicate their meats and drinks to the gods, and to regard the partaking of them as an act of worship. On becoming Christians, these still retained some of their former notions. In opposition to those who were thus scrupulous, whether Jewish or Gentile converts, were those who saw no ceremonial distinction of clean and unclean; who saw no act of worship in eating meats which had been dedicated to idols. In consequence they deemed themselves perfectly at liberty to eat meats, whether they were regarded by their brethren as unclean or offered to idols.

The Apostle appears as arbitrator between the contending brethren.

Those who were scrupulous, erred in judgment as to the nature of meats—for no distinction existed now, and no dedication to idols made the partaking of food idolatrous.

On the other hand, those who believed that meats and drinks were perfectly harmless, were neither unclean, nor affected by dedication to idols, judged correctly—"for there is nothing unclean of itself." Yet when these men, under the circumstances, exercised their liberty and ate at discretion, they sinned. Their conduct not only confirmed the idolator in his superstition, or the Jew in his hatred towards christianity, but induced weak christians to do what they believed to be wrong, or excited distrust toward themselves on the part of their prejudiced but conscientious brethren. "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." "Give none offence neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentile, nor to the Church of God."

Now let us apply these principles to the question which now, to some extent agitates the Church. Some believe that it is wrong to use as a beverage, liquors which when taken to a certain extent, produce intoxication and all the minor sins and miseries which universally follow. Others, the strong-minded brethren, regard these liquors as in themselves harmless, good creatures of God, to be received with thanksgiving, injurious only when used in excess; and in the exercise of their rights they partake of them, and regard those who scruple to imitate them as ultra or fanatical.

Now we think that, in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Heavenly Kingdom, which are to guide our actions, it is the christians duty to abstain from liquors which in the natural and ordinary use will produce intoxication.

It is wrong to use intoxicating liquors as a beverage because we cannot be satisfied that they are innocent or indifferent.

From the manner in which the Scriptures speak of them we are left in a state of doubt, at least, as to the propriety of their use; and until we are satisfied we cannot with clear conscience partake of them. Certainly if wines of all kinds were allowed, the fact would not justify the use of ardent spirits or wines adulterated with them any more than it would justify the use of Indian hemp, or leadum, or any other poisonous and maddening drug.

But when we carefully consider the Sacred Scriptures we find a difficulty in discovering proof that the use of intoxicating drugs or liquors is harmless or innocent.

We learn that in the Hebrew Scriptures, eleven distinct words are all rendered by the solitary word wine in our translation. We discover, moreover, that these so-called wines were of various kinds; there was the must and boiled wine which were not intoxicating, the ordinary fermented wine, the sweet wine, and the thin sour wine, not intoxicating unless used in enormous quantities, and there was the mixed wine which was decidedly intoxicating.

Now while in some instances wine is spoken of as though it were a blessing from God to be received with gratitude, in other instances it is regarded as a pernicious thing, to be avoided. Wine is said to be a mocker. We are told to avoid wine when its appearance denoted a certain property.

Now how can we account for this discrepancy unless we suppose that liquors very different in their nature are alluded to? This interpretation is probable, and throws some doubt about the propriety of the use of intoxicating wines as to render us under obligation to abstain, under penalty of incurring the guilt of performing a doubtful act.

The example of Christ does not remove the doubt. The wine at the Lord's Supper was not intoxicating. The language used respecting it indicates this, as also the fact that it was the same kind of wine used by the Jews at the Pass-over Supper which was unfermented. The wine made by Jesus at the wedding was probably not intoxicating, unless we can conceive that the Holy One afforded an intoxicating drink to those who had already arrived at a state in which it was difficult for them to tell good wine from bad.

Since then it is so very doubtful whether or not the Scriptures sanction the use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and since there can be no doubt as to the innocence of abstinence, the proper and right course would seem plain to the conscientious man.

But whether intoxicants be allowable or not in themselves, it is very evident from the principles laid down by the Apostle, that under present circumstances it is wrong for us to partake of them as a beverage. Let us suppose that the Scriptures only condemn that draught which makes a man drunk, nevertheless it is wrong to use intoxicating drinks.

Wrong because we are exposed to the commission of a positive sin.

When this appetite is formed is not the sin almost inevitable? Will the naked conscience stripped of the clear perception and the pure feeling, give warning when on the brink of sin, or lift up his voice against that one additional draught which separates the innocent use from the sinful abuse. Is it right to hover thus on the verge of sin?

Again, the use of intoxicating drinks is wrong under the circumstances, because it confirms a class of sinners in sin.

All around us are drunkards, sinners so declared by the Word of God. Their sin is of no ordinary magnitude. How numerous are the obligations it violates. Duties to self, humanity and to God, are disregarded for a base, sensual gratification. How numerous are the sins which follow this monster sin. With a mind debased, a heart petrified, a conscience seared, and all the brutal propensities increased by repeated and excessive indulgence, the drunkard must necessarily omit many positive duties besides that of sobriety, and commit many positive sins as base as that of drunkenness, for all of which he will be held accountable; how inexcusable also is drunkenness—it is not in general an isolated act, but the expression of a depravity of heart—the consequence of a ruling passion which has been engendered by a course of sin.

I see in a drunkard the most perfect type of sin in the world. I know that he is only one of a vast multitude which is increasing. I think of the misery he suffers and occasions to others and feel that I ought certainly to aim at the reformation of such. Cain it was who boldly denied his obligation to care for a brother.

But how can I be the means of a reformation in this case. I cannot tell him that he ought to abstain from intoxicating liquors. I cannot offer to him a practicable remedy for his vice. I can only denounce the sin, but in vain do I exhibit his wickedness, so long as I assert the innocence of beverages which he will necessarily use to excess if he uses them at all.—On the contrary, so far from benefitting I actually confirm him in a course of sin. For if he be conscious of his wickedness and degradation, he will be filled with disgust towards myself and my religion, he cannot and will not distinguish between the use and the abuse, and as he feels that he sins, he concludes, illogically of course, that these Christians who are forming the appetite which he has acquired, are sinners like himself, less degraded in the eyes of man, but more hypothetical in the sight of God. Hence longing for deliverance from his thralldom, looking to the church for precept and example—he meets with a repulse which casts him back again despairingly and recklessly to his courses.

Or if he be unconscious of the extent of his sin and degradation, the use of fire-breathing drinks by Christians will tend to delay the hour when he will awaken to a sense of his situation. He concludes if it be right for Christians to drink a certain amount of intoxicating liquor, it cannot be a deadly sin for him to drink the same quantity, though the effect be a little different on the Christian. In the latter case, there is a delightful exhilaration of spirit, while on his part this exhilaration is heightened into a sort of frenzy, or has passed into a stupor like that of death. He approves of the liberal conduct of those Christians who are not scrupulous about the use of those beverages. He will join with them in denunciation of the fanatic, but is not induced by their precepts or example, to refrain from the fearful sin of drunkenness.

When our use of liquors have such an effect when we are thus prevented from doing good to those men, and more especially when our example instead of inducing them to be virtuous, disgusts them with religion, or encourages them to sin—why then we are participants in their sins and guilty before God.

Another disastrous influence of the use of these beverages may be noticed in this connection.

We see around us men of various ages, who are not yet drunkards, but who indicate by their present conduct and disposition, the places they frequent, and the associates they choose—that in all probability they will one day fall. The Christian regards such, he sees that they do not make the nice distinction between the innocent use and the criminal abuse; that they have not the strength of will, the trained consciences, the pure associates, the many pledges to virtue which keep him from drunkenness. He sees a danger after another approaching the verge of the precipice, he knows that when they get there they will probably plunge into the gulph; but he cannot say, beware, or if he does, his example takes all meaning from his word. Is it right? Is it consistent with the example of the founder of the Church? Is it in harmony with the conduct of the early members of the Church? Does it accord with the aim of the Church, or does it agree with its essential principles.

Finally, it is wrong to use intoxicating liquors, because their use inflicts injury on the Church of Christ, the Heavenly Kingdom.

who unscrupulously partook of meats of all sorts, reckless of the injury he thus inflicted on the consciences of the weak, or the dissension caused in the Church of Christ.

In the present case, we find those who believe that it is right to abstain from the use of alcoholic drinks as a beverage; when duty is plain, they ought to abstain, and sin if they do otherwise. But here is the strong minded and liberal Christian, who drinks at discretion, because as he insists, the Holy Scriptures sanction these beverages. What is the effect of this on the weak brother. Influenced by the example thus set before him, he will do what he thinks is at least doubtful, and thus his conscience is injured, and his christian peace and joy destroyed. Or he will lose all confidence in him who sets such an example, he will regard him as exercising a most pernicious influence, doing what is wrong, and influencing others to imitation. Thus dissension is brought into the Church of Christ, the responsibility of which rests on him who for the sake of liberty, sacrifices the peace of the community. For certainly it does not rest on the Christian, who abstains from a sense of duty. He who will not sacrifice a mere gratification, however innocent in itself in compliance with the conscientious demands of a brother, must bear all the blame.

Thus from the very nature of intoxicating drinks, and more especially from the evil effects on the Church, resulting from their use even in moderation, we conclude that it is the duty of the believer to abstain, and if his duty, the duty also of all men.

On this account we ought to give our sympathy and aid to those organizations, which under the control of the principles of the Church of God aim to destroy the evil of Intemperance.

The Churches of God are the Divinely appointed agencies for the accomplishment of the aims of the Heavenly Kingdom. They are the various regiments of the Sacramental Hosts, and if true to themselves, we would need no other society for the suppression of vice. The self denying spirit, the wise principles which guide their operation, the motives which influence them, the power of their pleas, would then effectually destroy Intemperance and all other sins. But when the Churches, as such, oppose sin, only in the abstract, and leave the living palpable monster unharmed, it then becomes the duty of each true member of the Heavenly Kingdom to follow its principles and prosecute its aims. Hence Total Abstinence Societies.

From the Boston Record.—  
**"GREAT SERMONS" AND GREAT HEARERS.**

MESSRS. EDITORS:—Your readers have not yet forgotten the "scourge of small cords" with which your correspondent "Cecil," sought to drive out from our temples of worship the numerous "great preachers" of the times. Those "forty stripes save one" were well laid on. We, who preached "great sermons" deserved them all, and might have been benefitted even by the fortieth. We hope our brother "Cecil" will try his hand at us again, and whip us until all our vanity is whipped out of us. But "Cecil" did not "give to every one a portion." While the spectators enjoyed the confusion of the "great preachers," neither he nor any other writer, has, to my knowledge, deigned to notice the great hearers. Now while I do not propose myself to supply any man's lack of service in this regard, and cannot hope to do justice to the subject, I am strongly moved to offer a few hints. I should have done this before, had I not been under the impression that the great hearers were mostly among my own people, and that, however worthy they might be of the notice, it would be very trying to their modesty to be held up before the gazing world, as the models in this respect. I have lived long enough to ascertain my mistake. Upon diligent inquiry and considerable observation, I find that I should be doing injustice to all concerned, were I to suppose my hearers to have any peculiar claims to the distinction of "great." I learn to my surprise that many of the princes in the class to which I refer, are found in the congregations of the loudest "Sons of Thunder." The Rev. Dr. A., and the Rev. Professor B., and the Rt. Rev. Bishop C., and, what is more surprising than all, even the "star preachers," themselves, all have them.

Who then are our hearers who claim to be, and who are generally conceded to be, the greatest hearers of the day? In general, they are those who listen only to "great sermons," and to "great sermons" only on great occasions. They may be divided into many classes. There are the absent hearers; the fair-weather hearers; the half-day hearers; the hearers that hear while they are asleep; the absent-minded hearers; the fastidious and fault-finding hearers; the cavilling and scoffing hearers; the whispering, the winking, the laughing, and the busy hearers; the hearers but not doers; the hearers for others, and a great variety beside, whose designation would perhaps require the aid of the preposition "sub."

It is no part of my design to describe wherein the great strength of these Sampsons among hearers lies, or in what way they may be supposed to strengthen and hold up the preacher. But let us group some of them together for a bird's-eye view.

count of the "stormy wind that fulfils God's word" so kindly as their substitute, and those who can afford to devote only one hour and a half in seven days or in four weeks, as the case may be, to a business so unproductive as hearing the Gospel. In any case, whether it be the cloudy sky, or the hot sun, or the wet sidewalk, or the "great dinner" that detain them from church, they are sure that there will be a meeting. "Deacon Steadfast will be there; Old Aunt Hopeful will be there; poor Mrs. Humble will be there; Mr. Fidelity and all his family will be there; and probably the minister, Dr. Preacher, will be there. And as for the vacant seats, who knows that they will not be occupied by angels!"

There is something in this last supposition. The Mohammedans declare that the congregation of pilgrims who annually assemble at Mecca, never falls short of 70,000. Every deficiency, they say, is supplied by a mysterious deputation of angels who obligingly present themselves for the express purpose of occupying the vacant seats and keeping the number good. Why then should not our modern absent hearers console themselves with such "plan of union" for keeping the numbers good at church, though they are not there? It is not convenient.

Then there are the hearers who hear while they are asleep. Unfortunately this class of hearers has never been popular with preachers great or small. A certain Scotch minister is reported once to have suddenly stopped in the midst of his sermon, and calling out aloud even to his own wife who was asleep and nodding, to have said, "O Jenny, I did not marry ye for beauty, as all the people may see." "Sleeping Beauty" has been almost worshipped. And if sleeping at church makes one beautiful, the preacher is permitted to behold rare specimens. "Jenny" may have been an exception.

We are told of a certain old Bishop, who, on seeing his congregation generally asleep, once took from his pocket his Hebrew Bible, and read a Chapter. Immediately after were wide awake, but it was only to be rebuked for listening when they knew not a word he uttered, after having slept when they might have understood all.

Andrew Fuller, on seeing the people, during the singing of the hymn before the sermon, composing themselves for a comfortable nap, is said to have taken the Bible, and, with a great noise, to have beaten it against the side of the pulpit. The attention of the people being excited, he exclaimed: "I am often afraid that I preach you to sleep; but it cannot be my fault to-day, for you are asleep before I have begun."

Robert Hall, too, seems to have failed to appreciate the class of hearers under consideration. With great plainness of speech he says, "The practice of sleeping in places of worship, a practice we believe not prevalent in any other places of public resort, is most distressing to ministers, and most disgraceful to those who indulge in it. If the apostle indignantly inquires of the Corinthians whether they had not houses to eat and drink in, may we not, with equal propriety, ask those who indulge in this practice whether they have not beds to sleep in, that they convert the house of God into a dormitory?"

In like manner one of the most eloquent young preachers of our own land, sometime before his lamented death, addressed his people:—

You should listen to the preaching of the Gospel with a careful regard to the feelings of your minister. Remember that he is a man; by education, by profession, it may be by temperament, a sensitive man. He has eyes that can see; he has ears that can hear; he has a heart that can feel. Let the delicate and honorable deference with which you meet, him in the street, or welcome him to your dwellings, not be entirely laid aside, when he stands before you as the messenger of God. There are many persons who act as if they supposed that the eminence of the pulpit raised their minister above the level of human feeling; that it was round about him like an impenetrable fortress, and every mark of contempt or disrespect or inattention from the audience falls as powerless as if it were a senseless machine. If he visit them at their homes, they would be ashamed to treat him with such coldness, and it would be deemed the lowest indecency to read a newspaper, or to drop asleep in the chair while he was talking to them; but when he stands before them in the pulpit, they borrow a license from his remoteness and elevation, and never dream that it is rude and ungentlemanly, to fix themselves in a good position for sleep. The truth is, the minister is and ought to be more keenly sensitive to those marks of public disrespect, than he would be to private and personal contempt. And he observes the position of every hearer in the house. He feels every symptom of gaping listlessness.

Nearly related to the sleeping hearers, are the inattentive hearers. They are always uneasy. Their seat is always a hard one. They never look at the preacher. They seem indifferent to all he says. The sound of his voice gives them the ear-ache. They are evidently irritated, and although they may sometimes be hearers of "great sermons," if there is clap-trap enough in them, it is evident that they are quite too far gone to listen to any ordinary preaching of the "simplicity that is in Christ." Being great hearers, they are hearers only on great occasions.

And so there are the busy hearers. The hymn book must be examined. Who knows but somebody has torn the very best hymn out of it! The