

# The Christian Visitor.

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**The Christian Visitor**  
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RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL.

## THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION IN WALES.

By the Rev. Dr. Thomas  
(Continued.)

The facts now stated show that a great work has been done in Wales, especially within the last half century. The evangelisation of the people has been carried on to a large extent by the free churches of different denominations; and in this sacred enterprise the Baptists have taken a leading part. With the aid of a few of the clergy of the State Church, and in spite of the fierce opposition of the majority of them, in league with a dominant aristocracy, "the great trumpet" of the Gospel has been sounded through the length and breadth of the land, amidst the dense multitudes of the coal and iron districts, and the scattered peasantry of bleak hills and of remote and lonely hamlets. "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes!"

But we must glance at the particular means by which it has been achieved. Our fathers in the ministry of the Word were peculiarly qualified for the work of dispelling the deep darkness of the people, and rousing their attention to their eternal interests. Sprung from the people, and thoroughly conversant with their modes of thought, and with their thoughts and customs, they knew how to address themselves to the minds and hearts of their hearers. Disregarding needless refinement of speech and manners, they spoke to the masses in the broad provincialisms of their own native tongue. Ever in sympathy with their hearers, and on a level with their understanding, often employing lively colloquialisms, familiar illustrations, dramatic representations, and the boldest figures of speech—and above all, warmed and melted by the love of Christ and of souls, they exercised a wonderful power over their congregations, and produced impressions never forgotten. They also acted as missionaries, and traversed the whole country publishing the Gospel of the kingdom of heaven: they were joyfully welcomed and entertained by every church they visited, and preached in farm-houses, cottages, barns, and the open air. They did not discountenance in their assemblies, the free expression of thought and feeling; but rather felt inspired, not only by the fixed attention, the joyous smile, and the silent tear, but also by the loud "amen," and other emphatic utterances. They held their monthly and quarterly meetings, partly for business and fraternal intercourse, but chiefly for preaching the Word; and they seldom failed to get large audiences. At their annual Associations, many thousands came together from great distances; and from a temporary platform erected in a field or on a hill-side, they proclaimed, two or three at each service, "the words of eternal life." "The sons of thunder" and the "sons of consolation" were always listened to with eager interest; and the texts and most telling remarks were remembered and talked of for many years. The pastors were much aided in their labors by a kind of lay agency—a large number of assistant or local preachers, who both supplied branch congregations at home, and made occasional excursions into distant parts. At an early period they also promoted the establishment of Sunday-schools, in which large classes of adults as well as of children were taught to read and understand the Scriptures. The experience of the past has shown that the common method of conducting prayer meetings, too, helped to impart to them a lively interest. They were distinguished by both variety and fervor; usually a portion of Scripture was read, half a dozen short and fervent prayers were offered, and "the service of song," which occurred three or four times, was almost invariably restricted to a single verse, which any one might give out; and was repeated as often as the feelings of the worshippers prompted them.

These various modes of operation are still continued with such modifications as altered times and circumstances have rendered desirable. The multiplication and growth of churches, and the settlement of pastors over them, have made preaching journeys less necessary, and the assistant preachers are seldom encouraged to go far from home. Still, when such journeys are undertaken, the pastors and other accredited ministers are generally received by the churches on Lord's day or week evening, "as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." The annual Associations are kept up, and largely retain their popularity. There is as much preaching as ever, but more time is devoted to the business of the conferences, which is conducted with credit, order and ability. The principle of association operates so powerfully in this direction that there are very few churches unconnected with these organizations; and the decisions of the conferences are generally regarded with great respect and practical submission.

The Christian ministry maintains its character and influence. If there are now no great preachers who stand out as prominently as Christmas Evans did among his contemporaries, there are many men of great ability, whose style of preaching is better adapted to the exigencies of the present time. The standard of ministerial qualifications has been considerably elevated, and the pastors retain their hold on the advancing intelligence of the people. They employ the popular and impressive style of the fathers, with larger views and a higher culture. Nor are they as a body inferior in moral wealth and evangelical earnestness, though the altered state of the country and of the population renders excessive physical labour unnecessary.

As to the religious character of our churches, it probably exhibits both the excellencies and defects of others placed in similar circumstances. The common people, blessed with an efficient ministry, Sunday-schools, religious periodicals, and the free intercourse of social equality, have certainly a fair, perhaps an unusual amount of Biblical knowledge. There are but few churches in which any broad distinctions of classes interfere with the cordiality and co-operation of the members and officers. Their marked defects and errors arise chiefly from their unavoidable association with the low and vicious in the manufacturing and mining districts, from antiquated social arrangements unfavorable to virtue in some agricultural parts, and from the prevalence of the liquor traffic, in which many members, and even deacons are implicated, and which has caused the greater number of ministerial failures and exclusions from membership. The churches have often been charged with the want of pecuniary liberality. But two things should be considered, namely, the poverty of the people in past times, and the prevalence of the imitating system, which laid the hospitality of families more than the pecuniary resources of the members. In this respect, however, there is no progressive improvement, as is obvious from the better support of pastors, the augmentation of college funds, and

"Hold fast the form of sound words"—2d Timothy, 1:13.

## CHARITY OUTSIDE OF TRUTH.

Our Pædobaptist friends are often urgent that we should surrender our views of strict communion, and imitate the example of Robert Hall and many English Baptists. They eulogize his liberality and noble Christian principles. Yet when we frankly ask them if they are willing, for the sake of Christian union, to meet us on his platform, they respectfully decline, and turn the cold shoulder. The following, from the *Christian Secretary*, is a good illustration:

The late Rev. Elisha Andrews, of New Hampshire, when travelling in Vermont soon after Robert Hall's views of communion had been published in this country, called on his kinsman, Rev. Elisha D. Andrews, then pastor of the Congregational church in Putney. These men, although distant relations, had to this time been strangers. In seating his caller, Mr. Andrews said: "I have heard of you; I believe you are a Baptist clergyman."

"I profess to be one of that persuasion," was the reply.

"Are you one of the rigid, close communion sort, or are you one of the more liberal kind?"

"I make no pretension to liberality, sir."

"Sorry to hear it. I wish you could get Mr. Hall's work on communion, and read it, and believe it, and practice it."

"It must be a good book to be worthy of all that. Of what does it treat, Mr. Andrews?"

"Why, Mr. Hall is a Baptist, and of course does not believe that anything but immersion is baptism."

"Ah! he don't! Well, I should agree with him in that respect. Do you agree with him, Mr. Andrews?"

"O no, of course not. I believe that water may be applied in various ways, and yet be valid baptism."

"Of what else does Mr. Hall speak?"

"Well, he does not believe that infants are suitable subjects for the ordinance."

"Of course not. Well, I agree with him here, too. Do you agree to this?"

"No, O, no! I believe that children of believers are to be baptized."

"Is there any other thing taught in this work of Mr. Hall's?"

"Yes, Mr. Hall takes the ground that baptism is not a necessary prerequisite to communion."

"Here I must dissent from Mr. Hall. Do you agree with him in this particular?"

"Why, no, not exactly. I have always thought that baptism should precede the Lord's Supper. I think this is the sentiment of our denomination generally."

"Anything further?"

"I don't recollect any other point worthy of note."

"I think, cousin Andrews, that you are a pretty fellow. You want me to read, believe and practice a book that you don't believe a word of, and yet I do believe two-thirds of it!"

## THE SEA CAPTAIN'S STORY.

The sea captain was a large, frank, noble-looking man. There was no one in the stage who could talk faster, laugh louder, or swear more fearfully. The stage was full, and all day they travelled together. Among other topics of conversation, the captain related an account of a terrible storm he had met with in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. When the storm met them unexpectedly, they made all haste to take in sail, to get the spars down from their heights, to get every boat and every movable thing lashed. How the storm swept over the waters, making the waves curl and quiver as if in a continued shudder! Everything was made taut and trim, the storm-tail set, the helm lashed, and then the men had done all they could. Surely and fast she drifted before the storm towards the rocky shores of Labrador; but no human power could manage the vessel. All day and all night she drifted, and then about sunrise struck upon a little island. There for a few moments she was lifted over rocks, till at last a huge wave placed her on a great rock, where she swung and writhed. "All knew that she must soon go to pieces!" So they went to work to make a raft, hoping that possibly they might thus reach land. Hardly had they got it done, when the poor groaning vessel went all to pieces. The men shouted, "To the raft! to the raft!" "Alas! the captain was the only one who got on to it and tied himself to it. With many oaths he told how awful the scene—how the poor fellows struggled and tried to grasp the raft, but the waves dashed them off to sea no more."

"And there," said the captain, "I was alone. Not a thing saved, not a mouthful of food, not a drop of water! For three days and three nights I was on the raft, till I was nearly gone, when a ship came near. I had just strength enough to hold up my red flannel shirt, which they saw, and came to my relief. I was too much exhausted to stand, or even to speak. My life hung by a hair. But here I am, on my way home, having lost all I had in the world."

The passengers were much interested in the captain's narrative, and one silent gentleman got to contribute a handsome sum, giving the lion's share, which was delicately given to the captain. He seemed very grateful, and showed a great sense of relief.

In going up a long hill, just before night, the passengers all got out and walked up the hill. It was then that the silent gentleman found himself walking alone with the captain.

"Captain, may I ask you a question and not give offence?"

"Certainly, sir, and I'll be happy to answer it."

"Well, sir, when you was on that raft alone, during those long days and nights, didn't you solemnly promise the Lord that if he would spare you and save you, you would live a different life, and serve him?"

"None of your business, sir!" said the captain, reddening and drawing in his breath.

They got into the stage, and soon came to their lodging village. The captain was silent, and so was the silent man. The captain was to stop there and turn off in a different direction. At daybreak the stage and the rest were to go on.

Just before the break of day there was a knock at the chamber-door of the silent man. He opened the door, having first kindled a light, and there stood the captain. His eyes were red, and his face was flushed, and his great bosom heaved. He took the hand of the gentleman and sobbed, and heaved, and sobbed, and spoke:

"Sir, I treated you rudely yesterday. I come to ask your pardon. I did promise and vow to God on that raft that if he would spare me I would live a different life, and I would serve him like a sinner I am! I have not slept a wink all night. Will you—will you pray for me and forgive me?"

The gentleman wept too, and promised all that he had asked, and then the stage drove up. They

## THE UNKNOWN PAINTER.

Murillo, the celebrated artist of Seville, often found upon the canvas of some one of his pupils sketches or specimens of drawing, imperfect and unfinished, but bearing the rich impress of genius. They were executed during the night, and he was utterly unable to conjecture the author. One morning the pupils had arrived at the studio before him, and were grouped before an easel, uttering exclamations of delighted surprise, when Murillo entered. His astonishment was equal to their own on finding an unfinished head of the Virgin, of exquisite outline, with many touches of surpassing beauty. He appealed first to one and then another of the young gentlemen, to see if they could lay claim to the choice but mysterious production, but they returned a sorrowful negative. "He who has left this tracery will one day be master of us all. Sebastian," said he—a youthful slave stood trembling before him—"who occupies this studio at night?"

"No one but myself, señor."

"Well, take your station here to-night, and if you do not inform of the mysterious visitant to this room, thirty lashes shall be your reward on the morrow."

He bowed in quiet submission and retired. That night he threw his mattress before the easel and slept soundly till the clock struck three. He then sprang from his couch and exclaimed, "three hours are my own, the rest are my master's!" He then seized a palette, and took his seat at the frame, to erase the work of the preceding night. With brush in hand, to make the obvious stroke, he paused: "O, those eyes," said he, "they pierce me through; that blood will run from those purple veins; I cannot, O, I cannot erase it; rather let me finish it!"

He went to work; and soon the slave, the darkened brow, the child of toil and suffering, emerged in a youthful spirit, rising from the impetus of his own deathless energies into a sphere of liberty and bright beauty.

"A little bolder here, a touch there, a soft shade here, and thus three hours rolled unheeded by." "O, those beaming eyes; those lips, they will speak and bless me; my beautiful! O, my beautiful!" a slight noise caused him to look up. Murillo with his pupils stood around; the sunshine was peering brightly through the easement, while yet the unextinguished taper burned. Again he was a slave, and the spirit's folded wing scarce seemed to flutter. His eyes fell beneath their eager gaze.

"Who is your master, Sebastian?"

"You, señor."

"Your drawing master, I mean?"

"You, señor."

"I have never given you lessons."

"No; but you gave them to these young gentlemen, and I heard them."

"Yes, you have done better—you have profited by them. Does this boy deserve punishment or reward, my dear pupils?"

"Reward, señor," was the quick response.

"What shall it be?"

One suggested a suit of clothes, another a sum of money, but no chord was touched in the captive's bosom. Another said, the master feels kindly to-day; ask your freedom, Sebastian?"

He sunk on his knees, and a groan of anguish burst from him; he lifted his burning eyes to his master's face: "The freedom of my father!"

The death-chill had passed from his heart, and he breathed. Murillo folded him to his bosom. "Your pencil shows that you have talent, your request that you have a heart; you are no longer my slave, but my son. Happy Murillo! I have not painted, but made a painter!"

There are still to be seen in classic Italy many beautiful specimens from the pencils of Murillo and Sebastian.

Is there not a voice fraught with sweet eloquence from this little story, penetrating to the sanctuary of the heart, and awakening its holiest sensibilities? Is there not between the circumstances and trials of our little hero, and the events that sometimes occur in the career of the Christian, an impressive analogy?

Does he sometimes feel that the shadows of night encompass his pathway; that a dark captivity rests upon him; but, true to the heavenly impulse, he keeps brightly burning the lamp of faith? With chastened spirit he applies himself vigorously, earnestly to his work, his appointed work, and O what springs, perennial springs of life and beauty, are unsealed to him in that hour of dark stern trial. He finds, by the light of his wondrous lamp, locked in the cell of his oppressed heart, the germ of infinite treasures, and opening into its profoundest depth a fountain of light from the shores of immortality. He forgets his captivity, forgets that sin and sorrow have cast their murky shadows over him in the delightful service of his heavenly Master.

"Bright will the morn of eternity dawn."

Sometimes he thought he was toiling alone and unheeded, but that light will disclose eberdium and seraphim with eyes of eager interest bent upon him, arms of everlasting love ready to enfold him, and a voice filling his soul with untold bliss, shall say, "I have loved thee, loved thee with infinite and unchanging tenderness; thou hast overcome; henceforth thou art mine, forever mine."

## A SHARE IN THE CONCERN.

One evening, as a little sweep was running along the street, a big sweep met him, and shouted to the little fellow, "Halloo, Jack, where are you going in such a hurry?" Little Jack said, "Don't bother me now; I'm going to the missionary meeting; I've got a share in the concern, and I want to go and see how things go on." This little sweep was a Sabbath-school, and he was a subscriber to the missionary society; hence he said he had a share in the concern, and was going to see how things went on. Are there not many boys of respectable families who have no share in the concern? Let such learn from the little sweep their duty, immediately enjoy the privilege of becoming shareholders in this honorable concern.—*Missionary Advocate.*

Men of the greatest excellencies are the main objects upon which the eye of envy is placed.—*Books.*

## FLOWERS.

The blue-eyed Violet first we sing,  
So dainty and so fair,  
The soft south breeze kiss its lip,  
And breathes its fragrance rare,  
Sweet Flora's seedlings all are prized,  
But most this lovely flower,  
This modest unassuming child,  
Of April's sun and shower.

Within the garden's cultured round  
Are lavishly displayed,  
A radiant band of "lovely things"  
In glowing tints arrayed:  
The Rose—the fragrant blushing rose,  
Reigns proudly, queenly there,  
She claims bright beauty's palm as her's,  
With regal courtly air.

How sweet at early morn to note  
Gay flowers of every hue,  
In graceful homage bending 'neath  
The showers of pearly dew.  
The costly jewels which adorn  
A monarch's diadem,  
For brilliance and rare loveliness  
Can ne'er compare with them.

The Lilies neither "toll nor spin,"  
Yet Solomon's array,  
We've rivaled with them—the never-worn  
Such lustrous robes as Eden's bowers,  
They shed their snowy bloom,  
And deck'd the nuptial couch of Eve,  
With beauty and perfume.

The "Lily of the Valley's" type  
Of Purity and Love,  
Which died—and rose—now glorious reigns  
In Paradise above.  
While "nature's gems" are passing fair,  
Her fragrant realms disclose  
No flower so precious—lovely, sweet,  
As Sharon's Sacred Rose.

## MORNING.

How beautiful is morn, when 'awakening in the orient sky she pushes aside the sable curtains of night, and looks forth with blushing face upon the sleeping earth! The moon "pale with envy" seeks to hide her waning beauty beneath the silvery folds of the "golden tipped" clouds, which are mirrored in the pellucid waters, seeming as if another earth, with its azure sky and waving wealth of "light and shade" were at our feet. Soft strains of music are gushing from the leafy-vorn groves, for the gay warblers are so near, and seem to unite with all nature in praising the Hand that fashioned the lovely things so profusely displayed; even these delicate flowers bending 'neath their weight of pearly dew show forth the greatness of the Creator.

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good!  
Thyself thyself, thyself, how wondrous then!  
But now from his palace, like a deity, darts his lustrous eyes from pole to pole, the glorious sun comes forth, flooding the earth with brilliant light and beauty; the river lies bathed in his rosy beams, and the little wavelets crowned with sunshine play "hide and seek" with the grassy blades, and velvet mosses that gem the banks of the winding stream. Delicious is this morning air laden with fragrance; and while the light-winged zephyrs are abroad rifling the sweet breathing flowers, who would not willingly break the shackles of the drowsy god to inhale the balmy breeze?

Wary Mr. Dow's Cav. Famine.—A pious father had devoted great attention to the education of his son, who had maintained an unblemished reputation until the age of fourteen, when he was detected in a deliberate falsehood. The father's grief was great, and he determined to punish the offender severely. He made the subject one of prayer, for it was too important in his esteem to be passed over as a common occurrence of the day. He then called his son and prepared to inflict the punishment. But the fountain of the father's heart was broken up. He wept aloud. For moment the lad seemed confounded. He saw the struggle between love and justice in his parent's bosom, and broke out with all his usual eloquence: "Father, father, whip me as much you please, but don't cry over me." The point was gained. The father saw that the child's character was sensibly affected by this incident. He grew up, and became one of the most distinguished Christian ministers in America.