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The Christian Visitor.

THE OFFICE OF THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR, Corner of Prince William and Church Streets, SAINT JOHN, N. B. REV. I. E. BILL, Editor and Proprietor.

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

SAINT JOHN, N. B., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1866.

COMMERCIAL SCHOOL, Charlotte Street, a few doors South St. John Hotel. SAMUEL D. MILLER, Principal.

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THE ENIGMA OF LIFE.

How full of mystery is life! A troublous and bewildering maze, A night with but few guiding rays, A volume with enigmas rife.

The wicked thrive, the virtuous meet With poverty and cold neglect; Wealth and not worth insures respect, And folly sits in wisdom's seat.

Like puzzling hieroglyphics seem The characters before our eye; And scenes are ever passing by, Strange and disordered as a dream.

Sorrow, misfortune, pain and care, In quick succession through our path; Loved ones, once gathered round our hearth, Are seen, alas! no longer there.

O who shall solve for anxious minds The problems which this life suggests? Where is the shrine where reason rests, The pole-star which the spirit finds?

Faith is the anchor of the soul, It links us to the world above; It leads us to the God of love, Whose hand doth all events control.

He will evolve—we know not how— The purest good from every ill; Then like wise children, to his will In meek submission let us bow.

The past is dark, the future dim; A tangled web the present seems; But through each cloud God's promise gleams, And we will calmly trust in Him.

Now through a glass we darkly see, And therefore fail his plans to trace; But when we meet him face to face, Unclouded shall our vision be.

Then knowledge perfected will cast Its radiance o'er this earthly sphere; And full of wisdom will appear The intricacies of the past.

SUNNY HOMES.

There is a spot, even in this sad world, which is supremely blest—a spot brighter, dearer, sweeter than all the rest—and that spot is home, with all its tender ties and sunny memories.

It is Jeremy Taylor who says that "the first blessing which God gave to man was society; that society was marriage; and that marriage was consecrated by God himself, and hallowed by a blessing."

Now can it be denied that the home of wedded love is made all the sunnier and all the happier by the presence of infant life; while for the presence and protection of this infant life, the most beautiful provision has been made in the depth and intensity of maternal love.

Of all our human affections, this maternal love is the strongest and the most enduring. The love of offspring is inherent in our humanity; and though it would be the extreme of folly to count it a curse to be childless, who can describe her emotions who is "the joyful mother of children?"

It was on the night of Good Friday, 1523, that there might have been standing under the walls of the Convent of Nimpfach a covered wagon, with two strong, sturdy fellows, who were equal to some more daring enterprise.

Like a puzzle, the characters before our eye; And scenes are ever passing by, Strange and disordered as a dream.

Of the future history of these ladies we have here nothing more to say than that one of them, Katharine von Horn, became, a few years after, the wedded wife of the great German Reformer.

In domestic peace and conjugal affection—those surest fountains of earthly happiness—Luther found new sources of satisfaction and delight, and for them he was wont to leave those severe studies to which he was devoted.

It was no vulgar mind which conceived and drew the following contrast: "There is a place on the earth where pure joys are unknown, from which politeness is banished, and has given place to selfishness, contradictions, and half-veiled insults.

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He was ever seeking to ann his own soul, that he might shed light and gladness over them. Having left them for a time to attend the Diet of Augsburg, he took up his abode on the hill of Coburg—the loneliness of the spot being favorable to study and reflection; and which, being in itself a kind of Mount Sinai, he converted into a hill of Zion, and there, to use his own words, "set up three tabernacles, one for the Psalms, one for the Prophets, and another for Esop."

While at Coburg he received the painful news of his father's death. His cup of bliss was not without its bitter ingredient. His eldest daughter died within a year of her birth, and over the couch of his loved Magdalene, then in her fourteenth year, and like some more beautiful bud just bursting into blossom, we see him bending with untold anxiety, watching every change in her features, revealing to her, in his every look and smile, his inmost heart, speaking to her of heaven with its unfading loveliness, and assuring her of joys pure and unending above the sky.

The dark cloud gradually rolled away, and the light shone out as brightly as before; and to life's last moment Luther's home was one of the sunniest spots on earth.

THE CHURCH AND HUMAN GOVERNMENT.

Other duties prevented us from giving even an outline of the sermon of Rev. J. D. Fulton at the time of its delivery, as one of a series of discourses on "Baptist Principles," under the auspices of the "Social Union."

The primitive churches were, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, distinct congregations of Christians, each in the administration of its affairs independent of the rest, but all united by the common faith and allegiance, the only recognized Head of the church.

The democracy of the Baptist churches not only expresses God's idea of church government, but by inference of human government. Therefore it is to be expected, what is historically true, that Baptist churches should, especially with greater stress of voice the doctrines of "sovereignty," "human rights and equality," and the democracy of Christianity, than those churches whose theoretical views and forms of order were moulded by the teachings of men and the mandates of "evil government."

Believing that a church of Christ should be composed of regenerated persons, Baptists require that a candidate for membership shall furnish evidence that he understands the Gospel, and has been converted. So in our government, evidence of an intelligent apprehension of its nature and loyalty to it should precede citizenship.

rite which initiates a man into the church, and publicly proclaims his faith in Christ. And the policy of reconstruction should demand of the South that before it is readmitted its citizen should be able to write, and to read the constitution of the United States, and publicly proclaim their love for the government.

The practice of Baptist churches may aid in deciding the question of suffrage. All the members of a church, men and women, black and white, have equal rights, therefore all vote. A Baptist church is a democracy, where each one has an appropriate place and share in the responsibilities of the government. The unity of the church is secured by the obedience of all to Christ, as revealed in the New Testament.

Such is the outline of a sermon which commanded the attention of a large congregation. That the ideas of the preacher will command the assent of all Baptists is scarcely to be expected, but they may suggest to some that our principles are more thoroughly founded on the thought of God, and more intimately related to the future of Christianity and civilization, than they have supposed.

But the subject is timely and worth thinking about, and we thank our reverend brother for calling attention to it. We hope that as the pastor of an efficient Baptist church and the preacher to the largest congregation in Boston, he may find a practical illustration of the truthfulness of his ideas in the growth and efficiency of his own church.

THE MORALS OF THE THEATRE.

The Wabash Avenue Methodist Episcopal church was crowded lately, on the occasion of the delivery of Rev. Mr. Hatfield's second address upon the theatre.

In opening his discourse the speaker briefly reviewed his previous sermon on this subject, in which he avowed first, that the theatre had had a notoriously bad reputation for two thousand years; second, that it is not changed; third, that the theatre exercises a bad influence on the neighborhood in which it is located; fourth, that the character of actors is marked and significantly bad; fifth, it is had otherwise.

The greatest care may be used regarding the admission of improper persons, but the painted Jzebels, who are the chief attraction of the stage, are always sure to be there. A committee of the English Parliament, considering this subject, said nothing could be done to improve the theatre except burn it down. The theatre cannot be reformed because it is supported by people who are in quest of impure excitement, and are willing to pay for it.

Starting with the idea that the thoughts of God are exhibited in His physical and moral creations, and that these indicate His purposes, the preacher finds in the democratic elements which characterized the primitive, apostolic churches, and which exist in their legitimate successors—the Baptist churches—an expression of the purpose of God, not only as to the form of a church, but as to the form of government which eventually will be adopted by the Christianized world.

Each church chose, by a vote of all its members, its officers, who derived their authority and wisdom from their Lord. Each church was the equal of the other, each was related to the other by mutual love and respect for the guidance of the Spirit given to all, but each was a democracy complete in itself. From this democratic form there was an apostasy, whereby the churches were united under a monarchical form of government whose highest development is the Roman Catholic church.

The good old man is dead, but the words he uttered may serve as a warning to more than one, especially to the young. Never neglect secret prayer. Neglect this, and you cannot fall to grow cold and indifferent. Never let a day pass over your head without earnest prayer.

A lost lifetime.—A young man was converted during an illness which proved fatal, though this was not apprehended when he seemed to give his heart to Christ. When his physician announced an unfavorable change in his condition, he expressed entire resignation, and requested his friends to sing a hymn expressive of that feeling.

Secular and Religious Miscellany. The following are the Baptist statistics of Massachusetts, as presented in the annual report of the convention:—churches, 204; pastors, 198; ordained ministers, 299; baptized, 1,221; present membership, 35,760; students for the ministry, 32; money raised for religious uses, \$592,298.

BISHOP COLENSO.—The reply of Bishop Colenso to an address which had been presented to him from D'Urban, Natal, on his arrival in the colony, has been published. He protests strongly that what he had done in England was done not merely as a Christian man, but expressly as a member of the United Church of England and Ireland. He dwells at great length on the Queen's supremacy in the Church, maintaining that whether it was called Erastian or not, it was nevertheless the law of the Church, to which all members were bound.

UNION AMONG PRESBYTERIANS.—The Union Committee, consisting of the Free Church of Scotland, the United Presbyterian, the Reformed Presbyterian, and the English Presbyterian Committees, met in Edinburgh on Dec. 27th, and had a harmonious and effective meeting. The negotiations are reported to be proceeding hopefully. Dr. Nott, of Union College, New York, died on the 29th ult., in the 93rd year of his age. He was a very superior man.

The English market for colonial lumber is unusually good. This will go far to help us over the Reciprocity trouble. Professor Simpson, of Edinburgh, whose name is so widely known in connection with the discovery of the anæsthetic properties of chloroform, has been created a baronet. This is said to be the first time a baronetcy has been given to a Scottish professor or to a medical practitioner in Scotland.

Check forgeries have been very common in Boston of late, and very successful. In one day, four Boston banks paid out about \$19,000 to bearers of forged checks. THE SUICIDAL MANIA.—It was stated at a recent meeting of the County Medical Society, that the number of known suicides in New York and Brooklyn alone, is about one hundred per annum; and it is believed that at least an equal number take place every year, which never come to the knowledge of the public. It was also stated that the attempts of not less than a hundred would-be suicides to put an end to their existence, are annually prevented.

SAD ACCIDENT.—About a week ago, a man named McBurnie, belonging to Tatamagouche, met with a shocking death. He was sitting on a sled load of hay, and falling down in front, got entangled with his head dragging on the ground. The horse became frightened, ran off, and the unfortunate man's head was bruised and mangled in a horrible manner. He only survived his injuries a few hours. It is said that the man was under the influence of intoxicating liquor at the time.—Picton Chronicle.

SHIPWRECKS.—The loss during the late storms of between 300 and 400 ships has been reported by the Receiver of Wrecks, and this terrible list is being daily supplemented. Several very sad disasters are reported. One is the loss of the Liverpool clipper ship Hannah More, which was wrecked on Lundy Island, the captain, four mates, and 13 seamen being drowned. The other casualty occurred to one of the great Yarmouth life-boats, which, while engaged in saving life, capsized, and 12 of her crew perished.

Young ladies should converse with their female friends as if they were talking to gentlemen; and with gentlemen as though they were conversing with women. Mexico has had during the last forty years thirty-seven forms of government, and seventy Presidents: it has also had two hundred revolutions. What are such a changeable people worth?

Three hundred of the two thousand post offices re-opened in the Southern States have received post-mistresses, because the men could not take the test oath. The village post-mistress, we suppose, supplies the place of a newspaper.

A sensible New York judge recently awarded \$3,000 damages, to prove to a driver of a fast horse that he must keep out of the way of foot travellers. A masonic lodge in Poland has excommunicated the pope, because when a man has joined the usons, but since he became pope has excommunicated them.

The conspirators who assassinated President Lincoln, Dr. Mudd, Spangler and O'Laughlin, occupy the room of the Dry Tortugas, and are menial servants. Dr. Mudd, since his late attempt at escape, is behaving as a "good boy."

The new Governor, Gen. Storke, has taken charge of Jamaica. One hundred and fifty political prisoners are yet to be tried. Counsel for Mrs. Gordon, whose husband was executed by the English authorities, has arrived from London.

Mrs. Greene, daughter of Copley, the artist, and sister of Lord Lyndhurst, of England, died in Boston, Feb. 2d, aged 95 years. She was one of the last relics of colonial times. The BARK FREDONIA, Capt. Burke, at great risk rescued some 200 people from the disabled ship Gratitude, and brought them safely to Boston. The merchants of that city have testified their appreciation of Capt. Burke's conduct by raising \$32,000 to be awarded as follows: \$5000 to Capt. Burke, \$500 to first mate, \$500 to second mate, \$200 to each of the crew of the bark Fredonia.—The balance to go to owner of bark for merchandise thrown aboard.

A woman in Chicago, who is not yet sixteen, was married and divorced in eight days. A large number of vessels have been chartered to bring bamboo from Jamaica to New York, for the manufacture of paper. Paper is so high that bamboo has been experimented upon, and is found to produce a cheap and excellent article. Three things only are essential to happiness, namely: something to do; something to love; and something to hope for.