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The Christian Visitor.

"Hold fast the form of sound words."—2d Timothy, 1.13

SAINT JOHN, N. B., THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 1867.

THE VICTORY OVER AMALEK. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand that Israel prevailed.—Exod. xvii. 11.

On red Rehidim's battle plain, The banners sank and rose again; The tumult of the wild affray Rolled round to Horeb's mountain grey, Rolled down to thirsty Maribah, As Israel's host swept past, And Amalek's fierce battle cry, Came surging on the blast.

Above the strife the leader hung With hands upraised, and suppliant tongue, And still his wearied arm was stayed, And still the unceasing prayer was prayed, Till evening held the setting sun— Wrapt in her mantle pale, And Amalek, and all his host, Rashed, rooted, down the vale.

Then ask us not why, day by day, The same sweet morning prayers we say; Why, night by night, our even song Peals in the same soft strain along; Why children seek the mother's knee At eve to lian their prayer, While fingers rosy-fingered slip O'er their fringed eye-lids fair.

Nor say, 'Ye vex God's patient ear, And vain the strains that linger here— A soulless form, a weary round, A cry that hath no cheering sound;— Ye hear no voice, ye see no sign, Adown heaven's crystal stair; No white-robed angels gliding bring An answer to your prayer.

Nay, but God loves the constant cry; He wills the words should never die That speak our needs. Prayer pushes prayer Up into heaven's sublimer air; There round the throne eternally They pass and still repeat. Our whispers are the airs that breathe Above the sea of glass.

Within His temple shrine of old He bade the priests their watches hold; Still through the carved cedar flowers The deep chant swelled at solemn hours; Still, day by day, the incense burning, Crushed out its odours sweet; Still, morn and eve, the lamps were lighted Before the mercy seat.

And Nature, with her quiet force Of powers that keep their ordered course, And circle on, we know not why; Doth teach a hidden rule more high: The dew may drop to feed the earth, But why should planets glow? Why should the golden daisy cups Look yearly from below?

Yet, night by night, so calmly pale, The stars through heaven's blue ocean sail; Yet, year by year, like scattered seeds, The wild flowers come to deck our meads. All have their places and their parts In Heaven's sublime decrees, And words, that seem to wander wide, Shall find their end like these.

THE WIND-SWEPT HARP. It is related that in Germany there stood two vast towers, far apart, on the extremes of a circle; and that the old barge to whom this castle belonged stretched huge wires across from one to the other, thus constructing an Æolian harp. Ordinary winds produced no effect upon the mighty instrument; but when fierce storms and wild tempests came rushing down the sides of the mountains and through the valleys, and hurried themselves against those wires, then they began to roll out the most majestic strains of music that can be conceived.

REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER. A LECTURE-ROOM TALK ON CHILDREN.

In looking back upon my own childhood, I can see that at a very early period I had a deep religious sensibility. I do not know but the strong Calvinistic doctrine under which I was reared, developed very powerfully that side of my nature. I think that the views which, belong to that scheme have their best fruit in the sense which my minister of the infiniteness and of the transcendent importance of the soul's life in the future; it is not logically necessary, it has been too often the case that the elements of hope and encouragement have been left out.

Men are all sinful; none are born other than sinful, and probably none ever will be; but it does not follow on that account that the doctrine of human sinfulness should be the meat and drink of a child's education. Yet, I cannot doubt that that was the predominant truth which rested on my mind. From the representations which I bear, not only, but from the carriage of my parents and of other Christians toward me, the fact seemed to me to be about this: No man is without anything whatever before God till he has been converted; and conversion is a dramatic pause in a man's natural life, by which, through the agency of the Holy Ghost, truth is ministered to him, after which he is victorious over sin and everything goes right with him. Previous to that it is considered that a man, is a natural man; that, as my father used to teach, it is not possible for him to do anything to please God. And my childish impression was, that after he was a Christian he could hardly do anything that would not please God. He became then a favourite with God.

The question was, what to do with children. In the first place conversion was keyed so high, it depended upon such high motives, it required such refinement of the intellect and such loftiness of the moral sentiments, that a child was not considered capable of attaining it. It was to be a problem too difficult for young minds to grasp. Children were taught that they were sinners, and needed to be converted; and yet there was a kind of not knowing on the part of the parents what to do. They seemed to think that all they could do was to bring them up as best they could, till they came to the age when they might be converted and become good Christians. And that was just about the way I was dealt with. I had powerful religious impressions, and I was treated as though my state of mind would be of use some time when I had become older, and it could be worked up, but as though that time had not yet come.

I am satisfied that in my case it was a mistake. I have no doubt that the state of mind I was in could have been made available then. Before I was twelve years of age I went to two meetings in which I was profoundly and perfectly magnetized, so that I did not know whether I was in the body or out of the body; so that I did not know whether I touched the floor with my feet or not. I would have given all the world to have had my mind relieved on certain points that troubled me, but nobody came to my relief—not even my father or my mother. They talked to me about religion; but not in the way I needed to be talked to. My mother would sit down and say to me, "You know that you have by nature a sinful heart, and that unless you are born again you cannot enter into the kingdom of God"—and down, down would go the mercury in me! "God is angry with you wicked every day." I knew that before, and I had trembled a hundred times in the dark to think how God was angry with me. "All your thoughts and purposes are impure. You are a child deserving of God's wrath, and it is nothing but Divine mercy that keeps you out of hell for a single moment." It was this that troubled me.

Then I heard such preachers as Dr. Finney. I remember a clergyman that took me on his knee and told me stories about hell for nearly an hour, producing such an effect on me that I did not dare to sleep alone for three nights afterwards. I was well-nigh paralyzed with fear. And not until I was a man grown, and found it out myself, did anybody tell me about such a love of God as could be made use of by a poor, wretched, kicked-about, unconverted child. I never, until then, had a distinct view of salvation by grace. I never until then had a sense of God's tenderness and gentleness such as is described in the Old Testament scriptures, where He is represented as watching His flock and taking up the young and tender-footed in His arms and carrying them over the rough places.

That was my state. I was a little bit of a lamb, that stumbled over the uneven ground, and could not get along; and if it had been told me that there was that in the love of God in Christ Jesus that took lambs in His arms, and carried them where they could not walk themselves, it would have been an inexpressible comfort to me. I knew He would take care of me when I was converted; but I was not converted. I knew I should not lack for Divine help when I had become a true Christian, but I did not expect it until I had in some way, by faith, or repentance, or something else, overcome the evil that was in me, and become good. I was waiting for this change.

Meanwhile, I was a poor little fellow, with a certain constitutional strain of sadness underlying my buoyant temperament. And I spent hours, and sometimes days, in which literally the sky was dark to me though the sun shone. Really, I have gone through days in which the song of birds was discordant, and a torment to me, in my then state of feeling.

Now, children are still taught so, and that by conscientious persons, by earnest and devout people, from a misapprehension of the proper uses of the doctrines of the Bible. I was from a child instructed that by nature man is sinful. I think it quite possible to instruct a child in that direction so as to form in him a conscience on the subject, and make him feel that there is a profound interest connected with his volitions, his choices, his emotions and inward experiences. And it may be accompanied with a disclosure of the love of Christ, as that he shall not be given over to the ridden of fear, and that he shall begin to love Christ almost as early as he begins to form any other volitions.

It seems to me that as it was on earth, so it is in heaven, that children naturally like to run to Christ's knee; and it seems to me that like a father or mother, the side of His nature which He presents to children is the side of gentleness, condescension and forgiving love—a love by which He is worked out statement. And there is given to many parents a gift of representation by which they may early teach their children, so that long before what is considered an ordinary period of self-reliance they may be converted.

develops finally into love. And not only that, but as soon as they come to discriminate moral qualities in persons, I think they may be able, in their way, to discern moral quality in God—to love it and to be affected by it. I have seen children that had been taught that their best friend was Jesus Christ, and that He loved little children so that He was grieved when they did wrong, and was pleased when they did right, and took an interest in everything that they did; and nothing was so attractive to them as the name of Jesus. I have known children to whom that name was a greater power than school teacher, or than father or mother. And I believe that parents should seek to develop the religious nature of their children. I believe there ought to be such instruction in the household as that children shall grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord from the beginning. I do not mean to set aside the doctrine of conversion, but I say that it does not require any such mechanical, formal method as many suppose. When a child knows enough to look up to Christ and say, "My Christ," and to feel, "I do want to live so as to please Thee," he is converted. It may require afterward more volitionness. There are many parts of the unfolded life that have to be transformed, formed again; but in the child the simple act of loving Christ—of clinging to Him—I hold to be the purest and least obstructed form of conversion. Faith and love are the beginnings of Christian character in children.

Where children are full of sentiment and affection, and hope and strong sensibility, it does not seem to me wise to feed them with those sterner aspects of God's character which belong to hardened, rebellious men. Why, to take a little child that is untaught, and that is willing upon the first representation to cling to Christ in love, and to tell him of One whose fury burns to the lowest hell, and to explode in his ears all those thunders with which God meets the hard and incorrigible, is needless and unwise. This showing to children the corruptions and miseries of men in the lowest stages of life, as a part of the regimen of wholesome up-bringing in the family, is unnecessary and injurious. The elements of God's character are distributed, as it were, in revelation, to meet the exigencies of the minds of men in every stage; and there are parts of the divine character which are revealed that they may have their effect not on the pure and innocent, but on sinners, on vicious men, on men that are abusers of themselves and their fellow men. There are phases of God's character which are juridical and penalty-bearing, and there are men to whom a revelation of these phases is indispensable; but there are many to whom such a revelation is not essential. And you cannot treat all men, or men and children, of all children alike in these regards. I think that many children are led by a thread, as it were, by Christ, and that He leads them all their life. There are many children that have to go through a more serious discipline. They have constitutionally a more discordant nature. Many children have to be seasoned together, so to speak. Their faculties are in juxtaposition rather than in unity. Harmony in them has to come through an artificial process. You shall see children that are of one disposition when they are young, but that when they come to be fifteen or sixteen years old, are so totally changed that you would not know them. I know of one very docile, tractable, lovable child, that used to be fierce and unlovely, and that instead of believing everything, believed nothing. Now it is completely transformed. I have known children that were excessively disagreeable and very unpromising while they were under twelve or fifteen years of age, who after that began to have the moral sentiments developed in them, and seemed to take on elements that gave balance to their minds, and rendered them mild and sweet in their disposition. I know a great many very obstinate children. Perhaps you may know some such. You can hardly do anything with them as children.—But as they grow older they come to their own relief.

Now, in all these varying cases you must educate according to the disposition. There are children, I doubt not, who need to be plied with fear; but because some need it and can bear it, you should not give it to all. Stimulants of this extreme kind must be employed as medicine.—There are cases where heroic doses will do; but it would not answer to go through every ward of a hospital giving such doses to all the patients. Doctors vary their doses with discrimination and care, according to the patient's condition; and we ought to do the same thing in administering religious truth to our children.

HOW GOD SOMETIMES ANSWERS PRAYER. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Such being the case, it is doubtless the earnest daily prayer of every true disciple that he may be enabled to withdraw his affections from the world and the things of the world, and fix them fully and intensely upon God; that all undue attachment to earth and earthly objects may be sundered; and that God alone may fill his soul, may be his ———— all sufficient good, His portion and his choice.

This prayer cannot but be pleasing and acceptable to God; and, if it indicate the prevailing temper and desire of the heart, will assuredly be answered. But the answer may come by a process he little expects. He may look for it as the result of some direct divine influence upon the soul. But this is not God's usual method of grace. The soul must needs go through a disciplinary process to be purified and etherealized, and may be at times unconscious of the divine influence by which the process is directed. "He leaveth the blind by a way he knew not."

He who offers this prayer may presently find himself interrupted in his worldly property.—His schemes for accumulation are frustrated. The fields may yield no more, the flocks be cut off from the fold, and there be no herds in the stalls. Poverty may stare him in the face; friends may prove recreant; the dear ones of his family may be stricken, and sickness and death may invade the domestic circle. A beloved child, upon whom he has doted, and for whom he has prayed, may become profligate, and become a sword that shall pierce his soul; his reputation among men may suffer, his conduct be questioned, his motives impugned, and his name be cast out as evil; innumerable evils may press upon and almost crush him, till he cries out, "O Lord, why castest thou off my soul? Why hidest thou thy face from me? I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up; while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted." "Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy ways." "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Is his mercy gone forever; and will he be favourable no more?" "O with Luther, "Lord, where art thou? My God, where art thou? Come, I pray thee. I will not let thee go. And though the world should be thronged with devils, and this body be cast forth, trodden under foot, cut in pieces, consumed

to ashes, my soul is thine. My soul belongs to thee, forever. Amen. O God, send help."

Thus he is weaned from earth, and driven to God as his only and last resort. "God is the refuge of his soul When storms of dark distress invade." "His prayer is answered.—By and by the clouds break away, and light breaks in upon his soul.—He now sees that what appeared to him as altogether adverse and mysterious was for his best good. True, in his darkness and trouble, like good old Jacob, he had said, "All these things are against me." But, now he sees "the end of the Lord," he is satisfied, as was Jacob, that they were all for him—that fiery trials through which he had been led were necessary to purge away the dross from his soul. He thinks of the "goodness," as well as the severity of God, and remembers with gratitude all "the way in which the Lord hath led him," and he goes on his way rejoicing and singing.

"I love the Lord, Because he hath heard my voice and my supplications, Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, Therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me, The pains of hell gat hold upon me, I found trouble and sorrow, Then called I upon the name of the Lord, O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the Lord and righteous; Yea our God is merciful, etc."—Vids Ps. cxvi.

RELECTIONS. 1. Because we do not always receive a prompt and literal answer to our prayers, we are not to infer therefore that God disregards them. He may have a way of answering more worthy of himself, and far better for us, which he will reveal in due time. 2. The attainment of holiness may involve the necessity for great trials and afflictions. If we would have our prayers to this end answered, let us be prepared to pass through fiery trials. 3. We must not be deterred from praying for holiness on this account. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 4. Let us not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when we are rebuked of him. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

(From the Watchman and Reflector.) WATCH-NOTES.

CONSECRATION AT ROME AND RICHMOND. Our readers have noticed, no doubt, that in the graphical accounts of the late magnificent ceremonial at Rome in honor of St. Peter and the martyrs, the proceedings were suddenly arrested midway by an untoward event; the holy place was desecrated by the blood of a suicide. At once a depressing gloom pervaded the assembly. The grand cathedral had been despoiled of its sanctity, and worship therein was now unlawful. It was a sad catastrophe. A murky cloud overspread the brilliant scene. What pangs of disappointment smote the hearts of that vast throng of sight-seekers! But they were soon relieved.—The high-priest of miracle-workers was there. The Pope met the emergency by solemnly pronouncing his benediction, waving his hand and shedding forth from the ends of his fingers a sanctifying fire, which purified the sacred place from the stain of blood and reconsecrated it to God! Such was the wondrous transformation quickly wrought at the great Roman festival.

Within a few days we have had news from Richmond, Vt., of the consecration to God's service of a well-known place, long desecrated by crime, tears and blood—the old slave pen of the old Virginia slaves. This house of sighs, this prison of slaves destined to the auction-block, has been obtained by Rev. Dr. Colver for the use of the National Theological Institute as a home training school for colored preachers. At a moment when he was in great distress for lack of a place to organize his work, a remarkable combination of events placed this building within his reach on reasonable terms; and on Sunday, July 14th, it was dedicated to its noble purpose by an order and style of service quite different from that of a Romish consecration. On that day the old First Church of Richmond (colored) assembled in the broad paved yard, shaded by two large trees, and there poured forth with heart and voice a mighty tide of song that made the very stones seem vocal with praise; a volume of choral song such as Luther, in the days of the Reformation, would have hailed as grander than the artistic play of all the organs and stringed instruments on earth.

The text of Dr. Colver's sermon was expressive of the sentiment that thrilled the great throng of Christian men and women: "So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof; for the people had a mind to work." (Neh. iv. 6.) No one need be told that the audience was thoroughly responsive to the speaker, and we may imagine with what feeling they joined in singing an appropriate commemorative hymn written for them by the preacher on the morning of that day.

Land of darkness, from the light Velled so long by tyrants' reign! Changed, thy sunbeams into night! Wrong, thy anguish' heart with pain! ———— all sufficient good, His portion and his choice.

Yes, friendly reader, to the sermon and hymn there were verbal responses, heart testimonies embalmed with tears of joy, freighted with more of meaning than any that could be called forth by any sermon in this Northern latitude. Except two or three specimens. The pastor of the church said, as reported by the preacher, "Twenty-five years ago my sister was sold from me here. She was the first sold in this place." Another, "a brother of gentlemanly bearing," now a printer at Richmond, said, "I have had two wives sold from me in this place." Others spoke of wives and children sold and never heard from.—"It would have required days," says Dr. Colver, "to have listened to the testimony that swelling hearts in that crowd longed to repeat. Do you wonder at the trembling moan which was heard through the assembly as I read the commemorative hymn? My own heart was full. We felt indeed that it was a jubilee. O, what a change in the use of this beautiful place! Freedom for chains; songs for sighs; blessing for cursing!" This slave-prison was well constructed. It is admirably adapted to the needs of the Institute. It has ample space and good surroundings. It is a goodly place, well situated, exclusive, like a little world by itself, and is as well adapted for a training school as if built for the purpose. It is

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GROWING LOVE. I am sure if we shall ever learn the breadth of Christ's love our love will grow broad; we shall no longer confine our love to our own church, but shall care for all the churches of God; we shall feel an affection not only for Christians of our own name, but to Christians of all names. Then our love will gain length also. We shall love Christ so that we cannot leave off loving Him. We shall persevere in love, we shall abide in his love as he abides in us. We shall constantly have the flame of our love going up to heaven. And then our love will acquire depth. We shall be humbled on account of our sinfulness; we shall sink lower and lower in our own esteem, and our love will become deeper and more grounded as it descends more fully into the core of our nature. And then love will climb the heights. We shall forget the world and the cares thereof; we shall become Christians who lie no longer among the pots, but who have received the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold. We shall attain to such a height in our love, that we shall scale the mountain tops of the promises, and with our foreheads bathed in the sunlight look down upon the world that still lieth in darkness, and rejoice that we are made heirs of light; till our love mounting to heaven shall there be in its height as we appear before the great white throne, and cast our crowns with many a song before Him who loved us with a breadth, and length, and height of love that even in heaven shall surpass all measurement.—Spurgeon.

OUR COMMON BIBLE. The history of the Bible is a history without a parallel. The people to whose care the larger and earlier portions of it were committed have been for ages a despised and down-trodden race. Midianites and Philistines, Syrians and Egyptians, Assyrians and Chaldeans, each contributed something to the final catastrophe under Tias; and yet that catastrophe was but the precursor of that deeper degradation and that more embittered hate which followed the dispersed Jews through every country of Europe. But it was not, after all, from without, but from within, that the greatest perils were incurred by the Bible; for the Bible was a perpetual protest against the idolatry to which both princes and people were inclined. And thus it happened that the preservation of the sacred volume was in the greater danger from Jacobaam and Jesabel than from Semuch and Nabuchadnezzar.

The preservation of the New Testament also in modern times has, if possible, been more wonderful still. The atrocities of Popery have rivalled every land where Popery has had power, and you will find abundant proofs that if the Papal fire, and sword, and rack, and gibbet could have destroyed the Bible it had long ago been done. But the Bible still survives—not in an odd copy here and there, but in many millions, scattered over every degree of longitude on the face of the globe, and making known to more than a hundred and twenty different nations, in their own vernacular tongues, "the wonderful works of God."

DECLINING THE WINE. Senator Wilson of Massachusetts gives an incident from his personal experience which should go the rounds of the press. The incident occurred about twenty years ago. He went to Washington as the bearer of a remonstrance against the admission of Texas. With others he was invited to dine with John Quincy Adams, Mr. Wilson says: Eminent men sat around the table; one of the number has since been Speaker of the House of Representatives, two have been cabinet officers, and two have been foreign ministers. I looked up to Mr. Adams with profound admiration and reverence. During the entertainment Mr. Adams asked me to drink a glass of wine with him. I was embarrassed—hesitated a moment; it was the sorest trial of my life; but somehow I succeeded in stammering out, "Sir, I never drink wine." That answer settled the matter for me. I have never found it hard since to utter these words, nor to fill my glass with cold water. I have often since sat at the tables of governors, senators, and foreign ministers, cabinet officers, generals, admirals and presidents; but I have ever found it easy to refuse the proffered wine-cup. The real difficulty is not in others, it is in ourselves. Temptations are ever around and about us. The only thing for a temperance man to do is to stand inflexibly firm in his pledged faith. He who is ready to live by his temperance pledges will win the respect even of men who indulge in the excessive use of intoxicating drinks.

CHEERFUL PARTY.—Cheerfulness, that compound of many excellencies, comparable unto "the powers of the merchant," may scarcely be claimed to be called a virtue; but it is the friend and helper of all good graces, and the absence of it is certainly a vice. If cheerfulness be not health, assuredly melancholy is disease. Practically, cheerfulness occupies a very high position, and without it the Christian laborer is destitute of a very considerable element of strength. Cheerfulness sharpens the edge and removes the rust from the mind. "A joyous heart supplies oil to our inward machinery, and makes the wheels of our powers work with ease and efficiency; hence it is of the utmost importance that we maintain a contented, cheerful, genial disposition. The longer I am engaged in my Master's service, the more I am convinced that the joy of the Lord is and must be our strength, and that discontent and moroseness are fatal to usefulness. With all my heart would I say to my fellow servants, "Rejoice in the Lord alway," not only for your own sakes, but for the sake of the work which you do for Him. Whoever may advocate dreary dullness, I cannot and dare not do otherwise than impeach it as an enemy of true religion.—Spurgeon.