

The Christian Visitor.

"HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS"—2d Timothy, i. 13.

VOL. XXXII.

SAINT JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1879.

NO. 7.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR,

The largest Religious Weekly in the Maritime Provinces,

IS PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY

AT
No. 85 GERMAIN STREET,
Saint John, N. B.

Price \$2.00 per annum in advance, or 50 cts. extra if not paid within the year.

Rev. J. E. HOPPER, A. M.,
Editor and Proprietor.

All Correspondence for the paper must be addressed to CHRISTIAN VISITOR OFFICE, No. 85 Germain St., St. John, N. B.
All payments or remittances for the CHRISTIAN VISITOR, from May 1st, '78, are to be made to REV. J. E. HOPPER, No. 85 Germain Street, St. John.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR,
As the representative paper of a large and growing denomination, is a most

VALUABLE MEDIUM FOR ADVERTISING.
It circulates, more or less, in all the Provinces of the Dominion and United States.

TERMS:
Per square—first insertion, . . . \$1.00
Per square—subsequent insertions, . . . 50
Per Line—first insertion, . . . 10
Per Line—subsequent insertion, . . . 5
Business Card per year, . . . 6.00

For special terms and yearly contracts apply at the

CHRISTIAN VISITOR OFFICE,

No. 85 Germain Street,
ST. JOHN, N. B.

Poetry.

The Shadow of the Rock.

A hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.—Is. xxxiii. 2.

In the shadow of the rock
Let me rest,
When I feel the tempest's shock
Thrill my breast;
All in vain the storm shall sweep
While I hide,
And my tranquil station keep
By thy side.

On the parched and desert way
Where I tread,
With the scorching noon-tide ray
O'er my head;
Let me find the welcome shade,
Cool and still,
And my weary steps be stayed
Where I will.

I in peace will rest me there
Till I see
That the skies again are fair
Over me;
That the burning heats are past,
And the day
Bids the traveller at last
Go his way.

Then my pilgrim staff I'll take,
And once more
I'll my onward journey make,
As before;
And with joyous heart and strong
I will raise
Unto thee, O Rock, a song
Glad with praise.

RAY PALMER.

(For the Christian Visitor.)

Prayer.

How beautiful is prayer when, purged from the sombre features of conscious guilt, by faith, it becomes the natural utterance of the child delighting in the goodness and love, the wisdom and the power of the Father. How beautiful when trusting in a high friend at Court,—the child without alarm at what were else a fearful elevation, can find no words to address even to the awful majesty of the King of Kings, so precious, none so acceptable or so true as "Our Father who art in Heaven."

How beautiful is prayer in the individual; in each one, man, woman or child who utters it. How fair in growth, how lovely in its flower, rising to the sky, how healing the whole plant, root, leaf and blossom, plant of Paradise. Beautiful thus in each one who prays.

But when the mind ranges over the whole redeemed kingdom of Christ, and sees in idea the innumerable family of saved sons and daughters of God, all uttering with united voice their praise and joy; all giving language to the deep sense of the fitness and blessedness of praise and joy,—transported with the scene we ask, is there any other object or prospect under heaven, so bright and beautiful and blessed as prayer?

Is a rainbow touching the dewy earth with each end of its richly colored span, and arching high to heaven, as if to talk with God,—is this a fitting emblem of the beauty of prayer?

Or, fancy a delicious calm in early summer, after a storm; when the sun shines out gloriously, and birds sing everywhere around, and rain drops like diamonds sparkle on every leaf; when all nature laughs in an ecstasy of gladness, and every object we see is bursting into song; is not this like the united prayer of all the redeemed that rises in beauty and blessedness to God?

Ah! vain, utterly vain are all comparisons of earthly things with the heavenly loveliness of prayer—those golden vials full of odours, the prayers of saints. (See Rev. v. 8.)

There is, methinks, one kind of prayer that has a peculiar beauty of its own. I mean the prayer of that man to whom the Lord looks, (Isaiah lvi. 3) because he is contrite and trembles at His word. God has turned his eyes away, Isaiah tells us, from the heaven his throne and the earth his footstool, and all the things his hand has made, to look approvingly on this new object, a contrite soul, and he, the mourner, though he little thinks it, has become, in his contrast with surrounding impenitence,

A seraph Abdiel faithful found,
Among the faithless, faithful only he.

We are, to be sure, carried back now to the "sombre features of conscious guilt;" sorrow and grief and tears are around, still a prayer is uttered, doubtless, and it is beautiful by its very contrast with those sombre features; but besides this, the "God be merciful to me a sinner" of the parable had an inherent beauty in it that Christ saw. In his view I think it was the germ of an eternity of good to come. It had in it the beauty of budding promise; but how heightened that beauty by the contrasting circumstances around—the publican's disreputable position; his odious trade; the wrongs his business made almost inevitable. Could any spark of moral beauty shine under this load of deformity? No doubt to the Saviour's eye a light shone there like that of a diamond of the highest water, hidden by an ugly crust.

Infancy is beautiful, though surrounded with some things in strong contrast—with feebleness and pain; with the doubt in the hearts of loving friends who bend anxiously over the sleeping babe. How beautiful and precious is that babe, and none the less, nay, even all the more for those surrounding contrasts. And there is even a grandeur in that infantine life, when you think of it as linked with the Almighty Power that made it and is able to save it forever.

And so, in like manner, only in infinitely higher degree, there are grandeur and beauty in that trembling condition that acknowledges God and his just law, and his all conquering Christ, and with that acknowledgement strives to fight off the mocking fears of conscious guilt.

What an event in the wide realm of wrong and rebellion is that trembling acknowledgment, thrown out on the sea of human things like the small stone thrown into the lake. See the widening circles on the surface of the water, how they multiply and spread; so here, too, widening circles from that first hearty confession, multiply and spread through the mass of human life, in a thousand untold modes and influences, and wherever they touch the realm of darkness they contradict the falsehoods of Satan and refuse his rule, and they no less assert the truth and supreme authority of God.

But those spreading circles move on and on through the dark world to its utmost bound; they enter the world of light; how do they appear there?

What wonderful vistas Christ sometimes opened into the luminous interior of God's vast palace.

Is that not one of those vistas where he lifts the veil and shows us the angels in heaven rejoicing over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine that need no repentance? More joy over one that repents! Wonderful thought; then repentance is more than a common good; it is a victory, a triumph. A triumph impossible to unaided man. To angels an everlasting amazement, a ceaseless cause of adoration.

True repentance is a grand break in the ranks of God's enemies. A rebellious

force has come over to its true allegiance, and the prayer of repentance is beautiful, therefore, in its return to truth and right.

It is beautiful, too, as an attack on sin. The prayer of repentance, of contrition, of sorrow for sin, is a brand plucked from the burning, and flaming now in the face of Satan himself. I think the news of it must pass with electric speed through the universe, for the angels are always watching for it, in the world of evil as the thud of a heavy fatal blow; in the world of good as a triumphant shout of joy.

How beautiful is its fitness to fulfil instantly its purpose in two worlds so different, yet in both, a purpose so absolutely right and wise, that thereby everything good kindles into greater good at the sound.

The world of stars—our greatest visible wonder—has in it no principle or movement so amazing, so magnificently effective and true.

But it is most needful to watch anxiously that we do not blur the beauty of prayer by ascribing to it any worth that belongs only to Christ.

The beauty of prayer lies in its fitness to other things, not in any virtue in itself, in any power to wipe away sin or merit reward.

So far as prayer is an acknowledgement of God and Christ, it does but admit what is just and right. So far as it asks for mercy, it is no more than the beggar at the door asking for food and shelter, and if it asks for others than itself, the necessity is always weightier than the prayer and the reward greater than the desert. The beauty of prayer is in effect the beauty of Christ, but on this we cannot now enlarge.

Yours, dear Editor,

Jan. 30, 1879.

Christ with us.

We think of our Christ too much as we think of the dead heroes; as one who has lived, has wrought a mighty work, has left the world. We ought the rather constantly to think of him, not only as the one who has done something for us, but as he who is now doing; not only as the one who has lived, but as he who is now living; not only as the one who has been in the world, but as he who is now in it just as utterly as when the dust of Palestine fell upon his blessed feet. We ought to think of him as a veritable, vital, vitalizing, personal presence with us.

Standing in the crypt of the Cathedral of St. Paul's in London your eye is attracted by a huge mass of porphyry, to gain which they searched the continent of Europe. They wanted something large, massive, grand. At length they came upon it in Cornwall, England. They cut it, shaped it, polished it, at last lifted it upon its plinth of Aberdeen granite, and dedicated it as the tomb of their grandest man. On one side you read the inscription, "Arthur, Duke of Wellington, born May 1, 1769; died September 14, 1852." A great man was buried when they buried him. His hand had been for many a year on the helm of the British Empire. His influence remains indeed, but his personality has departed. In these difficult times confronting England in the sense of personal presence, she cannot have the Iron Duke.

Pass beyond the Channel, and in Paris take your place beneath the golden dome of the Hotel des Invalides and behold the most magnificent sepulcher in the world. You are gazing now at the burial place of Wellington's chief antagonist. Above, the dome; beneath your feet, the variegated pavement; down in the open crypt, rimmed round with the marble balustrade, the sarcophagus. Circled with wreaths of laurel are written in mosaic the principal victories of the great hero. Ranged round are the tattered flags he bore, waving, to triumph. Read that inscription—it is a sentence from the great Emperor's will written in his exile: "I desire that my ashes lie on the banks of the Seine, among the French people whom I have loved so well." But Napoleon himself has gone. His influence remains, but he is not in the world. Him neither can France have in any way of personal presence.

Go to Rome, stand for a moment under that encircling dome of the Pantheon. Raphael loved that majestic building, more majestic even than St. Peter's. It was his wish that he might be buried there. Look! There on the walls it is written, "Here is the tomb of Raphael." But Raphael is not there. You may gaze entranced upon his Transfiguration in the Vatican, you may be touched and softened as his wonderful madonnas tell you the story of that virgin motherhood with its pains, its mysteries, its beatitudes. But Raphael was done with this world at thirty-seven. He puts color no more to canvas. Everywhere in Rome you may see something that he has done, nowhere can you see anything that he is doing. His works last, he has gone forever.

The great heroes, painters, poets, teachers—they have been; but, as to this world, they are no longer. They have gone elsewhere. They have carried their presence with them. They are memories; they are not presences.

Is the Lord Christ like these? Does he speak only to us from the pages which were traced by his followers eighteen centuries ago? Is he no more than the first of the shadows of the past, the first memories, the first of biographies, the most perfect of human ideals? Is he only an ideal, alter all? Does he reign only in virtue of a mighty tradition of human thought and feeling in his favor, which creates and supports his imaginary throne?

No, he is a present, personal, living Saviour, "Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world," is not an idle, not an unfulfilled promise. He is not with us merely as a thought but as a life. He gathers us up into his own being; he floods us with it. There is inspiration here certainly for any duty, for any endurance. The faith, Christ with me, can make the poorest and the hardest life luminous, joyous, glorious. This is the faith that overcometh the world.—*Ec.*

Why Old Ministers are not Popular.

Bishop Simpson in his admirable Yale Lectures talks on this subject as follows:

It cannot be denied that there is a tendency among churches to seek for young men rather than the old; and I believe this is one of the great errors of Christian congregations. It is not so in other professions. The older a physician is and the more cases he has successfully treated, the greater is the confidence placed in him. The attorney as he grows in years is supposed to increase in knowledge and skill; and, while clients are willing that younger members of the firm should draw up papers and prepare the case, they desire the council and advice of the senior members of the case to help it through its intricacies. A statesman never grows too old to be sought for. Russell, Brougham, Palmerston, Webster and Clay were leaders as long as they lived. To-day Gladstone, Disraeli, Bismarck and Gortschakoff are the men who control in a great measure the destinies of Europe. Why should it not be so in the ministry? Why is it that men turn, in the most important interests of life, affecting themselves and their families, from the counsels of age and experience to those of youth and less skill?

I may not be able to answer this question satisfactorily either to you or myself. One reason is, I believe, the neglect of study on the part of many aged ministers. They lose that stimulus which belongs to other professions. To the physician every new case is a study. New remedies are discovered and recommended. He must keep abreast of the times, or some intruder will take away his practice. The attorney finds some new element in almost every case. New decisions are given by the Supreme Court and he must study them. In statesmanship new complications are constantly arising. The connections of nations are so numerous, the questions involved are so various, and sometimes so vast, as to require the utmost comprehension to grasp them, and the closest attention to the least minutiae and detail. The statesman has no old sermon that he can pick up and apply. He must think and study and write and thus keep his mind

ever active and fresh. There is no time for him to nod and sleep. But the old minister sits down under his own vine or fig tree, and there is no one to molest him or make him afraid. He hurls thunderbolts at the heads of scientists who are a thousand miles away and will never hear his thunder; he descants on the sins of the Egyptians who have been mummies for thousands of years; or he discourses upon the pride of Babylon or Nineveh, which have been swept away for ages. He is pressed for time and brings before his congregation of to-day a discourse which he had made twenty years ago, and on an issue then living but now almost forgotten. His thoughts are of the past; his sermons are of the past; and the congregation of to-day feels that he is scarcely one for them.

But, independent of this, society loves to be stirred or excited. Youth has greater power in arousing it; has more enthusiasm and zeal. Whether it be more earnest in heart or not, it exhibits greater earnestness in action. The eye sparkles more brightly, the utterance is more rapid, the gestulations more excited, and the whole bearing more impassioned. There is no need of age losing its keenness of thought though it may somewhat its energy of manner. I think the latter is something almost inevitable.

(For the Christian Visitor.)

Persecution in Canton Province.

Satan is raging again. Last year we had some bitter persecution that affected chiefly the station of our English Presbyterian Brethren. That nothing was done to punish the murderers on that occasion, is owing in no small degree to the irresolute, vacillating policy of the English Consul, to whom the matter was referred. Now in another region not so far away but they may have heard of last year's dallying, the people have begun on a greater scale than ever. The purpose is arranged to exterminate Presbyterians and Roman Catholics alike, and certainly the way they have begun indicates a readiness to carry out the malignant design. Some German Missionaries who attended at a Yamen to hear the examination of one of their converts who was falsely charged with crime, were mobbed and barely escaped with sound bodies.

In the case of a Roman Catholic priest matters became more serious. He was putting up a church edifice too near one of the idol temples as they alleged, thereby impairing its prestige. They ordered him to desist, threatening to attack him if he did not. Thinking they would not really push matters to extremes, the priest continued. A mob formed and charged upon the builders, and the priest had to fly for his life. His house was robbed of everything. Five unfortunate members of his flock were seized, wrapped in quilts saturated with oil, tied by the feet and hung up, and then a fire was built under them and they were left to die in this horrible way.

The refugees have already been coming into Canton and Hong Kong. Rumors were abroad that a general massacre was planned for the 20th of December. We are looking with great anxiety to hear of further developments. The officials are most probably implicated in the transaction. Indeed one of them was heard to express himself in a way fitted to inflame still further the angry passions of the brutal mob.

What action will be taken by the foreign officials in this matter, remains to be seen. There is little doubt but the French Consul will interpose promptly his protest. We hope the English, German and American Consuls will do the same thing. If they do this lawlessness will soon cease.

There is evinced a determined purpose on the part of the evil one that Christianity shall not gain a footing in China without all the power of the gates of hell being invoked to resist it. The promise is sure and explicit, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." But alas for some of our poor people, when their pathway to heaven lies through a valley of fire.

Yours,

W. ASHMORE.

Swatow, China.