

# The Christian Visitor.

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

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Rev. J. E. HOPPER, A.M.,  
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## Poetry.

### Stand like the Anvil.

[The following lines by Bishop Doane, suggested by the immortal words of Ignatius' message to Polycarp, are as remarkable for their force and terseness as for the noble spirit of endurance which breathes in every line.]

"Stand like anvil" when the stroke  
Of stalwart men falls fierce and fast;  
Storms but more deeply root the oak,  
Whose brawny arms embrace the blast.

"Stand like the anvil" when the sparks  
Fly far and wide, a fiery shower;  
Virtue and truth must still be marks  
Where malice raves its want of power.

"Stand like the anvil" when the bar  
Lies red and glowing on its breast;  
Duty shall be life's leading star,  
And conscious innocence its rest.

"Stand like the anvil;" noise and heat  
Are born with earth and die with time;  
The soul, like God, its source and heat,  
Is solemn, still, serene, sublime.

## Church Membership.

What sort of persons ought to be admitted to the rights of the Christian Church? Some answer "Believers in Christ and their children." Baptists answer, "Believers, and believers only." We understand the New Testament to teach that faith in Christ always precedes baptism. That you may see the ground of our belief I will cite a few Scripture references: Mark xvi. 16; John i. 11-12; Acts, ii. 41; Acts, viii. 37.

These passages speak of no other sort of members in a church than believing ones. They insist upon faith as precedent to baptism. We make no account of age or the circumstances under which persons believe in the Saviour. They may be silvered o'er with age or little children. They may come single or they may come in households, but they can come only on condition of a personal faith in the Lord Jesus. We do not baptize infants, because we find neither Scripture precept nor example for so doing. There is not a single example of infant baptism in the New Testament. We do not baptize infants because they cannot exercise faith in Christ and faith must precede baptism. We do not baptize infants because we believe that infants are already saved without any priestly or churchly rites. If the door of heaven stands open for anyone it must stand wide open to receive a little child. We do not baptize infants because we maintain the truth of the freedom of conscience. A profession of religion is a personal matter, and ought, therefore, to be a matter of free conviction and deliberate choice. We do not feel that we ought to influence any person to belong to our church by joining him in any way to our church while he is an infant and does not know what he is doing. But while we do not administer the rite of baptism to infants, the members of our churches do strive to bring up their children in the fear of God, and seek in their early life to lead them to the Saviour.

It is frequently said that Baptists believe that baptism is a saving ordinance, and

therefore, hold with tenacity to its original mode. Nothing could be further from the truth. We do not believe that it is a saving ordinance. We do not teach that it is a condition of salvation, and you will at once see that we do not, if you call to mind this fact that we do not baptize infants. If we thought that there was any saving power in baptism, any efficacy to cleanse from sin, any benefit to be conferred in another life on one who has been baptized, more than on another who has not been baptized, would we not baptize the children?

The Church of Rome is consistent. Her creed says: "Sin, whether contracted by our birth, from our first parents, or committed by ourselves, by the admirable virtue of the sacrament (baptism) is remitted and pardoned. By baptism we are signed with a character that can never be blotted out of our souls; it opens to every one of us the gate of heaven." Believing thus that baptism changes the nature and status of an infant, the devout Catholic sprinkles his child. He is consistent. But we believe that he who said "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of heaven," has already provided for the eternal blessedness of all such by his death on the cross. Baptism will not gain them heaven, nor will the absence of it lose them heaven.

Since we repudiate, then, all magical theories of baptism, and do not teach, either by precept or example, that baptism is prerequisite of salvation, the sin of making too much of baptism does not lie at the door of Baptists.

But while baptism is in no sense a saving ordinance, it is a Christian institution. Christ himself established it as an external rite for his disciples. To force the precept he added the weight of his own example. He was baptized in the River Jordan by John the Baptist. His disciples also were baptized. But more than this baptism was to be connected with the preaching of the cross. The commission to preach was coupled with the command to baptize; "Go ye," are the Saviour's words, "go ye disciple all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." First there is to be instruction leading to discipleship, and then baptism as a profession of discipleship. Did the disciples obey the commission? They did. All their teachings after Christ's ascension are in accordance with his last request. "What shall I do to be saved?" asks the convicted Jailer at Phillippi. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." And he was baptized straightway. The whole force of Apostolic practice and preaching is in the same direction. The unvarying custom was to immediately baptize those who believed the Gospel.

What, then, do we have? A rite for those who believe on the name of Christ; a rite instituted as the door into the earthly, visible Church of Christ; a rite enforced by Christ's own example, commanded as a part of the preaching of his disciples, observed by them in their own baptism and in the case of every new convert to the Christian faith. Surely, then, baptism is a permanent, perpetual rite of the Christian church; an ordinance to be observed in its original form by every one who truly loves Christ. Where this rite is properly administered it has a three-fold significance. Toward God it is the answer of a good conscience; toward the believer it is the outward sign of the inward change; toward the world it is a solemn profession of the Christian religion.

Common Faults.

The commonest fault in prayer meetings is to fossilize. The service, which gets all its power from its freshness and originality, tends to become a stiff and formal routine. Now, any stiff form in a prayer meeting acts like an iron cap on an infant's head. It prevents growth. No good can come till that formality is broken up. A leader, then, must look out that he does not always do things in the same way. There must be change, variety and motion in the services or else stagnation will ensue. And stagnation is death. There are a few things which go to make up this sameness

on the part of those who take part in the meetings. First they pray in a circle. All their prayers are run into a certain mould. No matter what the specific object set before them in prayer they must travel the circle before they reach it; and before they get around they often forget the specific object. I have frequently known special requests for prayer entirely disregarded, simply because the man prayed so long that he forgot what the request was for which he was asked to pray. Now, where there are a large number to engage in prayer, it is not necessary that every prayer should embrace every object of petition. "Prayer is the offering up to God our desires for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with thanksgiving for his mercies." If any man has a special desire that presses upon his heart let him express that and stop. If asked to pray for a special case let him at once pray for that, and then, if other desires fill his heart, express them.

Long prayers are out of all propriety in a public assembly. They were expressly condemned by the Saviour. All the examples of public prayer given in the Bible are short. The prayer of Hezekiah, on the occasion of the blasphemous message of the king of Assyria, when the whole nation was at stake, would not occupy two minutes in the delivery. The prayer of Nehemiah, on going before the King to ask deliverance for his people, contains an acknowledgment of God, a recital of God's promise, a confession of sin, and a petition for the object desired, and yet it is less than two minutes in length. Even the prayer of Solomon on the extraordinary occasion of the dedication of the Temple, could not have occupied even five minutes. The penitential prayer of David, in the fifty-first Psalm, is a perfect model of an outgushing heart. But it is not more than two or three minutes in length. But above all, the Lord's prayer, the pattern and model of all prayer, is extremely brief and comprehensive. "God is in heaven and thou upon the earth, therefore let thy words be few."

From any point of view, long prayers are pointless and dull. They distract, rather than help the minds of worshippers and prevent concentration of desire. These same remarks will equally apply to exhortations. An exhortation should come from a full heart, and be directed toward the point. When an idea is once expressed, it should generally be left without enlargement. Let it come burning from the heart, and then it will wake up thought and feeling in other hearts. And if what one says comes from the heart, it makes but very little difference in a prayer meeting, how the thought is clothed. It may be dressed in the chaste metaphors of an experienced thinker, or in the broken words of an unlearned, unlettered man, never mind, it does its work. As for me, I would as soon hear the stammering, halting effort of a man whose heart is warm and right, but whose education is limited, as the polished speech of one who floats into the meeting like a glittering iceberg from the polar regions. Let each one put his thoughts into the best words at his command; only let his words be few and from the heart.

## Temperance in. P. E. I.

It will be interesting to the readers of the VISITOR, to hear of the great success that attends the efforts of the Temperance men of Charlottetown, in the agitation in favor of the Canada Temperance Act. The meeting last night was one of the largest ever held in the city. The City Hall was packed to its utmost capacity, not less than 1000 men and women were present, besides a large number of the citizens could not gain admittance. A. A. McDonald, Esq., Postmaster, occupied the chair. The speakers were, in order, Rev. D. G. McDonald, G. W. Millner, Esq., Malcolm McLeod, Esq., Barrister, Rev. G. W. Hodgson, Robt. Shaw, Esq., Barrister, E. J. Hodgson, Esq., Barrister.

The speeches were pronounced to be the best ever delivered in the city on the subject of Temperance. The arguments were powerful and convincing. The appeals were strong and touching, and many were

moved to tears. At times the silence was almost oppressive; this, however, was repeatedly broken by bursts of enthusiastic applause. The resolutions, all of which were in favor of adopting the Act, were carried without a dissenting voice. Never were so much enthusiasm and harmony experienced in Charlottetown at a public meeting with a mixed audience. Not the slightest interruption occurred during the time occupied by the meeting, save two or three times the spirit of rum within a poor drunken rumseller, cried out against the power that was now about casting the demon out of the city, but he, however, was soon quieted. The city may well rejoice in the fact that many of her ablest men, who never before showed any sympathy in the cause of temperance, have buckled on their armor and are now fighting like Trojans, in favor of the cause.

For the encouragement of the friends of the cause on the other side of the Gulf, I may add that on the 24th of this month we are confident that the victory will be ours. May the strong arm of God help us.

No Rum.  
Charlottetown, April 17.

## A Noble Example.

Lady Huntington with an income of only £1,200 a year, did much for the cause of religion. She maintained the college she had erected at her sole expense; she erected chapels in most parts of the kingdom, and supported ministers who were sent to preach in various parts of the world. A minister of the gospel and a person from the country once called on her ladyship. When they came out the countryman turned his eyes towards the house, and after a short pause, exclaimed, "What a lesson! Can a person of her noble birth nursed in the lap of grandeur, live in such a house, so meanly furnished, and shall I a tradesman, be surrounded with luxury and elegance? From this moment I shall hate my house, my furniture and myself for spending so little for God and so much in folly."

If many of our Baptist Christians, and it may be some of our ministers, were to follow the example of Lady Huntington, the cause of Christ would be better sustained both at home and abroad and poor missionaries would be more encouraged to go on in their work and labor of love.

Let ungodliness be put away from Jacob. "Let your meditations be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." Phil. iv. 5. "Thou fool this night thy soul shall be required of thee, then where shall these things be which thou hast provided. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God." Luke xii. 20-21. "God loveth a cheerful giver." 2. Cor. ix. 7.

T. M. MUNRO.  
Newcastle.

## Remedies for Anxiety.

Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.—Jesus Christ.

Leave the future; let it rest  
Simply on the Saviour's will;  
Leave the future; they are blest,  
Who, confiding, hoping still,  
Trust His mercy,  
To provide for every want,  
And to save from every evil.

If we are faithful to the duties of the present, God will provide for the future.

Bedell.  
We can easily manage if we will only take, each day, the burden appointed for it. But the load will be too heavy for us if we add to its weight the burden of tomorrow before we are called to bear it.—John Newton.

Make a firm-built fence of trust,  
All around to day;  
Fill the space with loving work,  
And within it stay;  
Look not through the sheltering bars,  
Anxious for the morrow;  
God will help in all that comes,  
Be it joy or sorrow.

The campus at Cornell University is illuminated every night with electric lights at the expense of a cent an hour, leaving no chance for mischief in the dark.

## Gems.

Paul saw in Hagar and Sarah what an unbeliever could not see. I look into the Gospel; how infinitely different do they appear to me, and to the sceptic who only sees in them certain exploded myths; and yet how very far does my view come short of that of angels and saints within the veil.

An old writer says: "He who will fight the devil with his own weapon, must no wonder if he finds him an overmatch." The old chieftain is a valorous, stern, terrible warrior. He knows how to match carnal weapons. Infernal weapons are death-dealing to those who are so slightly equipped. But spiritual weapons are "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." It well said that

"Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees."

The philosophy of such warfare is simply this: A saint on his knees, in prostrate weakness, instantly brings Omnipotence into conjunction with his impotence, and then the conflict is wholly unequal. Satan against humanity joined with Omnipotence is impotence extreme; the issue is soon declared, the victory sublime.

## Items of Interest.

Rev. John Geddie has a tombstone on the island of Anetium, erected to his memory by the people, with this inscription:

When he came here  
There were no Christians.  
When he went away  
There were no heathen.

Geo. B. Vosburg, lately of Jersey City, has brought a suit against his wife for divorce, in Dakota Territory; ground, "extreme cruelty."

It is said, to the credit of the Chinese, that of 40,000 employed on public works in California not over six have been discharged for intoxication or any other cause.

Dr. Selah Merrill of Andover, who has lived a long time among the wild Arabs, and been often from Jerusalem to Jericho, has at last fallen among thieves—in Boston! The other day at the Boston & Maine depot his valise was stolen. It contained thirty dollars' worth of stereopticon slides, and all of Dr. Merrill's Lowell Institute lectures. The loss is a severe one, besides being very aggravating. The culprit was caught with the empty valise and has been sentenced to one year in the House of Correction.

Rev. David Swing talks with his doctor, deacon, groceryman, and butcher and makes a number of pastoral "calls" by means of a telephone.

Dr. Howard Crosby, of the University of New York, will deliver the Lyman Beecher lecture on preaching before the students of the Yale Divinity School next year.

Of the popular preachers of New York and Brooklyn, Dr. Talmage receives \$12,000; Rev. Morgan Dix, \$15,000; Rev. Dr. William Taylor, \$12,000; Rev. Dr. R. S. Storrs, \$10,000; Rev. Dr. Cuyler, \$8,000; Rev. Dr. Hall, \$15,000; Rev. Dr. Potter, \$10,000; Rev. Dr. Tiffany, each \$10,000; Rev. Dr. Chapin, \$8,000 to each \$10,000.

The pastors of the Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist and Episcopal churches in Oneida, N. Y., have published a card in which they characterize "the life and theories of the Oneida community as shameful." They say, "We cannot withhold our condemnation when we see views and practices that we regard as outrages upon decency and good morals upheld in the name of religion and the Bible. We think it due to our good name to correct the widespread impression that we are not so much shocked and annoyed as other decent people are elsewhere by the unceasing vulgarities of the Oneida community life and teaching. We declare ourselves, and those we represent, as in hearty sympathy with the movements to suppress by lawful means their immoral practices."