

The Christian Visitor.

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

VOL. XXXII.

SAINT JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 1879.

NO. 19.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR,
The largest Religious Weekly in the Maritime
Provinces.

IS PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY

AT
No. 99 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
CHRISTIAN VISITOR OFFICE, No. 99 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. 99 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, .05
Business Card per year, 6.00

For special terms and yearly contracts apply at the

CHRISTIAN VISITOR OFFICE,

No. 99 Germain Street,

ST. JOHN, N. B.

[For the Visitor.]

"Parsons and Parsons."

Amongst our literary magazines of recognized ability and influence, I suppose it is generally conceded that *Scribner's* holds an enviable position. There is an air of culture and refinement, and a beauty of mind and thought that characterize its editor, and so give a prevailing tone to that which from different authors make up the whole. The best sides of human nature and feeling are often shown in most attractive colors, and it must be acknowledged that many a hearty blow is struck at shams and many a sturdy rebuke is administered to those phases of life and society that are uncivilized or inhuman.

I have been led to these remarks from reading a recent article in *Scribner's Magazine*, entitled "Parsons and Parsons." The author has fully established his worthiness to claim a place in this galaxy of writers. His sentences flow with easy grace, his reminiscences are racy, and his sarcasm is sufficiently biting, while, with all his scorn of what is unmanly, and his disgust at what is hyper-clerical, he makes no vulgar noise nor raises his voice above the conventional propriety of the drawing-room. Yet, while his articles are highly readable, and while they contain, moreover, much that is wholesome, I would suppose that he had doffed his clerical robes—perhaps as the only condition upon which he might enter his present field—were it not that he carefully informs us that he would be ashamed on any occasion, to wear such habiliments. Did a magazine make only this much demand, I doubt not our author would deem it the surest mark of good sense and freedom from cant. But I believe the demand means more, and that Mr. Eggleston, perhaps in his zeal to do good, readily lays aside all insignia of a "spiritual policeman," and aught else by which his mission—perhaps it would be better to say business—might be betrayed, so that he may approach men on equal terms, not forewarning them that he might attempt to call their attention to such unpleasant themes as a hereafter, or the existence of but a single way to happiness there, all theories of human goodness to the contrary notwithstanding.

When we touch on these last mentioned theories, we are daring to approach a modern battle ground, and should we have the temerity with puny lance to strike a shield we would wait in suspense to see whether we were doomed to tilt with doughty knight or barly friar. But we are not in armor; we carry no mighty battle-axe, and so, perchance, we may, as lookers on, express our opinion of the tournament.

Human nature has always had a high appreciation of itself—its capacity for goodness and merit. When it can claim for itself the advantages of the culture and progress of this latter half of the nineteenth century, he must be brave indeed who dares to say that heaven is above the reach of its excellence. Now I have no intention of charging Mr. Eggleston with cowardice,

nor do I believe that it belongs to him, but it seems to me that he recognizes this wide spread feeling of self-complacency, to which men of the Ingersoll type so successfully pander, and decides that "discretion is the better part of valor;" that he will reject all technicalities of Christianity and come down to the broad common plane of humanity, and so reach men where he can be understood, and from a natural and easy beginning inaugurate that "slow-growing development, that subtle intangible thing that evades inquisitions and statistics, and that is not to be dealt with too grossly," by which in a later paper Mr. Eggleston describes Christianity. I do not object to this description so far as it goes, and yet I think I detect in Mr. Eggleston's abhorrence of cant somewhat of the influence of the "liberal" men of this age, who would reduce Christianity to the level of any ordinary system of reform, rejecting the necessity and denying the existence of the Spirit which Christ promised to send, which made possible the induction of men by the hundred on the day of Pentecost, and the peculiar office of which no mental culture or social refinement can supercede. Is it not a result of modern liberal views and a source of deplorable weakness to the followers of Christ, that they too little recognize the office of the Spirit and too largely lean upon the "arm of flesh"? Certainly no lover of the race was ever more broadly human in His sympathies than He who died for men, nor could be more free from the imputation of cant, and yet He spoke in a manner that liberal men now term "narrow dogmatism." Nicodemus was little prepared for the declaration, "Ye must be born again," and yet he attempted no natural and easy explanation of the truth. Has the refinement and advancement of the race so far done away with the necessity for His atonement that we should shudder to speak of "a religion of blood"? or has modern civilization so softened the character of human guilt that we must not shock refined sensibilities by saying that the efficacy of Christ's death is necessary for its expiation, but must keep this truth in the background until a "slow-growing development," has brought men to a point where they can receive it? Mr. Eggleston will not claim this much, and yet may he not at least seem to yield it and thus practically give up the ground which Christ has given him to hold, and, standing upon which, He will give him the unfailing aid of the Spirit to accomplish that which human means—even the wisest and most humane—are inadequate?

Amongst the good hits which Mr. Eggleston makes—and it were strange if he did not hit somewhere, for he strikes in all directions, not excepting "Boston Monday Lectures," and Brooklyn sensational preachers—is the one at pedants who will go any distance out of the way to find a Latin quotation. There may be, however, a spice of pedantry in the desire to prove that God has "not lost the power to bring forth in every age fresh types of manhood." While it may be true that "in most cases the man who moves in ruts is but a second hand man," it seems to me no less a fact that he who ever shuns the beaten track lest he may be accused of a lack of originality is apt to strike a rut, which now-a-days is pretty deeply worn. If the Georgia Baptist who told his hearers that it was none of their business why immersion was the only mode of baptism, stood on the ground that Christ had the right to choose that method of symbolism and none might substitute a better way, he with all his illiteracy, held a truth that men may not gainsay. While sturdy adherence to the "Word" alone is liable to misconstruction and the charge of narrowness, it is surely safer than the pliancy that leads, through respect for modern refinement, to a seeming assent to the proposition that "the Bible is an antiquated book." I would not have anybody mistake this as a quotation from the author of whom I am speaking. That would be doing the gentleman a gross injustice, of which I would not be guilty. I have no doubt of his sincerity and Christian zeal. The most I should think of fearing is that his originality and abhorrence of cant may lead him into habits of thought and expression which, however much he may regret it, will incline the

very broadly "liberal" to claim his alliance.

A few quotations will best show the tendency of the author's hatred of cant. He says: "Sincerity is the great antiseptic." "What the teacher is is of more consequence than what he says." "When I can pick a man out at first sight by his air, dress, tone, as a parson, I have no further use for him or curiosity about him. Such men you can buy or sell by sample." Now the amount of truth in these sentiments makes the fallacy the more dangerous. Certainly men feel the influence of a pure life and correct example. Their power is invulnerable, yet might a reader not doubt the author's belief that human character must have a basis of principles, must be built by teachings and swayed by mental convictions? Let men at large carry the point that they are to mould their lives only after the models that human teachers afford, and what a field is open for excuses and palliations of what is wrong in their lives, on the ground of imperfection in the teachers. Christ's teachings leave no such loopholes of escape. It brings men face to face with eternal principles, and throws upon their own shoulders the responsibility of rejecting, or accepting, and obeying. Then too, instead of reading "sincerity," I should say "Truth is the great antiseptic." How many an error is propagated and excused on the plea of sincerity! How widely this claim opens the way for the perverting influence of all vagaries of human imagination and folly. Christ says You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. To attribute to sincerity, inestimable as it is in its own province, so high authority, but opens the way to the prison house of ignorance.

Our author's danger of permitting the truth to escape notice, while he strives to hold and present it in only such a shape as shall be attractive, is shown in his story of Chaplain Little. "Once, after a battle a certain church was turned into a hospital, and wounded and dying lay all up and down the floor. A severe chaplain added to the terror by passing around exhorting the poor groaning fellows to prepare for death. Chaplain Little, seeing how fatal this despondency must prove, walked up into the pulpit, placed his melodion upon his knees, and struck up a ridiculous song known as the "Ohio Girl." Sunlight came in with the rich melody of the Chaplain's voice and the humor of his song. The surgeons took heart, and life seemed to come back to battered and homesick men." The austere Chaplain, however, thought that Chaplain Little should be ashamed to sing such stuff to men who ought to be preparing for death, whereupon a wounded Colonel regretted his inability to kick the severe Chaplain out of doors.

We can appreciate the good feeling of Chaplain Little, and see how his tact struck a common chord, but we may be allowed to question his taste, and wonder if there were not men who needed different cheering from that afforded by "a ridiculous song."

The humanity of the Chaplain Little was, perhaps, more lovely than the austerity of the other; what a pity there had not been there a man who combined the elements of both; who comprehended the necessity of raising drooping spirits, and arousing flagging energies, and yet understood the capability and adaptation of the Gospel to lighten sad hearts, and cheer with a power more enduring and healing than the passing anaesthesia of nonsense. While we can understand how much Mr. Eggleston means, are there not many who will wrest from his words more significance than he intended to give them, and claim his assent to the proposition that the Gospel, at best, is a code of morals that it does very well to live by, but from which trouble derives no alleviation, under the power of which death bates nothing of its terror, and the influence of which in no wise reaches into eternity, if, indeed there is any existence for us beyond the grave.

A friend of mine who served his country in that war, and has since achieved a national reputation in literature, said of this story: "It made me mad. There would be men there who wanted in their last moments to think of home, and children, and wife, and of their own future. Such a song then was coarse and cruel."

The established reputation of Mr. Eggleston as a writer, makes it unnecessary that we should call attention to the many good things in his article. It will not fail of appreciation by those who read it; but they may lay it down with the question whether a minister who holds the fundamental truths of the Gospel, can afford to bid for space to write of these subjects in a liberal magazine.

Burlington, Iowa, April 26th, 1879.

A Few Questions for Open Communions to Answer.

BY ELDER W. N. WELKER.

1st. Have Christians any right to teach or practice anything where there is no precept or example given in the Bible? Read Rev. xxii. 18.

2nd. Where is the chapter and verse in the Bible which plainly teaches that intercommunion was either taught or practiced among the early apostolic churches?

3rd. Is there a precept or example in the Bible where mixed or open communion is taught or practiced as now practiced in open communion churches? If so where is the chapter and verse?

4th. Is the church which celebrates the Lord's Supper to be in any sense the judge as to who are proper communicants, or is it to be left wholly to the judgment of the one who proposes to commune? If the communicant is the judge, then, as a matter of course, the church is bound to admit any person to her communion, whatever might be their creed, conduct, or character. If the church in any sense is to be the judge, then she comes in the category of what is generally called close communion. Who dare say no?

5th. If a brother becomes an extortioner, or a railer, or a drunkard; and another is notoriously dishonest in his dealings with his brethren and neighbors, so that the church is under Scripture obligations to exclude them from her fellowship, and as soon as they are excluded, another church in the community, knowing all the facts, with open arms receives them, without any investigation or confession whatever, does the Bible require the excluding church to receive such to the Lord's Supper? Read 1 Cor. v. 11-13, 2 Thess. iii. 6.

6th. If it is unscriptural and cruel for a church to "slam the door against professing Christians," and "draw the line of division" at the communion table, because they have not been immersed, and for other disorderly conduct; is it not equally unscriptural and cruel to slam the door in their face and draw the line of division by refusing them admission to the church, simply because they have not been immersed?

7th. Have not all professed Christians the same scriptural right to church membership as they have to the ordinances of the church?

8. By what scripture authority are we to admit a person who professes to be a Christian to the ordinances of the church and at the same time refuse such person membership in the church?

9th. If we cannot all belong together to one church on earth, how will we in heaven? Let this question be answered and the oft-repeated question put to Regular Baptists (if we can't commune together on earth how will we in heaven?) will be answered.

10th. Where is the scripture precept or example for inviting any one to the Lord's Supper as now practiced by open communion churches?

11. Where is the scripture authority for Pedo-Baptists to expel from their church fellowship Baptist ministers who believe and teach that sprinkling and pouring and infant baptism are unscriptural, and others are expelled for other causes, and then invite them to the Lord's Supper? (See Methodist Discipline, No. 40.)

12th. Where is the scripture precept or example for parents to have their infants sprinkled?

13th. Where is the scripture authority that teaches that baptism came in the room of circumcision?

14th. Where are the standard lexicons that are used in the schools of learning that translate the Greek word baptize (as it oc-

curs in the Bible in common use) sprinkle and pour?

Answer. There are none. *Et cetera.*

That Coverdale Matter.

EDITOR VISITOR,—

Please deal gently with Rev. N. Freeman, of Coverdale. He was evidently not in a very good mood when he so contorted a sentence from the N. B. minutes as to make it appear that Baptists teach that none are regenerate but those who have been baptized.

Did you not read in his communication, (*Wesleyan*, March 18), "This community is very largely Baptist." Do you wonder then that the brother looked round for something to throw at them? And what better could he have discovered than the charge of baptismal regeneration. He says that the phrase from the Minutes as corrected by the Editor of the VISITOR, does not contain this popery. Do you think, Mr. Editor, that Mr. Freeman needed that the phrase, "All those who are regenerate have been baptized on profession of their faith in Christ," &c., should be explained to him as not meaning baptismal regeneration? I trow not. First, it is clear as noonday that the words intended to teach that such as had been regenerate, and had been baptized, &c., should partake of the Lord's Supper. Second, Mr. Freeman must have known well that there is no denomination further from believing in baptismal regeneration, and opposing it more stoutly than the Baptist.

He says that the Baptists had lent him and his brethren their kindly aid at their meetings. Then why return evil for good? And if they hold to such doctrine as he charges them with, why did he accept their aid? Mr. F. describes the above doctrine as belonging to popery. He is right. But such a charge comes with ill grace from one whose denominational literature on baptism is deeply stained with that very doctrine. Baptists especially endeavor that their churches consist only of converted people. This is well known. But as the wise man says, "Let another praise thee and not thine own mouth." Hear what Joseph Cook says on the subject in one of his Boston Lectures in 1877:—"Roger Williams objected to the baptizing of infants for this reason among many others—because he saw that to regard all baptized persons as, in an important sense, members of the church, led to the secularization of church membership." He then added:—"I know where I am speaking; I know what prejudices I am crossing; but I know that in this assembly, assuredly, no body will have objection to my advocacy, even at a little expense of consistency with my supposed principles, of the necessity of a spiritual church membership."

"If, I say, that a certain denomination represented by that man who was driven from Massachusetts to Rhode Island has, in spite of all the criticism about one of its beliefs, been of foremost service in bringing into the world, among all Protestant denominations, an adequate idea of the importance of a spiritual church membership, I know that no generous heart or searching intellect will object to that statement." Yours, J. B.

COMING TO THE LIGHT.—A student writes: "The professor of Greek in the Methodist Theological Seminary at Evanston, Ill., tells his students that immersion is the only mode of baptism taught in the New Testament, but he attempts to justify other modes upon other grounds. The pastor of the M. E. church at the same place holds that immersion is the only mode taught in the New Testament, and goes further and prophesies that the day is not far off when the primitive mode will again be the only mode. He says that he now baptizes more by immersion than by any other mode.—*Christian Secretary.*"

THE MISSIONARY UNION.—The receipts and expenditures for the year ending April, 1, 1879, were:

Expenditures, 1878-9,	\$231,893.62
Debt, April 1, 1878,	26,489.59
	\$257,883.15
Receipts,	235,430.34
Debt, April 1, 1879,	\$22,452.81