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HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS"—2d Timothy, i. 18.1

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CHRISTIAN VISITOR OFFICE,
No. 99 Germain Street,
ST. JOHN, N. B.

The Christian Visitor,
THEOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT.

EDITOR.—It is not necessary
to be far from becoming, to
be at length the recent communi-
cation of N. S. who has chosen to
ble himself further concerning
Theological Department, and who
to think he may write any
out of misrepresentation and non-
provided he does it over an as-
signed name.

The following: "The fact
that the Theological Department is
experiment first set on foot by the
Home Missionary Union, and
wards carried on from time to
by the Board of Governors."

According to this statement the
Department has been in existence
five or six years; but I was my-
student therein nearly thirty
ago, that is, before N. S. was

If he will consult the early
regimes of the college he will see
the Theological Department and
Faculty and Course of instruction
distinctly named. Now when
penned the above statement he
knew or did not know it to be
without foundation in fact.
former, then he shows himself
not sufficiently truthful, if the
not sufficiently well informed
upon the question at all.

He cries out against placing
Law and Theology before stu-
dents when what they need is Eng-
lish Grammar." Just so: and the
Theological Faculty cry out against
Law, and have not failed to take
for preventing it. If N. S. had
his facts from the printed regu-
lations touching this matter instead
of his own imagination, he
would have learned that "applicants
for admission to the partial course
are prepared to stand an exami-
nation in the usual branches of an
English education." When N. S.
down that "grammatical errors"
mark the conversation of regu-
lators in the arts course, it will
be enough to institute this charge
against students in Theology. But
from the foregoing which
N. S.'s principal points, it will
be clear how little he knows of the
Department on which he would enlighten
readers, how utterly incompet-
ent to form a proper judgement
of the Department, and how undeser-
ving of a place in the organ
purporting to be the organ
of the denomination.

D. M. WELTON.

REVIVALS.

BY THE REV. NEWMAN HALL.

Hall, after reading an article
by Cuyler, in which he favors
the occasional revival rather than the
work of grace, says:—

It is quite a novelty to me to diffi-
cultly my beloved and honored
pastor on this question my ex-
perience has led me to a totally dif-
ferent conclusion. During the twenty-
years of my present pastorate I
have permitted to receive into
the church upward of 3,000 persons.

Of these I may, perhaps, reckon, with
my friend, about 2,000 received
on their personal confession. Instead
of three-fourths of these being the re-
sult of special seasons of revival, I
am within the mark when I say that
not twenty-five of the whole number
have referred to such seasons as the
occasions of conversion, including
those benefited by the visit of Mr.
Moody. On two or three occasions
we have had special services of a re-
vival character; but not ten conver-
sions have resulted, and these have
been chiefly cases in which there had
been already deep conviction and
which, in all probability, would have
developed under the ordinary instru-
mentality. Admissions to the Church
have been at a very average rate,
year after year, resulting not only
from preaching, but also and very
largely from the labors of the Sunday
school, from home influence, from
open air services, and the various
mission operations in the neighbor-
hood.

My predecessor, James Sherman,
experienced several encouraging re-
vivals during his seventeen years
ministry. He had protracted services
and the aid of eminent American re-
vivalists. I have heard of fifty in-
quirers on one Sunday, and of several
hundred admissions to the church
in one year. Some years ago I felt
distressed that we had no such seasons,
and I carefully examined our
church book, comparing ten years of
the former with ten years of the pre-
sent pastorate. I was surprised to find
that the average of admissions to the
church was slightly greater during
the latter decade. So I thanked God
that, though he had granted us no such
special seasons of "showers of
blessing," yet that, in his mercy, he
had all the time been giving us the
small rain and the gentle dew, and had
been encouraging not merely the
preachers, but all the workers of the
church by proofs of his presence and
co-operation.

When I was in Hull (1842 to 1854)
there were six months of special re-
vival services amongst the Wesleyan
Methodists. In one district a thou-
sand new members were added.
About three years afterward, the su-
perintendent minister told me that
not fifty remained on their books. The
holy and devoted John Angell James,
of Birmingham, told me that an emi-
nent revivalist came to his church at
"Carr's Lane," by his invitation, and
during Mr. James' absence carried on
services in his own way. When the
pastor returned, he resolved to do all
in his power to secure the fruits. Out
of a large number of professed con-
verts there remained after a sifting
process, about fifty. He determined
not to receive them at once into the
church; but to form them into an
inquirer's class. He met them himself
for prayer and counsel, week by week.
Gradually the numbers declined, till
in a few months not half a dozen re-
mained for membership.

Dr. Cuyler says: "A majority of
the members received into our Evan-
gelical churches during the last forty
years have been converted in seasons
of revival." I can confidently assert
that the very opposite is our experi-
ence in the Old Country. The mission
of our brethren, Moody and Sunkey,
was followed in some places by large
admissions; but this was not the case
in London. I hailed that visit, took
part in it, assisted in the "inquiry
room," and occasionally preached in
connection with it. Some of the ser-
vices were held very near "Surrey
Chapel"; yet out of a membership of
1,300, we have not three who are the
fruits of that mission. It did great
good in many ways. I should hail an-
other visit; but it did not, in our ex-
perience show that occasional revivals
followed, as Dr. Cuyler says, "by
seasons of comparative repose," are
more useful as regards conversions
than the steady, quiet, prayerful work
of the church.

Most heartily I endorse my friends
words: Machinery is but mockery.
We need the Holy Ghost. We need
more of Christ in our souls and our
daily lives. When we have him, the
revival has begun." But such a re-
vival will continue without "inter-
vals of repose."

During a revival the conversion of
sinners is specially aimed at in
preaching. Should not this be the
habitual aim of every preacher, as I
know it is that of Dr. Cuyler? Not
omitting the instruction of the church
should not this be an element in every
sermon? Before the period of re-
vival returns, during the "season of
comparative repose," many souls will
go into eternity. Should not the Gos-
pel trumpet sound the notes "Repent!
Believe!" week by week? If

the regular week day prayer meeting
were crowded by church members,
earnestly seeking the divine blessing
on the ordinary instrumentality; if
all professors felt their responsibility
to be workers, not waiting for a re-
vival to bring in the hundreds, but each
trying to save individuals; if the pew
preached, as well as the pulpit, vin-
dicating the doctrine propounded in
words by purity and probity and ben-
evolence of life, if, instead of waiting
for an occasional torrent, more ad-
vantage were taken of the rain that
daily falls, the dew that nightly dis-
tills, might we not have a revival all
the year round?

Surrey Chapel, London, England.

LIFE-TENURE DEACONS.

BY DONALD MURRAY.

The somewhat serious question
whether deacons should be elected
for life, or only for a limited period,
is pressing itself upon the attention
of the churches. Many who do not
advocate any change from the old
way of electing for life, or "for good
behavior," as our fathers used to ex-
press it, do feel that the present sys-
tem has decided disadvantages, and
serious evils which should in some
way be obviated. The practice of
the churches in the matter of electing
deacons is not uniform, and every year
sees new departures from the old way.
Some elect for one year, some for five
years, while the majority cling to the
life-tenure. We express the opinion
that the election of deacons for life
in any church is a grave mistake, un-
der which the body is liable to be-
come a severe sufferer. We do not
say that it would be unwise to keep
men in office all their lives, by re-
election, but that is quite a different
thing from life-tenure. It may be
wise for a state to keep a man in the
Federal Senate for fifty years. It
would not be wise to make the tenure
of office fifty years.

Our first objection to life-tenure
lies in the fact that there is nothing
in the original election of deacons as
recorded in the Book of Acts, nothing
in the nature of the office itself, no-
thing in the qualification for the work
as described by Paul in his letter to
Timothy, which requires the life-
tenure. A study of the New Testa-
ment gives us facts which indicate
the reverse of this. When deacons
were first chosen it was for an emer-
gency which had arisen in the church,
and though from the minute instruc-
tions given in relation to the charac-
ter of deacons and their office-work
we may suppose it was designed to be
a permanent institution, yet it is very
evident that it was an office relating
to the temporalities of the church, at
a time when the believers had all
things common. The very character
of the work originally entrusted to
the deacons would indicate the neces-
sity of frequent changes, to prevent
corruption, sloth, indifference, or
jealous complaint.

The second objection to life-tenure
lies in the fact that no other officer
of the church is elected for life. The
pastor comes and goes. When he is
elected provision is made for a disso-
lution of the pastoral relation. Among
Baptists the pastoral settlements aver-
age less than five years, so that we
may say that churches change their
ministers as often as that.

The clerk, an officer who is more
and more valuable as the years go
by, is elected annually. No one
thinks of electing a clerk for life,
though the same man is often long
continued in office. The trustees,
the standing committee, the various
subordinate officers are all elected
every year, or every few years. They
are all chosen for limited periods.
Rotation in office is advocated every-
where but in case of the deacons.
But why should that office be an ex-
ception? Why should the pastor be
changed, clerk and treasurer elected
annually, and all the other officers
rotated, while the deacons hold on for
life? There is nothing in it democra-
tic or sensible.

The third objection grows out of
the fact that every church officer may
outlive his influence, and need to be
changed. This fact is everywhere re-
cognized. A church is organized
and a pastor is settled. He is just
adapted to a church in its infancy.
His preaching powers, mental capaci-
ty and pastoral ability fit him to pre-
side over just such a church as he has.
But the church grows while he does not.
New men come in. Men of superior
intellect fill the pews. The pastor is
outgrown. The church wants more
of a man—at least they think they

do, and after having done a good
work, the pastor leaves to make room
for a man who will do a larger, broad-
er work. The same is true of a clerk.
The best man for the office is put in
when the church is organized. Bet-
ter men come in and the old clerk
gives way to a new one. He who
has done as well as he could gives
place to one who can do better.

But the deacons, chosen when the
church has few members, stand for
life. They are the best men in the
church when elected; but better men
for the office come in. The church
outgrows its deacons. They become
ciphers, nonentities. They grow old,
indolent and useless. But there they
stand, like a stone-wall. They never
give way for better men. They were
elected for life, and, as Mr. Spurgeon
says, "A deacon seldom dies and
never resigns." The church gets
ahead of its deacons, but they stand.
They are hindrances to progress.
They were elected for life, and must
stand for life.

Now it seems evident for these,
and for other reasons, that it would
be better to elect deacons for a term
of years. If they prove to be the
right men, re-elect them. If they are
not the right men drop them. This
plan furnishes a rational way to get
rid of an incompetent man. If a de-
acon gets a blot upon his character, he
will often hold on to his office with
fearful tenacity, in order to save him-
self from falling. He thinks the of-
fice will cover the sin. The church
may not have evidence on which to
exclude or depose him, and if not, he
continues in his office in spite of
popular opinion, which demands his
resignation.

The remedy for all such evils is to
elect for a term of years. This seems
to be the most natural and common-
sense way, and the way that best ac-
cords with the spirit and democratic
policy of Baptist churches. Rotation
in office is a fundamental law of all
democracies.

A fair trial should be made of this
thing. We love deacons. We wish
to make their office honorable. They
are a useful class of men; but if any-
body can tell why the deacon, and he
alone of all the officers of the church,
should be elected for life, to remain
in place after he has become super-
annuated, inefficient and perhaps sus-
pected of wrong-doing, let him do so
for ourselves, we fail to discover,
imagine or guess any valid reason.

A COMMON ERROR OF THE CHRIS- TIAN LIFE.

BY WAYLAND HOYT, D.D.

That the Christian life is all in the
beginning. I am sure that the gen-
eral thought, while it is not too much
concerned about the beginning of
Christianity in the soul because it can
not be too much concerned about it,
is not anxious about its subsequent
development. It would have been
just as wise for the ancient racer,
after he had gone through the train-
ing process, stripped himself for the
contest, and entered the arena, and
run on three steps, to have stopped
there, and declared the race won, and
himself entitled to the prize. Why,
the judge would answer, the race is
but begun. Your preparation may
have been assiduous and admirable,
but it is the law of the arena that the
entire course must be accomplished,
and the prize adjudged as you shall
have carried yourself around the
whole circle. The race itself is the
only test of your preparation and be-
ginning.

But somehow we have too gen-
erally come to think that if we can only
get a man to acknowledge his sinfulness,
and walk for a time in darkness,
and then pass out in a better state of
feeling, to break forth in joy and song-
fulness, to see new lights in the sun,
and fresh greenness in the grass, to
profess trust in Jesus Christ, that then
the whole race is run, the victor's
crown is on the brow.

Now it may be true that a man
passing through such an experience
has become a Christian, and it may be
he has not. You can not predicate
Christianity altogether upon feeling.
It is not all fervors and raptures and
high excitements and suffusions of
sentiment. These may be the glorious
door into the noble Christian
life, and they may be the door into
delusion. Christianity is a changed
nature. To be a Christian is to be a
new creation in Christ Jesus. Chris-
tianity is the setting of the purposes
towards God; it is resolute determi-
nation to arrange our action with,
and not athwart, the will of God; it is
living as ever in our great Taskmas-

ter's eye. And so the only test to the
truth of the beginning is the whole
race succeeding. "By their fruits ye
shall know them," said the Saviour.
The genuineness of the new life is to
be judged of what you do each day
in your business—not so much by
what you thought you felt on some
dim day years back. Christianity is
more a life than a feeling. If the life
bloom other than Christian, the strong
presumption must be that the root
out of which the life issues is other
than Christian.

It is the Springtime, and I want
flowers in my garden. I go to a seed
store and ask for hyacinth bulbs. Un-
less my sense of smell be acute the
man may sell me onions instead of
hyacinth bulbs. They look very much
alike. I take them home and plant
them and water them. If instead of
the perfumed flowers I get some weed
or vegetable, then I am sure I have
not planted hyacinths. So it is with
Christianity. Unless the bloom be
Christian, it is certain that the bulb
is not. The only test of saintship is
endurance in saintship. The begin-
ning is not everything in Christian-
ity.

A POPULAR MINISTRY.

A ministry that pleases everybody,
especially in the Presbyterian Church,
may well suspect itself. Look at the
doctrines we preach—human deprav-
ity, our Lord's true Deity, the atone-
ment on the Cross, the Personality
and Work of the Holy Ghost, the
need by every man—the most ami-
able and cultivated—of being regen-
erated, the Bible the sole rule of
faith, self-denial a part of true Chris-
tian living, retribution on the impen-
itent concurrent with natural immor-
ality, the obligation of the Sabbath;
and all this with a worship conspicu-
ously plain and free from showy and
meretricious decoration. Make all
this palatable to "society," the
"world," everybody!

No! this whole message tramples
on the pride of human intellect; be-
littles the boasted culture of the time
and it is, if understood, in direct
opposition to the "life" which we are
being persuaded to import and servilely
copy from Paris.

"Then what am I to do?" one
may say. Go on and preach these
truths only more clearly, firmly and
tenderly. "But what if the people
leave me?" Yes some will leave you
and go to churches they like better,
assigning various reasons for the
same. That is their matter. Yours
is to preach for the saving of men,
not for the keeping of them in the
pews. "But cultivated and well to-
do people will quit the church." Let
them. It is so much the worse for
them. Remember Paul's words
"Not many wise, mighty, noble are
called." "But it is a pity they should
not be saved." Certainly, but it is
by the truth they are to be saved;
and you are a teacher of the truth.
"But I may set them against it!"
Yes, and if your spirit is bad, you
will be verily guilty in so doing. But
if yours is the right spirit, then your
ministry will be like Christ's which
irritated, and drove off not a few, es-
pecially of the ritualists, and intellec-
tual kind. "For judgement am I come
into this world; that they which see
not might see, and that they which
see might be made blind."—*Dr. John
Hall.*

The late British Premier, Lord
Beaconsfield, said some years ago:
"I have ever myself been of the
opinion that it was in the great cities
of the earth the church would effect,
in this age, its most signal triumphs."
The history of the gospel Church
fully confirms that statement of a
patent fact. In many of the great
cities of Christendom the churches
that were first planted have outlived
all other institutions, and they have
put on new life with the changes and
emergencies of successive ages.
Every new Church of Christ points
forward to the better future of this
world, and to the things that are not
seen and eternal.

The Baptists of Russia, have sent
a missionary to Bulgaria. The sale
of Bibles has recently been very large
in Bulgaria, and there are signs of
deep religious interest.

The Jamaica Baptist Union, which
held its annual meeting last month,
report the Baptism of 2,394 persons
in the past year, and 4,446 "inquir-
ers" who are candidates for baptism.

A BAPTISM TO BE REMEMBERED.

On the evening of the 11th day of
February, 1831, just fifty years ago,
a baptism occurred in a little stream
running through the jungles of Tavoy
never to be forgotten. The Karen
apostle, Ko Tha-byu, had made three
visits among the people inhabiting
that section of the country and on a
fourth excursion he was accompanied
by the Rev. George Dana Boardman.
Under their labors a large number of
Karens professed conversion, and
thirty-four were accepted for baptism.
Subsequently Rev. Mr. Mason reached
Tavoy and arrangements were
made for him to go again into the
jungles with Mr. and Mrs. Boardman,
with a view of administering the or-
dinance. Mr. Boardman was so
feeble that he had to be carried on a
cot. Before the time appointed for
the baptism, his wife saw that he was
failing so fast that she urged his im-
mediate return. But he said, "The
cause of God is of more importance
than my health. Ministers often wish
to die in the pulpit, but to die in the
pulpit would be nothing to dying here
in the midst of the Lord's work."

The baptism was described by Mr.
Mason in these touching words:

A little before sunset, he was car-
ried out in his bed to the water-side,
where, lifting his languid head to
gaze on the gratifying scene, I had
the pleasure of baptizing in his presence
thirty-four individuals, who gave sat-
isfactory evidence to all, that they
had passed from death unto life.
After this he seemed to feel that
his work was done. He had said in
the course of the day, that, if he
could live to see this ingathering, he
could in special mercy say, "Lord,
now lettest thou thy servant depart
in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy
salvation."

From the banks of the stream he
was borne back to the mission-house,
but on the way his happy spirit es-
caped from its "clay tenement," and
when his companions thought to min-
ister to him they were surprised to
find that "he was not, for God took
him."

That jungle baptism and the sud-
den translation of Mr. Boardman are
events deserving of devout commem-
oration in all our churches.

THE WHOLE TRUTH.

The Methodists, Baptists, and
Presbyterians in a small community
in South Carolina agreed to build a
meeting-house in common—preach-
ing by turns. When it came to the
turn of the Presbyterian minister, he
said he felt it his duty to preach on
Baptism, and he did so, remarking
that he should give them the truth,
and the whole truth, on the subject.
In the course of his discourse he quoted
Hebrew 10: 22, "Having your
hearts sprinkled from an evil con-
science," and there he stopped. A
little German member of the Baptist
church was sitting in one corner of
the house. He could only speak
broken English; but Bible in hand,
he turned to each passage referred to.
Observing the minister stop at "con-
science," he continued out loud, "and
your bodies washed with pure water."
This much confused the minister, who,
to recover himself, repeated his last
sentence, "Having your hearts
sprinkled from an evil conscience;"
"and your bodies washed with pure
water," was again the response of the
pertinacious German. The minister
was so annoyed that he wound up his
discourse. The congregation all be-
gan to read for themselves, and sev-
eral became Baptists. As for the little
German, he defended himself by say-
ing, "Vy, de minister say he vas
going to give us de truth, and de
whole truth, and dis vas de whole
truth."

ALWAYS PREACH CHRIST.—Preach-
ers should never fail to point sinners
to Christ. Every sermon should tell
men what must do to be saved. The
importance of this will appear from
the following incident, related in the
"Preacher's Cabinet." "Spurgeon
tells of a jail chaplain who preached
on sin, and divided the discussion
into two sermons: one Sunday the
disease, and the second its cure. Be-
tween the two Sundays several of the
prisoners were hanged. They had
heard only what they already knew,
but failed in hearing what they
especially needed."

THE AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSIONARY
Union closed its financial year with a
debt of less than \$20,000. The Home
Mission Society will carry over a debt
of \$30,000. These amounts may be
reduced at the Indianapolis meetings.