

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS—Paul.

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SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS NOTES.

While English Baptists, with the help of loose communion, double in forty years, American Baptists, with the hindrance of strict communion, double in twenty years. Well: there are hindrances that help, and there are helps that hinder.

Princeton College has had over fifty Baptist students since 1870; but the Seminary there has had no Baptist student in the last twenty years, though previously nearly forty Baptists, principally from the South, attended that school of the prophets.

"When a man," says Spurgeon, "gets to cutting down sin, paring down depravity, and making little of future punishment, let him no longer preach the gospel. As for me," he adds, "I believe in a hell that is bottomless and in a heaven that is topless." It will be well for all preachers to be careful lest they whittle eternal verities to the small end of nothing.

SIZE OF LONDON.—You will form some idea of the vast space which this largest city in the world covers when we tell you it has 1,600 miles of streets and is larger than New York and Paris combined. What a population, too! There are more Scotchmen in London than in Edinburgh; more Irish than in Dublin; more Jews than in Palestine, and more Roman Catholics than in Rome.

Mr. Ingersoll appears to be appreciated out in the mountains, as the following, from two Colorado papers will show:

Ingersoll has excited the amateur thinkers, as he always does wherever he goes. It may be put down as a broad proposition that a man who believes in Ingersoll does not know much. His smartness only appeals to the lowest order of intellect. No really bright man was ever fooled by his hotch-potch of almanac jokes about things he does not understand. He can burlesque a poem, but he cannot understand it.—*Denver Tribune*.

There is a great deal of truth in the above. Any well balanced, well informed man would see his special pleadings, his unfair methods and his dishonest misrepresentation.—*Colorado Springs Gazette*.

The 396,246 Congregationalists of the United States baptized last year 6,374 adults and 5,366 infants—1,008 more of the former than of the latter. There was one infant baptism to every 73 members. Does not this look like "decline," compared with the statistics of the Trinity Episcopal parish, New York, in which 61 adults were baptized last year, and 1,141 infants? The difference is explained by the fact that Episcopalians hold and Congregationalists reject the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, which first called infant baptism into existence and which alone can keep it alive.

Do we read the word of God properly? We need not hesitate long in saying that we do not. Some read merely to find its beauties, others to find its faults, others read it merely to quiet their consciences. Very few read it as the message of God to their souls, and as the rule of their faith and life. If we do not read it as the word of God it will not help us in our Christian life. If we study the Bible to find light, we shall find it, and with the light which the Holy Spirit will give us we will be enabled to understand the word of God as we never have been able to comprehend it before.—*Cumbe and Presbyterian*.

I can say unfeignedly I should be glad to hear of the conversion to Christianity of Charles Bradlaugh, but, were it to take place, there need not be any particular effusion of utterance about it. He would only be following in the way of many noisy infidels of our time, and the grace of God has reached many worse men. His brother, Mr. W. R. Bradlaugh, has been conducting a mission at Exeter. In his opening address, he said, in reference to his brother:—"I have faith in his conversion, and should not be surprised by receiving a tele-

gram during these or any other services informing me that he had given his heart to the Lord."—*London Freeman*.

The *Religious Herald* concludes a pungent article on "Modern Dancing," with this very judicious paragraph:

A brother asks us as to the course which our churches ought to pursue in reference to dancing members. For obvious reasons, it is a difficult question to be handled. In many of our churches there is not enough consistency and spiritual vigor to deal with such cases. Our experience teaches us that it is a question for the pastor rather than the church. If he is wise and fearless, he can generally manage it. To begin with, he ought to be faithful in his ministrations. He ought to teach his young people what is lawful and expedient. If there are cases of disorder, let him see the offenders, show them their wrong and exhort them to repent. If this is done in a kindly and conciliatory spirit, it will save such of the offenders as have the root of the matter in them. If any are refractory and unmanageable, their evil spirit will soon drive them into courses of conduct that will necessitate their exclusion.

For the Visitor.

A Belief that Needs Defending is not Worth Defending.

BY REV. C. GOODSPEED.

So said a minister of another faith when preaching to a congregation of Baptists. The insinuation seemed to be that our peculiar beliefs are worthless because they need defence.

This would be an admirable principle for aggressors, as it would ever disarm all resistance, and permit them, however weak they were, to scale the strongest holds of those they wished to subdue. It would be a very nice principle for the wolf to teach the shepherds, as it would leave the sheep his prey. It is peculiarly fitted, therefore, to serve the purpose of those who know they must be repulsed if Baptists defend their beliefs, as it assures them victory without the risk of resistance. Is it not a wonder that this principle so long and urgently needed by our pedo-baptist friends, in their attempts to win Baptists, has not been discovered before? What needs defence is not worth defence!! This means that all beliefs which are attacked are not worth defence; for all that are assailed need to be defended. What a worthless book the Bible is then! for it has to resist more attacks than any other. The divinity of our Lord, justification by faith, all the doctrines to which the Bible is the basis, are worthless. An old belief, then, that the better you define the more it will be assaulted, the representatives of evil, is all a mistake. What is excellent is never attacked, it is only what is evil that is assailed. What a good world this is, after all, if this principle be true?

But the Apostle Paul made a great blunder when he wrote, "Contented earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," and he proved the worthlessness, not the value of the doctrine of justification by faith, as he supposed, when he defended it with all his might from the attack of Judaizing teachers. He should have known that by virtue of being attacked—justification by faith was of no worth.

But, seriously, is it not pitiful that Christian teachers will propound such absurdities as the statement at the head of this communication? If they cannot serve their purpose but by such means, let them be sure their purpose is not worth serving. The true principle—one which will stand every test, is this, "The belief which is not worth defending is not worth holding."

For the Visitor.

Wayside Gleanings.

BY W. H. P.

Bright gleams from a black diamond.

An old colored man said the other day, "There is enough in a few crumbs of the Saviour's parables, to feed upon for thousands of years." Well done, said I. If I know of a vacant theological chair, I will recommend you for it. In answer to a man who asked him where he was educated, he said, "The great I Am, educated me. Do you know him?" "And what an education he gave!" said he. He sweeps everything right up.

In speaking of the spiritual ignorance of worldly men of intelligence, "The man whom that God teaches, can look right through these men."

A colored woman living near St. Catharines, aged 117 years, who still does her own housework and, though "getting blind, threads a needle without glasses yet," said the other day, "Others read of miracles of healing in the New Testament, but I'm a witness to them."

She has never had any but the Lord for her physician.

She rode in about three miles to meeting last fall and stayed to dinner with us. She remembers well over 70 years ago when "the Lord met her."

For the Visitor.

Jehovah-Jireh, or a Pleasant Experience.

Deo Non Fortuna, writes: "Dear brother, enclosed find five dollars. You can use 50 cents for a couple of chairs, for my wife and self to sit upon when we visit the Tabernacle. We, though not residing in Halifax, have both been there and may be again. Meantime, use the chairs till we come, and the remainder as you deem most for the glory of God. We are pleased to see the letter from the converted infidel. Be encouraged, dear brother, in your efforts to save the perishing. Eternity alone will reveal the full result; I doubt not it will be glorious."

We know not the author, but the motto and circumstances in connection with the letter, were as cold water in a thirsty land exceedingly refreshing. Faith had been put to a test respecting a double issue of *Buds and Blossoms*, (see explanation in next number of our magazine) and when the motto, "Deo non Fortuna," with the enclosed five dollars came it did not a little clear the mists away, and strengthen our hands in the special work. The interpretation, "God, not fortune," keeps up a glad expectation of success and that the needful funds will come in. Whilst writing, additional proof is given that God can and will sustain. For a poor widow woman formerly of my congregation, now of Devon, England, has just sent me a postal order for 10s., being one dollar for *Buds and Blossoms*, and balance to help pay for the 100 extra chairs purchased for the increased congregation. We should be happy to receive special donations so that they can be paid for independent of our general income, for our demands are many.

God is dealing very graciously. There have been baptisms nearly every Sunday so far this year. Others are being received, one being the last in a family for whom we have heard the father cry for years, now all are saved.

Yours in and for Him,
J. F. AVERY.

The secrets of life are not shown except to sympathy and likeness.

A holy life spent in the service of God, and in communion with him, is without doubt the most comfortable life that any man can live in this world.—*Melancthon*.

The Baptist Cause in St. Louis.

A correspondent of the *Observer* has this to say of the origin and progress of the Baptist cause in St. Louis:

"It is almost impossible to appreciate what we are, without remembering what we were: comparison is the gauge of success or failure; so, when a Baptist friend was showing me 'the glory and beauty of the temple' where she worshipped, and wherein we chanced to meet one pleasant day, I asked: How long has your denomination been planted here? How many years has it taken this tree to attain its present growth and bear all this goodly fruit? My friend waxed eloquent while she recounted the triumphal march of her church, how it had overcome the hardships incident to pioneer existence, perils in the wilderness, perils in the city, perils by fire, until now the stately temple in which we stood, though called 'the Second Baptist,' was indeed second to none, but the proud and prosperous mother of eight thriving daughters in the city of St. Louis, not counting a number of colored organizations which she has helped to establish. It is a matter of history that the first Protestant church erected here was Baptist. As early as 1798 John F. Clark introduced the wedge of Protestantism into the heart of this Roman Catholic territory. Six years later he organized the 'First Baptist church' in a certain dingy building 'by a river-side where prayer was wont to be made' by some half dozen of faithful brethren. Although a good Methodist when he first left his native Virginia, by the time Mr. Clark had made his devious and perilous way across the wilderness as far as the Father of Waters, he had become so strongly impressed with a belief in the necessity of immersion that he declared himself a Baptist. In the lone wilds of Illinois he met with a fellow-worker who had come to the same conclusion. These men actually immersed each other, there being no minister to perform for them the sacred rite.

This leading Baptist church has for its pastor Rev. W. W. Boyd, D.D., whose whole soul is given to the advancement of his work. He is accounted a fine speaker; has the largest church and Sunday school, the biggest organ and the best organist in St. Louis.

"Ought Women to Preach?"

It is one of the signs of the times that a great literary periodical, like the *Contemporary Review*, should have in its last issue two articles, by eminent men of different Churches, on this subject. The world moves. The first is by Dr. Plumptre, Dean of Wells, and the other by Prof. Godet. Dean Plumptre comes out squarely in favor of allowing Christian women who possess the necessary gifts and grace the free exercise of their talents. The extent to which conventional prejudice has given way already, in regard to women, he thinks points to still greater advance in other departments of activity. Women are Poor Law Guardians and members of School Boards, and compete with men in various departments of work. Dr. Plumptre thinks the time has come, "That we should recognize and foster, on a far wider scale than at present, the teaching function of women in the ministry of the Church of Christ." And he adds: "I do this on the broad ground that they have often in large measure the gift of teaching, and that the Spirit who bestows these gifts, does not give them to be wasted." The success of many gifted women as public teachers, and of the female preachers in the Salvation Army, confirm his conviction. He bears very commendatory testimony to the general discre-

etion and good sense, as well as zeal, that has characterized the latter. He says: "All that I hear from others, including the testimony of curates and policemen from their different points of view, leads me to hope that they have awakened the sense of a higher life in many who had been as 'without hope and without God in the world.'"

Dean Plumptre thinks that those who interpret St. Paul's words as forbidding all women to use their gift of speech for the instruction of others, misinterpret his meaning. These apparent prohibitions must be read in the light of other parts of his writings where the teaching and public work of women seem to be fully recognized and commended. And even if the prohibition was as absolute as is claimed, he asks: "What proof have you that it was intended for all time, and not rather to take its place among the things that might be varied from time to time by the wisdom of the Church, according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners." In literature and teaching, he sees spheres not yet so fully occupied by women as they may be in future.

Professor Godet takes the other side of the question, and regards St. Paul's language as prohibiting women from taking part in public teaching. He also quotes instances where the teaching of women and their prominence in the Churches did much harm. Yet, even he says: "I would not go so far as to affirm that the preaching of truly pious women, like Elizabeth Fry, Mrs. Taft, Miss March and many others whose example might be quoted cannot have done any good. The gospel does not lose its life-giving power, even when it is preached in a manner not altogether in accordance with apostolic prescription."

More About Baptist Newspapers.

Only 1,550 persons among the 18,000 Baptists in Philadelphia take the *National Baptist*, and the Business Manager of that paper says it has only one subscriber in every twelve Baptists in Pennsylvania. We beg those who think it so easy to induce Baptists to read, to consider this announcement, which we take from the columns of the *National Baptist* itself. That paper, until recently, has been ably championed by the American Baptist Publication Society. With his exceptionally good opportunities for securing a large advertising patronage, the publisher was enabled to reduce his subscription price to two dollars per annum. The paper has been ably edited. Every issue is full of fresh and vigorous thought, aptly expressed. Its editor is President of the Baptist State Convention, and is as popular as a Baptist editor could well be. Add to this that there is not in the wide world a more compact body of Baptists than that in and around Philadelphia, and that they are noted for their zeal in behalf of home enterprises. Hence Dr. Wayland and his *National Baptist* have had the enthusiastic support of pastors and other leading Baptists of his State; and yet, with all this, he has but one subscriber to every dozen Baptists. If such be the case in a State filled with cities and towns, with every Sunday preaching in almost every Baptist church, how must it be in the South, with our people scattered over vast districts of country, and with poor post office facilities, and preaching, in most cases, but once a month.

We would like to hear from other Baptist newspapers at the North. Possibly some of them can make a better exhibit in this line than the *National Baptist*; but we think not. The average Baptist, find him where you may, is not giving himself much concern about newspapers. You may reduce the price to a nickel

a year and not very largely increase your list. There is a constant improvement, but, from the nature of the case, it must be slow. The *National Baptist*, by giving the public a glimpse at its mailing list, has rendered a most wonderful service to that large and increasing class of Baptists who feel called of Providence to the work of Baptist journalism. Those of them who think at all may possibly ask themselves: "If a paper of such immense backing of men and money, published in the greatest Baptist city of the world, makes such an exhibit as that, I will wait and consider the matter a little more closely before making the leap". Others will rush ahead, disdaining to profit by the experience of their brethren, vainly thinking nothing is more appropriate and nothing more easy than for them to succeed where others fail.

Ministerial Meanness.

A minister of the Lord Jesus Christ should be the soul of honor in all his dealings with all men, and especially with his brethren of the same holy calling. But what shall we say about a case like this? Rev. Mr. A., pastor of a church which promptly pays him his stipulated salary, accepts an invitation to officiate for his people in his place on that day. He receives compensation for his services, the whole of which he puts into his own pocket, and offers the brother who has done his work for him, not one cent for his services. Ought he not ever afterwards to be ashamed to look that brother in the face? for it seems to be about as mean a thing as a minister could be guilty of. Ministers, without charge, are, we believe, always ready cheerfully to serve any pastor, by occupying his pulpit when he is sick, or called away on ecclesiastical or other business, and they would not expect pecuniary compensation under such circumstances, and would decline it if offered. But the case which we have mentioned is entirely different, and while we can conceive of circumstances in which, and persons by whom pecuniary compensation would be declined even in such cases, yet we cannot but feel that the obliged pastor should give the brother who has served him an opportunity to accept or decline such compensation. And is there not a glaring injustice as well as meanness in this matter. Two congregations are served on the same day by two ministers, the one takes pay from both, the other gets nothing from either. You could hardly make things more unequal.

To the honor of the ministry we must say that we believe few are guilty of this meanness and injustice, but there ought not to be one.—*Christian Intelligencer*.

DANCING.—"No man in India would allow his wife or daughter to dance. And as to dancing with another man, if a woman were to attempt it, her husband would leave her at once, as one who was lost to modesty and virtue. In regard to Western nations, there is nothing that more perplexes them, than that fathers and husbands should allow their daughters and wives to indulge in promiscuous dancing. No argument will convince them that it is the proper thing for a virtuous woman or that it is not, at least, of a licentious tendency. The prevalence of this practice is one of the greatest reproaches, in their esteem, to Christian nations. With them, dancing is simply an accomplishment of a prostitute, and even she dances only with her own sex."

To return good for good is civil courtesy; evil for evil malicious policy; evil for good, hateful ingratitude; good for evil, true Christian charity.