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The Christian Visitor,

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REV. J. E. HOPPER, EDITOR.

NOTICE.

To Correspondents, Subscribers and Others. Items of Religious Intelligence are solicited from all parts of the world; also, communications upon other subjects of interest, especially educational, social, and industrial topics. Correspondents should write upon only one side of the paper, and make their letters as brief as the facts and circumstances will permit. As a rule, all matter, to ensure being published the week of issue, should reach us not later than Monday noon. When you desire to discontinue taking the VISITOR it is necessary to pay all arrearages if any, and notify us by letter or post card. It is not enough to send back the paper marked refused, as in most instances we have no means of finding out the address without much searching.

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PERFECTION.

No. 2.

The language of scripture nowhere asserts or implies that a christian may in this life attain a state in which he lives without sin.

1. The doctrine of Perfection is founded on a false interpretation of scripture. In Job 1: 1, it is said Job was perfect. Now to know how much meaning to put into the statement we may find by referring to Job 9: 20, where he says, "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: If I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse." Job's perfection did not include freedom from sin, but set forth the fact that as a ruler, a servant of God, a kind father, and one mindful of the poor, etc., he was remarkable for uprightness. In Job we find much murmuring, ignorance of God's dealing, unsound argument and contradictions. He was not perfect as the term is commonly understood, but merely a man who by moral and religious life had attained a high standard of excellence in his day. Similar remarks may be made of Noah and others.

Paul is claimed as a perfectionist by Rev. Mr. Earle, who says in speaking of the 7th and 8th chapters of Romans, Paul struggled with the enemy within until he could say, what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh God sent his Son to do. In the 8th chapter Paul entered into rest and was never again heard to say: "O wretched man that I am." Now as this epistle was written A. D. 60, Paul was then resting or perfect. But Paul in writing to the Philippian Church in A. D. 64, says in 3: 12-14, "Not as though I had already attained either were already perfect, etc." Paul four years later was unwilling to be placed in the perfection category. In justice to Mr. Earle, however, we should say that what he says he has experienced is "not perfection, not attaining to a sinless state, but rest—the rest of

faith—a calm sweet resting all with Christ." To this putting and naming of the matter we have less objection, but it sounds peevish to hear men as we do to-day stand up and say they are perfect, and then tell how little perfection includes. It admits they pay of errors, weaknesses, infirmities, mistakes, etc. Well if it does it ought to be christened some other name than perfection for this term thus qualified to the mass of people is essentially misleading.

2. The doctrine of perfection is flatly contradicted by Scripture. In James 3: 2 it is said: "In many things we offend all," or, as the revised version has it, "in many things we all stumble." Solomon said in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, I Kings, 8: 46, "There is no man that sinneth not." In Proverbs 20: 9, it is said: "Who can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from sin," and in Ecclesiastes 7: 20 it is plainly stated: "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not." To these add I. John, 1: 8-10. The meaning of these passages lies on their face. They will not submit to fanciful interpretation. They plainly deny the statement of any that they are perfect or sinless. If any are perfect and still sin, as some claim, we leave such to be dealt with by Lexicographers. They are quite outside of sober theological treatment.

3. Perfectionists mix justification with sanctification. Justification is a judicial act on the part of God in which he ceases to view us as condemned, and looks upon us as pardoned and restored to divine favor for Christ's sake. It must of necessity be an instantaneous act. Sanctification, on the other hand, is that state of christian growth begun in regeneration and justification, and carried on till perfect manhood is reached in a sinless world with the risen Lord. It is a state progressive. Instantaneous sanctification is not only not taught in God's Word, it is contrary to the law of our human constitution. Mental habits are strengthened by exercise. Dispositions, good or bad, are rendered stronger by indulgence. Evil associated with and yielded to blackens the character, just as fellowship with the good and walking with God assimilates one to the divine character.

Christians are exhorted to grow in grace (II. Peter, 3: 18) and urged to add to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, etc., till charity crowns the structure. All the figures of God's Word indicate progress, some the taking on of additional parts in external growth, others the assimilating of the whole to the consistency of the new, or added part as the leaven in meal.

Instantaneous sanctification would divide christians into two classes, the sanctified and unsanctified, the holy and unholy. Of this division into classes there is no mention in God's word. All are saints and addressed as such by the Apostle Paul in several of his epistles. The differences among christians are those of degree not of class. It is only Rome and the "Holiness Brethren" that make some saints and others unsanctified christians or sinners, afraid to preach instantaneous sanctification, as some have said because of their worldliness.

The passages that represent christian life as a gradual development are many. "The inward man is renewed day by day." "Put off the old man and put on the new man." "I bring my body into subjection." He which hath begun a good work in you will carry it on till the day of Jesus Christ." To such passages add the seventh of Romans which is as great a mountain in the way of perfectionists as the ninth is in the way of Armenians.

We regret that a letter from our North Western correspondent, sent about the first of October, detailing the progress in religious matters being made in that new section, never reached us. This letter is referred to by Bro. McDonald in his interesting letter in this issue. We regret the loss of the letter and hope our brother may have time to reproduce it.

ONE DOLLAR WILL PAY FOR THE VISITOR TILL NEXT JULY.

THE COLOR LINE.

Jamaica must be indeed far behind the times. The government has, by an overwhelming majority, declined annexation with Canada! Mr. Selomon stood alone in his advocacy of the measure. And will any one hereafter adore the divinity of Jamaica, or, suppliant, place a victim on her altar? *Bystander* evidently will not. His divinity must have no colored blood in her veins, nor even any colored worshippers at her shrine. He says, in *The Week*, "Can any one doubt what part would be played in Canadian politics by a negro delegation, or a delegation mainly elected by negroes, whose homes and principal interests would be two thousand miles away?" The difficulty as to distance would certainly not be insuperable. The governing of a country at two thousand miles distance would not be something new in history, nor would it be an unknown stretch of mutual government to extend it over that distance. Canada was not nearer to England. British Columbia was as far from Nova Scotia. In the latter case, *Bystander* would, of course, deny the analogy, because these two are but extremities, with Ontario, the heart, between as it ought to be. Yet there is enough to show that the objection with regard to distance is scarcely tenable, if he wished to give it prominence, which we think he does not. The water way between is cheaper than the railway that is to unite us to the West, and as to want of common interest, if we produce what they need and their products are called for in our markets, that interest will not be wanting.

As we interpret *Bystander's* argument, he does not really base it on color either. He is rather too liberal minded to measure men by the shades of their complexion. This may do as a poor sort of *argumentum ad hominem* when used against annexation with Jamaica, or to the United States, with a large colored element in the South; but he rises superior to such narrow views, when, in the following article, he denounces the "murderous and infamous reign of terror" by which Governor Eyre quelled the disturbances in Jamaica.

The strongest ground of opposition—the real basis—appears in this: "In Ontario not a voice was raised in favor of the now defunct 'proposition.'" "But in Halifax advocacy of the measure has been loud." Halifax would be the winter, though hardly the summer, port of the Jamaica trade." And, alas, "We have not yet made the people of Nova Scotia, or New Brunswick, or British Columbia, Canadians." Here then is *Bystander's* difficulty. Jamaica might bring some advantage to the Maritime Provinces. It is at a terrible distance, because at the opposite end from Ontario. It has nothing in common, because its trade would probably be with the Lower Provinces. We are not advocating the annexation of the island; but we are endeavouring to point out that *Bystander* is not in this instance, taking the fair and broad view that inspires some of his utterances.

The wail that "We have not yet made the people of Nova Scotia, or New Brunswick, or British Columbia, Canadians," is scarcely complimentary when viewed from the standpoint of his Jamaica argument. It rests at best upon a narrow and one-sided view. When the several provinces voluntarily confederated, it was surely for mutual advantage. Ontario could fairly claim that we be merged and our individuality lost in her, only if she were so far in advance in all that constitutes civilization that the best interests of all would be best promoted by our dropping of all our provincial characteristics, renouncing all habits and tendencies that give us anything of individuality, and, though pretty old children, learning new tricks, with Ontario for our pattern and patron. If *Bystander* asserts that Ontario holds this relative position to us, we down by the sea, have self-respect enough to dispute the claim. If he does not mean it, he has been unfortunate in expressing himself. He may as well lay aside the hope of making Canadians of us. Whatever Canadians are made, we, while we are a part of the Dominion,

will have our part in the making, and the Canadian thus developed will be the result of harmonious growth that gathers into itself all that is best in Nova Scotians, and New Brunswickers, and British Columbians, as well as what is desirable in those of the other provinces. This will make fusion; this will promote progress; this will develop a strong and homogenous race like that from which we spring.

THE "WESLEYAN" AND PERFECTION.

Our contemporary is ill at ease on the doctrine of perfection. It criticises a brief report of a sermon delivered by Rev. Dr. Hopper in his own pulpit in this city. Certainly it will not deny the right of a pastor to warn his flock concerning what he believes to be false doctrine. Dr. Hopper simply set forth the belief of nineteen-twentieths of the christian world in all ages, concerning sin, and for that the *Wesleyan* treats him to a column and a quarter article, and dignifies it with the first place on the editorial page. The reverend gentleman ought not to be displeased with such attention. The secular press also comes in for a little share of criticism and rebuke for levity in reporting holiness meetings. It says: "Tens of thousands of the purest souls whose presence have ever blessed our earth," have held the doctrine. Perhaps so, and it might have said some whose record has been as foul as Pearsall Smith's have been its most brilliant advocates.

The *Wesleyan*, after stating that Dr. H. deplored the worldliness of church members, thinks strange that he rejected "the one safeguard against this universal danger." We would be glad to see some proof of Perfection's doctrines being a safeguard against worldliness. Have they ever in the history of the church been such? Church history negatives such an assertion from the days of Pelagius onward. It is true that men like John Wesley, who held the doctrine in a modified form, did not exhibit its legitimate evil fruits because of the large amount of evangelical truth which he held with it, which neutralized its effect. The fruit of a doctrine which lessens the restraints of God's law and lessens the guilt and turpitude of sin, cannot but be bad unless restrained by other influences.

The *Wesleyan* says, "It is the privilege of each christian believer to attain such perfection of choice, of trust, of love, as shall involve perfect obedience, while yet such errors as may have resulted from early training and influences, though sinless in motive, may not be wholly removed." This is a strange perfection, certainly. Sins of early training, such, for example, some one might say, as lying a little, stealing a little, gratifying lust a little, because early training and influences had been in these directions, do not militate against the possession of perfection. Well, brother *Wesleyan*, we "unsanctified ones" can teach a higher morality and purer christian life than you, for we shall not cease to proclaim that any departure from the law of God is sin, even though it result from early training and influences.

We were not a little surprised to note that at the recent meeting of the Methodist Sunday School Convention in this city, one of the leading pastors presented a paper which met with approval, containing this statement as reported, that "infants are born into the world in a regenerated and justified state." From such premises as this it is easy to work up a belief in perfection, but alas, for evangelical christianity, if such "errors" ever gain general currency.

ONLY A MAN.

"A minister is only a man" said a friend the other day. We assented. We had long thought we were aware of the fact. We would have granted further that he is sometimes a very ordinary man only. Still we could not go the length to which our friend was inclined to carry his deductions with reference to the respect and influence due to the ministry. Taking the clergy as a class, it has ever included many of the strongest and brightest intellects and finest charac-

ters. But we merely put the case to our friend in this way:

Suppose you and I are to-day men of ability and education in all respects equal. I study law; give all my time and thought and talent to secure advancement in my profession; cultivate the sterner part of my nature, and deem it necessary to hold in abeyance, or conquer, the sympathetic side—or even suppose that I give such time, and thought, and labor, as are demanded to bring me success in any profession. You, on the other hand, are brought under influences that turn your thoughts towards the moral and spiritual interests of your fellows; you are led to give yourself to the work of the christian ministry. Naturally all your thoughts and study are turned upon God's Word, and human interests and destiny as seen in the light of its teaching. You avail yourself of the thought and experience of others in interpreting the Scriptures and giving to each part its relative importance. You study theology at home; and "in your walks abroad" your read human nature and become acquainted with the various phases of spiritual want and spiritual difficulty. You carry a load of anxiety for those who are troubled as to their standing in the sight of heaven, and for those who "regard none of these things;" you bear in your own heart a shadow of that gloom that rests over the death-beds of those who approach the hereafter with no hope. Now, if a man wished to collect a debt, to be defended against some unjust accusation in court, or to have an opinion on any difficult point of law, he would not hesitate, as to which of us would be best qualified to meet his requirements. Taking merely this practical view of the question, to whom should he go for a theological opinion, or for spiritual counsel and direction?

Our friend said he had not looked at the matter in that light, and, as he seemed to have modified his views, we took advantage of his more reasonable frame of mind to give him some salutary truth as to the extremes to which men are likely to go. We intimated that, if the clergy had sometimes assumed too much authority, men ought not, in rejoicing over their emancipation, to deny the influence and weight which naturally belong to the ministry. We argued nothing from the Word of God, not because there was there any lack of argument for our position, but because our friend, like many others, was so far effected by liberalism as to be inclined to accept reason as the higher standard.

CURRENT TOPICS.

Our Canadians on the Nile find the rapids no insignificant matter, yet they seem to be justifying the expectations that Wolsey entertained of them. Occasionally a wrecked boat strews the shore, yet, with uncomplaining pluck the voyageurs are pressing onward. We trust that their officers, while maintaining discipline of course, will know a little how to "give and take"—will leave some margin for the intelligent experience of the men in work similar to that they have in hand. These men may not make the best machines, but, give them a chance, and they will prove themselves efficient agents in carrying out what is entrusted to them. We are sorry to learn that the alligators have been sampling white flesh, and sincerely hope that none of our countrymen will fall victims to their voracity.

While Canadian muscle is battling the rapids of the Nile, calm British endurance is holding the Mahdi at bay, and occasionally admonishing him that to come too near, does not tend to promote his health. A man recently arrived at Cairo from Khartoum, says Gen. Gordon has in his army 2,000 Turks and 6,000 blacks; besides a large number of Arabs. He has plenty of provisions and ammunition. The Mahdi's followers are deserting, having lost faith in him.

A compromise seems to have been effected between the British Government and Opposition, the latter agreeing to pass the Franchise bill, provided the Government will immediately produce a redistribution bill satisfactory to both parties. It is said that

one of the points of compromise is a reduction of the number of Irish members by at least five.

Some reinforcements have been ordered to the British squadron in Chinese waters, although it must be acknowledged that they seem small in view of the interests which may be involved.

Recent French operations in the East have not been—to use their favorite expression—brilliant. There are some indications that John is waking up, and, if the French do not soon go home, will really get mad. The recent importation of a number of German officers ought to do a good deal towards increasing their military efficiency, while it is not likely to bring any added friendliness to France.

In Spain, the bishops censured a professor of the University of Madrid for advocating liberty of education, whereupon the students sustained the professor's arguments by tumultuous demonstrations on the streets. Large crowds collected about the offices of some of the Carlist journals and threatened to loot them, whereupon the unsympathetic police interfered and after arresting twenty students and some journalists who had joined them, dispersed the mob.

Mexico is promising a new revolution. Bloody riots took place at different points on election day. One town has, since that date, been under martial law. The revolutionists are encamped near Sabinas, and are said to greatly outnumber the regulars who hold the latter town.

WILL ALL WHOSE SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE UNPAID FOR THIS OR PAST YEARS PLEASE REMIT.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THANKSGIVING Day in the United States is next Thursday.

DR. WILLIAM DEAN, of Bangkok, Siam, has returned home from missionary labor. He is 77 years old.

THE "Holiness Brethren" held meetings last week in Carleton, and on Sunday in the Mechanics Institute.

ANY persons wishing to help us extend the circulation of the VISITOR or our Sunday school papers will find us ready to make liberal remuneration for work. Write for terms.

For the Visitor.

China Correspondence

BY W. ASHMORE.

The wave of trouble has reached us at last. We are you know, in the upper part of Canton Province, and what is done in the Provincial city, of course, will be done in suburban places. At Canton and round about some fifteen chapels have been pulled down, and many houses of Christians looted. Fugitives are streaming in to the missionaries to find counsel, comfort, and even food. Here with us the rioting began at the Departmental City, by the looting of some twenty dwellings of Catholics. This was followed soon after by an outbreak in a District City, thirty miles distant. A Roman Catholic chapel and an English Presbyterian chapel were pulled down, and our own was barely saved. Then at Jiau Peng, another District City, some sixty miles away in another direction, one of our chapels was destroyed. The mob did their work most leisurely, carrying off every bit of timber in the building. Beams that were built in the wall were sawed off, which shows how deliberately they worked. The magistrate was within three minute's walk, and, notwithstanding the work was going on for three hours, he pretended to know nothing of it. After the chapel was finished the mob went to the shop of a well-to-do Christian family. This was within half a minute's walk of the magistrate's. The owner of the house hurried to him and implored protection against the mob. He could not avoid "turning out" at such a request. He went to the house where the looting was going on. He pretended to attempt some arrests, but he made none, although the robbers were walking quietly away, loaded down with plunder. The magistrate