

# Christian Monitor.

VOLUME 1.] RICHMOND, VA. DECEMBER 9, 1815. [NUMBER 23.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

From the *Religious Remembrancer*.

### DEAF AND DUMB CHRISTIAN.

The Rev Mr. Samuel Davis, in Hanover county, Virginia, who was for some time in England, published a small pamphlet in 1751, which he stiles "The State of Religion among the Protestant Dissenters in Virginia," in which, among other particulars, he mentions the following case, viz.

"There is one *Isaac Oliver* here, a miracle of a man, whose history, could I write it intelligibly to you, would be very entertaining. He has been deaf and dumb from his birth, and is now grown up to manhood. The want of the faculties of hearing and speech rendered him wholly incapable of all human converse and instruction, except by signs: and as for the most of divine things, they seem to me of so abstract and spiritual a nature, that the first notions of them can never be conveyed by this obscure medium: and yet (I mention it with grateful wonder) I have the utmost reason to believe he is truly gracious, and also acquainted with most of the doctrines of Christianity, and many matters of fact related in the historical part of the Bible. I, myself, have seen him represent the crucifixion of Christ, the swallowing and ejection of *Jonah* by the whale, &c. in such significant signs, that I could not but understand them. Some of his signs, whereby he described heaven and hell, were also intelligible to me; but many of them about other things I could make nothing of. Those that live in the house with him can hold an intelligent conversation with him, and he with them, upon most of things, with surprising readiness; and he has undoubtedly the most significant

gestures of any man I ever saw in my life, which his relations understand by repeated observation, and use them to communicate their thoughts to him. There is so much of the devout ardour of his soul discovered in him at times as is really affecting; and I have seen him converse in signs about the love and sufferings of Christ till he has been transported with earnestness, and dissolved into affectionate tears. Mr. *Morris*, with whom he lives, has told me, that *Isaac* informs him that he had these discoveries of divine things made to him while in bed, probably in a dream; and that eight years ago he appeared remarkably changed in temper and conduct. He seems ever since very conscientious in the whole of his behaviour; generally delights to attend public and domestic worship, though he cannot hear a word; and is observed, sometimes, to retire for secret devotion; though he signifies that he is praying with his heart, when about his business or in company; which is peculiarly practicable to him, as in all places he enjoys the undisturbed serenity of retirement. He discovers an expert genius in those things he is capable of, particularly in sundry mechanical employments; and his passions seem very vigorous; in any passionate emotions, his whole visage and all his gestures are surprisingly expressive of the temper of his mind; so that he seems to stand in the least need of the faculty of speech of any man I have known.

"I could relate sundry other remarkable peculiarities concerning him; but as they are unintelligible to myself, or might seem incredible to those that are unacquainted with him, I omit them." So

\* It is the general opinion of those that are acquainted with him, and especially of the family where he lives, who have the best op-

much, however, I know of him, that I cannot but look upon him as a miraculous monument of Almighty Grace, that can perform its beneficent purposes on mankind, notwithstanding the greatest natural or moral impediments; and I submit it to others' judgment, whether a person so incapable of external instructions, could be brought to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven any other way than by immediate revelation.—Besides the people here, sundry of my brethren, who have been here, particularly the Rev. Messrs. *Samuel Blair* and *John Roan*, can attest this relation; though to some it may appear an hyperbolic affectation of the *marvellous*; or the effect of popular superstition, which is wont to ascribe something prophetic, or divine, to those that labour under such natural defects.”

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FOR THE CHRISTIAN MONITOR.

### COMMUNION WITH GOD.

While the world at large evidently “lies in wickedness,” and is darkened with care and sorrow, there are a few of mankind who cultivate communion with God, and enjoy in it some anticipations of heavenly felicity. Whatever those may think of the subject who know nothing higher than “the things which are seen,” it is a fact that the precious inter-

portunities of observing him; that he can read. The first evidence of it appeared when he seemed to be first under religious impressions; for he was then observed to be frequently taking the Bible and looking into it; and ever since he gives the following evidences of it: he frequently looks into the Bible, or other good books, with great attentiveness; and sometimes points with his finger to some particular sentences, and tries to persuade others to read them; and these sentences, as the family tells me, are peculiarly affecting, and worthy of distinct notice. If you put a book into his hand inverted, he will immediately turn it into a proper position. When a history, or the like, is put into his hand, after looking into it a little while, he throws it away, with signs of its uselessness; but give him a Bible, though it were of a size and character he never saw before, or some other good book upon religious subjects, he hugs it in his bosom with signs of the most endeared approbation. He intimates, by signs, that the Almanack treats of the sun, moon, and stars, the weather, &c.—I have opened the Bible in Jonah, and shewn it him; and after a little perusal he has given me a very lively description of the fate of that prophet.

course of love subsists between the great eternal Being and every devout Christian; a fact it is too, which sinks all the glories of earth and time into comparative insignificance. The moment we form one just idea respecting communion with God, we feel constrained to adopt, with pleasing astonishment, the language of the Psalmist, “What is man; that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man; that thou visitest him?”

The ground of this holy intercourse with God is the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his name alone, and pleading his merits, we draw near to the throne of divine mercy. To use the unrivalled words of inspiration, we “pour out our hearts before God.” With lowly prostration we confess our unworthiness of his favour; yet ask that favour in its highest exertions, with the cheering expectation that we shall be heard and answered. We present to him our wants of every kind, especially the need that we feel of pardon and sanctifying grace. We repose our cares in the bosom of our God, believing that he careth for us. We praise him for blessings received in days past, and trust him for the future. By faith we “lay hold of the hope set before us” in the gospel, which hope, “as an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast,” bears us up under the ills of life, and fixes our thoughts upon the everlasting joys prepared for the people of God in a better world.

But how on God's part, is this communion carried on? How does he speak peace and consolation to his humble worshippers? I answer, not by new revelations from heaven. We expect no voice from the clouds, nor do we hear any, to tell us that we are accepted, and that we shall be blessed. The bible is the grand instrument by which our heavenly Father communicates his loving kindness to his children. It is here that he addresses us, and answers our petitions. This sacred book contains materials to produce a little paradise in the breast of a Christian. The letter indeed will not do it. But God by his spirit applies the word, when used according to his directions, with a light and energy peculiarly his own. The doctrines, the precepts; the encouragements and promises contained in the written word are brought

home to the heart, prepared by grace for their reception, with a power as impressive, as animating, as if they were immediately delivered to us from on high. We recognize their reality, their excellence, their adaptation to our circumstances. We feel our selves growing, under their transforming influence, in the likeness of God. We look to him with filial confidence for all necessary accommodations during our pilgrimage here below; for strength to conquer his and our enemies; for the remission of our manifold offences; and for perfect, endless happiness in his presence beyond the skies. The cares and troubles of this world become light in our estimation, as we know that they shall be overruled for our good. Through all the changing scenes of time, we "set our affections upon things above," as upon a vast treasure which shall never be taken away from us, "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

Communion with God is the very essence of religion. It is to promote this union of our souls with himself that he has appointed the various exercises of devotion, public and private; and we are mockers of God if we attend upon them in any other view. Precisely in proportion as we advance in communion with God, we are advancing towards heaven, and gaining those tempers and dispositions which are indispensably requisite to qualify us for heaven.

Suppose a holy angel should visit our earth to day for the first time, ignorant until now of our existence and our situation—suppose him to be informed, as the truth is, that we are a race of fallen, guilty sinners, who live only by the forbearance of our offended Creator and Judge—suppose him to come to the knowledge of our gospel; to hear us invited and urged, as from the mouth of God, to return and be reconciled to him through "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus," his well-beloved Son—suppose the celestial visitant to see the way of access opened for us wretched mortals to the throne of infinite grace, and to observe that all who approach that throne with becoming supplication receive the blessings they implore, blessings rich as the Saviour's blood could purchase, and durable as eternity;—what

tender sympathy would such a benevolent spirit feel for every poor sinner who is seen struggling in the way which leads to God! But with what amazement, what consternation, may I not say, would he contemplate the fact, that only here and there one of the many, only a very few of the whole mass, are availing themselves of their privilege; that multitudes never think seriously of the matter at all; that some even make it a subject of levity and ridicule: in a word, that the great majority, with the gospel sounding in their ears, turn their backs upon God, and prefer to go on in obstinate rebellion against him; bringing upon themselves, for the trifling, fleeting gratifications of this worldly life, all the fearful results of his final displeasure in the world to come! "This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation."

PHILANDER.

By inserting the following in the Christian Monitor, the Editor will oblige

A CONSTANT READER.

*Extract from the proceedings of the Synod of Virginia, sitting at Richmond, October, 1814.*

"The following question was overtured to the Synod for their consideration and advice, viz. How should a pastor proceed towards fathers of families who are in the communion of the church, but live in the habitual neglect of family worship?"

To which question, after deliberation, the following answer was given:

"The Synod are impressed with the importance of this overture, and convinced that it merits serious attention; as there is too much reason to believe that the very necessary and Christian practice of family worship is neglected in our Churches to an extent much to be lamented. The Synod therefore determine that it is the duty of a pastor often to insist, both in public and private, upon this duty, and enforce a compliance with it by all the prudential means in his power. And moreover, the Synod are of opinion that the neglect of duty stated in the overture is a proper subject for the discipline of the church."