

TERMS AND NOTICES.

THE RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER, published in the interest of the Free Baptists of Canada, is issued every Wednesday.

SUBSCRIPTION, \$1.50 a year, in advance. When not paid within three months the price is \$2.00 a year. Subscriptions may begin at any time.

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All letters, whether on business or for publication, should be addressed to THE RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER, Box 384, Fredericton, N. B.

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Religious Intelligencer.

(ESTABLISHED 1853.)

Manager's and Editor's Office: Fredericton, N. B.

Rev. Joseph McLeod, D. D., - - Editor.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1903.

Editorial.

—Preaching loses its power when the message is not enforced by a "Thus saith the Lord."

—Church and state in France are sure to be separated. The question has entered the domain of practical politics. The government desires the separation, and some ecclesiastics are not opposed to it.

—When the pastor is making pastoral calls is a good time for him to mention the denominational paper. A judicious word by the pastor will often secure a subscriber when nothing else will do it. The INTELLIGENCER will be glad if the pastors will speak a good word for it when they can.

—According to *La Revue*, a French journal, the average annual secession of Roman Catholic priests in France is two hundred. And many others are dissatisfied, and would come out from Rome if they knew of anything they could do for a living. The Roman Catholic church in France is being weakened, and serious disruptions may be looked for.

—To "annihilate the whole Christian system and wipe out its ideas and practices," is the announced purpose of a London socialist leader. An ambitious undertaking, certainly. But however vigorously he assails, nobody feels uneasy. Such attempts have been made before, and as large boasts have been made. And Christianity has moved on, scattering blessings on every hand.

—A man so closely connected with social work as Dr. Barnardo, of London, may speak with authority about the causes of the distressing conditions with which he and other social reformers have to deal. From his many years close study of the matter, he says that ninety-nine per cent. of the homeless children of London are made so by the drink

habit of the parents. Is it using strong language to characterize the drink traffic as devilish? And the men who fatten on the miseries they produce—and they do not produce anything else, what are they? The most successful agents the devil has.

—Explaining the great influence a certain pastor had, who was a very ordinary preacher, one of his people said: "If you had known him as we knew him, you would have thought that every sermon weighed a ton." Commenting on which the *Canadian Baptist* says preachers need to remember that it is their own weight as men which gives weight to their words. No man who is lightly esteemed himself by his hearers can have much power over them, however eloquent he may be. On the other hand, a man who is respected for his weight of character, although he may not be a brilliant speaker, may do the grandest service as a minister. Are we taking this enough into account in these days when sparkle and flash and rhetoric count for so much for a little while.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

The sacredness of the relations of membership in the Church of Christ is not so much considered and appreciated by many as it should be. This is shown by the low sense of the obligations and privileges of membership so often exhibited by church members. The fact that those who disregard all the obligations of church membership are retained as members, without remonstrance or endeavour to restore them, shows that the church, as such, is often without the high sense of the sacredness of church membership vows.

To unite with the Church of God is a greatly more serious act than joining a merely human society. When one becomes a member of the church he enters into covenant to renounce sin and to walk humbly and righteously before God and man. It is a covenant with God to serve Him, in His church and in the world, to the end of life. The violation of such a covenant is a serious thing. It is akin to perjuring one's self. Besides the condemnation and loss of the violator of the covenant with God, his sin reproaches and wounds the church, grieves the Holy Spirit and is a hindrance to seeking souls.

Churches should not hastily cast out members. The utmost of patient Christian labour to restore and save should be exhausted before a weak and erring member is cast out. The business of the church is to save. And yet there come times when members have to be separated by the act of the church. Immorality cannot be tolerated in the church. Nothing will more surely and quickly destroy the life of a church than the toleration of immoral conduct in any of its members. Moral delinquencies of every kind, whether the guilty persons be of high degree or low, should be promptly and faithfully dealt with—to save the wrong-doers and to preserve the spiritual health and power of the church.

There is need of much and careful

teaching about the holy character and mission of the church, and sacredness of the privileges and responsibilities that pertain to church membership.

THE NEEDED REVIVAL.

That there is need of a revival none will deny who are observant of the life of the Church of God. For two or three years there have been predictions of a great revival just at hand. And even now some are saying that there are signs of a general refreshing. The signs may be very clear to those who speak about them. All who are concerned for the kingdom of Christ will hope for a widespread quickening of spiritual life. But it may not be the wisest way to predict too much. Prayer for revival is as likely to be general and fervent when there are no predictions, and the blessing will not tarry because it is not heralded.

What is the revival most needed now? We are inclined to agree with the *Baptist Commonwealth* that the revival most needed is one that will begin in the Christian home. It will re-erect the family altar and recreate, if it be absent, the religious atmosphere about the domestic hearth. It will so naturally and irresistibly extend to the church. Each church and congregation will be its centre. Each minister will become more fervent and all of the members of his flock more effective. Prayers will be more earnest and desires and longings for spiritual refreshing more intense. All this will beget a revival quite as greatly needed in the relation of the members of our churches to business life. They will refrain from the appearance of evil. They will see to it that there shall be a difference between the Christian advocate of financial operations and the unchristian, unprincipled promoter of wild and unsubstantial schemes. There has been too much of this in these last days, and members of our churches are not wholly exempt from connection therewith. It will be a revival too, that will make each of us careful as to personal walk and personal demeanor. It will teach us to realize that life is more than a profession and that purity of purpose is above all pious pretense. Let us have this revival in the home, in the church, in private walk and in business circles, and it would not be long ere there would be a revival of interest in religious matters on every side of us. Streams of salvation might not run down the streets of our cities, but the influence of salvation would be felt as now it is not. There might not be the great gathering which would absorb all interests and all energies, but there would be smaller gatherings each of which would be a centre of spiritual impulse and consecrated life. We may be wrong, but we think and feel that this, after all, is the revival needed, and that this, after all, is the revival to be sought. There need be no prophecy in regard to it, but when we work and pray for it with sufficient earnestness it will come.

Faith is the hand wherewith we take everlasting life.

CAST DOWN, BUT NOT DESTROYED.

REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.

I am often struck by the different ways in which different persons are affected by severe trials. Some seem to have no rallying power after a great affliction; the wound never heals. On the other hand, trials that consume some persons, only kindle others into greater exertions. "This financial gale has carried away all your spars and swept your decks," I once wrote to a most benevolent Christian merchant after he had lost his property, "but you have got enough grace stowed away in your hold to make you rich to all eternity." That brave servant of Christ repaired damages, resumed business, rallied his friends and at evening-time it was light. Cast down, he was not destroyed.

The afflictions that are permitted by your Heavenly Father are never intended for his children's destruction, but for their discipline. The shepherd often casts his flock into deep waters to wash them, not to drown them. "You will kill that bush if you put that knife into it so deep," said a gentleman to his gardener. "No, sir; I do this every year to keep it from ruining all to leaves; sharp pruning brings the fruit." We pastors often find God's most faithful ones bleeding under the knife, but afterwards they yield the peaceable and precious fruits of righteousness and triumphant trust. It is that "afterwards" that God has in mind when he sends the trial. Affliction is the costly school in which great graces are often acquired, and from which grand characters are graduated.

How is it that a genuine Christian recuperates after being stricken down by a severe adversity or a sharp bereavement? Simply because his graces survive the shock. For one thing, his faith is not destroyed. When a ship loses her canvas in a gale, she can still be kept out of the trough of the sea by her rudder; when the rudder goes, she has her anchor left; but if the cable snaps, she is swept helplessly on the rocks. So, when your hold on God is gone, my suffering friend, all is gone. The most fatal wreck that can overtake you in times of sorrow is the wreck of faith; but, if, in the darkest hour, you can trust God, though he slays, and firmly believe that he "chastens you for your profit," you are anchored to the very throne of love, and will come off conqueror.

Hope is also another that survives. Some Christians never shine so brightly as in the midnight of sorrow. I know of good people who are like an ivory dice; throw it whichever way you will, it always lands on a square, solid bottom. Their hope always strikes on its feet after the hardest fall. One might have thought that it was all over with Joseph when he was sent to prison, or with John when he was exiled to Patmos, or with John Bunyan when he was locked up in Bedford jail, but they were all put in the place where they could be the most useful.

And that reminds me to say that your sorrow may be turned to the benefit of others. You can relieve your own suffering