

TERMS AND NOTICES.

THE RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER, published in the interests 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.

The date on the address label is the time to which the subscription is paid. The date is changed within two weeks after payment is received. If not changed in two weeks, we should be notified.

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ADVERTISING rates on application. ST. JOHN OFFICE: Barnes & Co's, 84 Prince William Street.

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, APRIL 22, 1903.

Editorial.

—Mention was made a few weeks ago of the refusal of the Governor of Nebraska to attend the ball given at the time of his inauguration, giving as his reason that as a Methodist he could not conscientiously countenance such things. In a recent talk about it he said:

I have had more commendation from men out of the church than I have had from those in it. They have said that I did right. That is the way the world thinks of this question. You men of the church must grapple with these problems.

The men of the world admire Christian consistency, and are impressed by it.

—A Missouri minister has made announcement that hereafter in funeral sermons he will tell "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." He seems to be confessing that he has been doing something else than telling the truth on funeral occasions. It is suggested that he may not be able in every case to get "the whole truth." One thing, however, he and every preacher should be careful to do—to preach nothing but the truth, and to do it in no uncertain or apologetic way. Desire to say pleasing things has made many a funeral sermon a curse instead of a blessing.

—Of an eminent minister, one of the chief in his denomination in the United States, it is told that for ten years he devoted his Sunday evening sermons to critical discussions, and to "bringing as far as possible the doctrines of revelation into harmony with current critical and scientific ideas, so as to make them acceptable to many who are skeptical." Recently he has confessed that his work has been a failure, in that it had not accomplished the real object of preaching. He says: "I am having large congregations and I am making the people that come to hear me *thinkers*; they get the best ideas that I can give them, but I am not suc-

ceeding in making them *Christians*." He has, therefore, changed his whole style of preaching. Men are not saved by doubts or critical questionings, but by the plain and earnest preaching of the simple gospel. The gospel is "the power of God unto salvation." Let every Christian minister be "determined not to know anything amongst men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

—Can this be? Surely the condemnation is too sweeping. The preacher was Rev. Dr. Madison C. Peters, a Baltimore Baptist minister. He is reported as saying in a recent sermon these severe things about the pulpits of the United States:

In the majority of the prominent pulpits in America today the preachers simply dare not be uncompromising in their denunciation of sin and wickedness. Such preaching would drive out the men whose ill-gotten wealth makes them essential to the church, because they can make large contributions. And many a preacher is compelled to credit his hearers with virtues he knows they do not possess, for the sake of his bread and butter; for the sake of his wife and babies he must avoid truth disagreeable to his hearers and pander to prejudices in public which in private he despises. We are hired to preach what the people like, and as Faust steeped his pen in the blood of Mephistopheles and signed himself to the devil, so many a preacher today, to hold his position, must sell his manhood to the favor of a few rich and godless men in his congregation. The sycophantic cowardliness of the pulpit will disappear when the people in the pews will stand by the men who won't keep their mouths shut when the people sin.

While there doubtless is weakness here and there in the pulpit, let us hope that the cases of cowardice described are much rarer than Dr. Peters thinks. There is a suggestion in his last sentence of how true preachers may be made stronger—by the open and steadfast support of the people in the pews. Whatever weakness is shown by ministers in dealing with popular evils is due, chiefly, to the fact that they are so often left to stand alone when they have aroused the antagonism of the influential wicked.

CHURCH BUILDING.

The erection of churches is one of the signs of the strength of the Christian religion, and its progress. A recent article in the *Church Economist* gives some interesting facts about church building in the United States. From \$35,000,000 to \$40,000,000 are expended annually for new church buildings, those erected in place of old ones outgrown, and those for newly organized congregations. The number of church buildings erected every year is variously estimated. There is agreement, however, that not less than twelve are built every day in the year, and some place the number as high as fifteen. The Methodists are the greatest church builders, claiming "three a day," which is probably under rather than over the mark. The Baptists build two a day, the Roman Catholics one and a half, the Lutherans one and a half, the Presbyterians one, the Episcopalians

one, the other two or more being divided amongst smaller denominations.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE BIBLE.

A good many people in the world yet take interest in the Bible, despite the efforts of some other people to belittle or discredit the sacred book, if we may judge from the fact that during last year the British and Foreign Bible Society issued over 5,000,000 Bibles or portions of Bibles, mostly Gospels or Psalters. At the beginning of the last century the Bible was open to about two-fifths of the population of the world. Today the Bible is published—complete or in part—in languages spoken by seven-tenths of the world's population. Since its foundation the British and Foreign Bible Society has circulated more than 175,000,000 copies of the Scriptures. It last year employed 750 colporteurs abroad, who were really pedlars selling the Bible amongst their own countrymen, and also supported 640 native Biblewomen in the East. The Society proposes to raise a special Centenary Fund of \$1,250,000 to enable it to employ 100 more colporteurs and 100 more Biblewomen, to provide fresh Scriptures for the blind, to undertake a special work in Sunday-schools, and among young people in England and the colonies.

THE MASTER AND MESSAGE.

There are people, and perhaps a large number, who profess to have a very exalted regard for Christ, and yet they have but little respect for those sayings and commands of Christ's which do not harmonize with their ideas of rightness and duty. That French skeptic, M. Renan, expressed high admiration for Christ, yet he scornfully rejected many of his most vital teachings. Let us not be deceived. The great truth is, the Master and his message are compactly united together. Any professed love for Him which does not include love for His full message of truth is no true love at all. A rejection of Christ's word—and this covers the whole of the New Testament—is a rejection of Christ himself. They are inseparably bound together. A carpentering criticism of the inspired message is equivalent to an irreverent criticism of the Master himself. Dr. Maclaren, in one of his sermons says: "You can take Plato's philosophy and do what you like with it, and treat Plato as a negligible quantity. You can do the same with all other great teachers, even those of them who have most impressed their own individuality upon their thinkings and theorizings and teachings, but you cannot do that with Christianity. You cannot say, 'Never mind who it was that said it. Attend to what was said.' For Jesus Christ and his message are so interwoven and interlaced in such a fashion as that you cannot get rid of Him, and keep it. He himself is the Truth. Christ is Christianity, and any man that has ever tried to deal with the teachings of the New Testament as a body of principles, ignoring the lips

from which they come, is left with what they call a *caput mortuum*, a dead mass of impotent generalities. Get Christ into them, and they are all palpitating and living and flaming, and have power." Here is a sample of theological healthfulness which thousands of religious people in this land, including preachers, ought to absorb and be governed by. The New Testament, in all of its length, can never be a full revelation of the glory of Christ and power of God to any person unless he most cordially accepts the large truth that Christ and the complete message are vitally linked together. Let Christ be fully seen in all of the New Testament, and then it will speak to the very soul of the reader of it with accents of a spiritual grandeur which will thrill every part.

C. H. WETHERBE.

JOURNALISTIC NOVELTIES.

The *Christian-Evangelist* tells of two journalistic novelties. One is a daily newspaper depending entirely upon wireless telegraphy for its news from the outside world has been established on Catalina Island, twenty-five miles off the coast of southern California. The island has no cable service. The new paper will get the news from Los Angeles by a system entirely different from the Marconi method.

The other is a daily newspaper edited and published entirely by women is a novelty which is about to be perpetrated in Chicago. It will not be a paper of fancy-work, culinary hints, dress patterns and side-talks with girls, but will plunge boldly into politics, commerce and all the large questions of the day. And no male thing is to have any place in the force from editor-in-chief to office cat. We had supposed that thoughtful and capable women would never again countenance one of these childish attempts to "show that women can do." Not that she can't do it! Certainly she can. Doubtless the editress of the new paper will exhibit wonderful sagacity, and its reportresses will show unparalleled enterprise, and its presswomen will turn out a beautiful job of printing, and its news-girls will sell more papers than the ordinary newsboy could hope to dispose of. But the women-journalists who take their profession seriously and have confidence in their work and have no silly self-consciousness about showing the masculine world what wonderful things women can do all by themselves, will stay in the open field where it is a fair fight and no favors on the score of sex. The up-to-date advocate of "equal rights" loses patience when you talk to her of a "woman's Bible" or a woman's newspaper. The best she asks is to have her work judged, not as a woman's work, but as work.

A NEW SOCIETY.—The Baptist *Argus* says: "Editors of religious papers are anxious to start a new society in Zion, a 'Label Society,' something new and interesting. The only qualification necessary for membership is to solemnly promise to keep an eye on the label which brings the papers and then see to it with both eyes and hands that the date upon it is never allowed to pass."

There are several INTELLIGENCER readers who might join it. No initiation fee—just the payment of dues according to label date.