

# RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER,

And Bible Society, Missionary, and Sabbath School Advocate.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY, FOR THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF FREE C. BAPTISTS OF N. BRUNSWICK, AT ONE DOLLAR

A YEAR, IN ADVANCE.

E. McLEOD, Editor.  
GEO. W. DAY, Printer. Office, No. 5, King Street.

That God in all

things may be glorified through Jesus Christ—PETER.

NEW SERIES.

SAINT JOHN, NEW

BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1854.

VOL. I.—NO. 5.

## Religious.

From the New York Recorder.

### THE CELESTIAL SUSPENSION BRIDGE.

BY REV. D. BELLAMY.

I had been reading an account of the building of the Tubular Railway Bridge across the Menai Straits on the British coast, and had been amazed at the power of the human intellect, approaching in its stupendous engineering almost to creative might. I had read also of the Suspension Bridge thrown across the same body of water, from tower to tower, on which, hanging hundreds of feet above the ever turbulent flood, swung and tottered a structure apparently frail, on which man and beast, loaded van and stage-coach, were swiftly and safely passing.

I thought also of our own Niagara. In fancy I was there. I saw again the mighty fall, and heard again its everlasting roar. I saw again the chasm which its waters had worn for themselves in the rock, and stood once more on its precipitous and treacherous banks. And then I saw, close by the wonders of God, the wondrous work of man. A noble tower, fast anchored on the rock, stood on either shore, and the river rolled between. Angry and rapid the waves dash onward, as though excited to madness by the dreadful leap over the rushing cataract. From the summit of either tower to the other was stretched an almost invisible wire; and by this another, and another, and yet another. Parallel to each other they are placed side by side, and strengthened by chains until a foundation is laid on which plank may be fixed for crossing. And plank after plank, stretching away across the horrid chasm, is laid upon the chains until a way is made across the waters in mid air.—Behold it now! From point to point is stretched the frail structure; although some twelve feet broad and strong inconceivably, it seems like a ribbon fluttering in the wind and quaking at the zephyr's breath.

A man appears upon it, the man who conceived and made it. He ventures his weight upon it; he crosses, and safely. Behold him again! He is in a carriage now, and drives a horse before him at that dizzy height! No railing is there, no parapet! Two hundred feet above the frantic waters swing the woven chains in the wind! It trembles, shakes visibly, vibrates like a pendulum, as the trembling animal pursues his airy journey. You can almost hear your neighbor's heart beat in his bosom as he gazes on the daring feat. Mind triumphs over matter, and he is safe upon the shore. Look again! The wires are stronger now, and more abundant; the path is broader, and, where the footman hardly dared to tread, the locomotive rolls and bears along the train of living freight.

And then I thought of another gulf—another chasm. It was said in the gospel that between the righteous and the wicked in the spirit world there was a great gulf fixed. But, although there is no passing from hell to heaven, there is yet communication between earth and sky. Jacob saw it from his stony pillow at Luz. Perhaps it seemed to him a heap of mountains, Alps piled on Andes until they pierced the clouds, and God's angels ascended and descended there. And Christ foretold it, that his people should see it. "Hereafter," says he, "ye shall see the heavens open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." He was himself the ladder, the means of communication. Standing on the earth, he seized blessings from the throne of God, and reached them to the disciples waiting at his feet. I thought of the abyss of wrath that separated man from God, and of the bridge that Christ had thrown across it. Christ has built such a bridge. It rests not, however, on piers or abutments, nor is it sprung upon arches, for there is no bottom to that gulf, no resting-place for the sole of the workman's foot. It is a Suspension Bridge.—It was the first ever built. And while I mused, it rose before me in all its stupendous majesty of conception; I saw its origin, and noted its strength and beauty.

That bridge is stretched from tower to tower across the bottomless chasm that rolls between fallen man and his justly offended Creator.

There stands on the shores of earth a mighty structure built by God—it is the Tower of Justice. On the heavenly shore stands another, equally beautiful and strong, erected by the same great Builder—it is the tower of Truth.

One day, when man was weeping over his fall, ere he yet was expelled from Eden, the Son of God beheld him from the battlements of heaven. Pity filled his soul, and he waded a promise over. It was this: "He shall bruise his head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The breezes of heaven carried it far; the zephyrs of Paradise caught it, and it was fixed on the Tower of Truth. Thus a single wire was passed. An angelic messenger passed over upon it, and wiped away the tears of penitence from the eyes of the fallen pair. And angels stretched other wires across, and often passed and repassed with messages of love. Promises were made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and every promise was an additional wire as strong as adamant. At last Moses came. He was taught to lay the wires parallel—to place across them a floor of statutes and ordinances, and to secure it by a parapet of peculiar laws. The prophet came, and each brought a wire, a chain of promise, and laid it in its place—Christ himself came. He and his apostles labored diligently upon it until it was finished. He wove the promises together in chains of everlasting strength, secured them well at either termination, and having done this, said, "It is finished." He then crossed the bridge himself, and carried with him a single soul.—To give confidence to his followers, he returned again across the bridge

to earth, that we all might know the bridge was secure and safe.

The bridge crosses the abyssal void.—Darkness and clouds rest upon it, and no man can see its farther termination. Thunders roll above it, and lightnings flash around, but sometimes, when the sun shines, a rainbow spans it beautifully. He who steps upon it walks by faith, and none but Jesus has returned to tell us where the bridge will land us.—It is only a bridge for souls. Bodies cannot cross there, at least not now. You cannot carry your wealth, nor good name, nor even good works. Naked souls alone can be admitted there.

Although Christ has built this structure at such vast expense and toil, and although thousands have been employed in pointing it out, it is found with exceeding difficulty. One reason for this is, there is such a multitude of false bridges, each bearing this name, and pretending to carry souls across the dreary gulf. Since no man can see across the stream, pilgrims are often deluded. Messengers specially appointed are continually shouting in the ears of travellers, "Strive to enter in at the straight gate," while they describe the bridge, the gate, and the passage to it; but many are deceived, notwithstanding.

Of these false bridges, some are made by men, and some by demons. Some seem to stand on shadowy arches, or shades of abutments; but all are deceptive, for the chasm being bottomless, there is no foundation.

Some are said to be suspension bridges, like the true one; but while the chains are indeed fast to some point on earth, the other extremity is floating in vacancy and attached to nothing, like some spider's thread borne away uncertainly by the wind. All along the banks of the river are gates and avenues professing to lead to the great Suspension Bridge, and many a careless traveller is led astray. Some have broad gates, with massive pediments and architectural decorations of every order of art.—Some have flattering and boastful inscriptions, and the weary passenger is allured by splendid lights and music and revelry.

The multitudes that throng the way conceal the path; you see not the chasms in the floor of the bridge; you see not that for long distances there is nothing but the naked string-pieces to walk on, and the tramp of countless thousands drowns the wailings of those who disappear in the billows beneath. Here is one of them: Over the entrance, beautiful with Gothic arches and adornings, is written, "Mystery! Babylon the Great!" Crosses and images, mitres and robes, crosses and hangings of scarlet, are there in abundance. Millions pass that way. Small and great, rich and poor receive the mark of the beast in their hands or foreheads. It stands on shadowy supporters of curious form, that are themselves tossed on the flood. Inscriptions are on them, such as these: *Human merit, priestly absolution, transubstantiation, extreme unction, death to heretics.* Many are frantic, and are drunken with the blood of the saints.

There is another avenue leading to another false crossing. It is called the Bridge of the Pharisees. The self-righteous go there.—Thousands who would make a merit of their sufferings, their alms, or their prayers—those, too, who expect to win heaven by scourings, and fastings, and self-inflicted austerities, and those who would add to the deficiency of their own deservings the merits of Christ—gather together here. Well-dressed sinners are here, and they thank God they are not publicans.—It is strange to see among them some of the worst men pleading their own righteousness. There comes a man with a load of blasphemy, but he says he means no harm, his heart is good. There another, with a load of licentiousness, but he says he is no worse than others. There another, who confesses that he never prays, but in his own opinion he is better than some who do. These travel on, finding fault with others, and taking no heed to their footsteps, and very soon they find that the bridge reaches not half across the gulf, and that there is no returning.

Once more—the Bridge of Presumption.—Here is the liar, the swearer, thief and debauchee, all travelling together. They say there is no danger; God is love, and the bridge was conceived in love and built in love; that he loves the guilty as well as the good, and that they can carry their sins with them. They are warned to the contrary, but in vain. Multitudes throng the way; songs and dancing beguile the tedium of the path, and divert the eye from the dangers of the passage. Some fall through and are lost in the thick darkness. This bridge is also too short. It only extends just beyond human view, where clouds and darkness cover the gulf, and then the deluded victims find, too late, that their sin was their destruction.

In the midst of all these stands the gate to Christ's Suspension Bridge. Unpretending in its structure, plain in its appearance, it is often overlooked. There are indices all over the plain, pointing to the avenue, and saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." "Seek, and ye shall find."

RULES OF CONDUCT.—1. Never lose any time. I do not think that lost which is spent in amusement or recreation some time every day; but always be in the habit of being employed. 2. Never err the least in the truth. 3. Never say an ill thing of a person when thou canst say a good thing of him; not only speak charitably but feel so. 4. Never be irritable or unkind to any body. 5. Never indulge in any luxuries that are unnecessary. 6. Do all things with consideration, and when thy path to act right is most difficult, feel confidence in that power alone which is able to assist thee, and exert thine own powers as far as they go.—Elizabeth Fry.

## WATCHING—WHAT IS IT?

LIFE is a battle. Man contends with crafty foes, who seek his immortal ruin. He is aided, if he desire to be, by the highest wisdom, by almighty power. Still, his success is in his own keeping. He must fight earnestly, wisely, perseveringly, or he must fall. He must neither pause amid the strife, nor sink into dull forgetfulness after a victory. To do so, is to be surprised and conquered; for his foe is wary and sleepless. Though foiled and beaten back, he is still at hand, preparing some new strategy, by which to resume the warfare and win a triumph. Hence it is, that the voices of Scripture sound a constant alarm in the ear of the church. They ring like the blasts of a trumpet, in every ear; bidding every man, who would overcome, to Watch! "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!" "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." "Let us watch and be sober."

Watch thou in all things; are its warning voices. To watch, as every one knows, is to be vigilant, attentive, guarded, and prepared. It implies the perception of some threatening evil, which the watcher is determined to resist. To be successful he must know somewhat of the character of the expected foe. He must understand his object, and the strategy, through which he may attempt its accomplishment. Otherwise, the most intense watchfulness may be in vain, as can be seen in the following illustration.

During some of the early wars of our English ancestors, with the aborigines of this country, a small detachment of soldiers, stationed near the fortress, had their sentinels posted along the margin of the forest which skirted the camp. From one of these out posts, a sentinel disappeared one night, and no traces of his departure could be found. The next night, during the same watch, a second one was missing; the night following, a third was in like manner lost. By this time the post had become an object of terror to the soldiers. Accordingly the guard was doubled, and received orders to fire on the first symptom of danger. But they too shared the mysterious fate of their comrades. The troops now showed a manifest unwillingness to mount guard on that dreadful spot at the fatal hour; and the commander called for a volunteer, appealing to the honor of his men, and to the obvious necessity of guarding every point. The troops stood mute for a few minutes. Then a fine looking young man stepped forward and offered to run the risk. At the appointed hour, some of his comrades bore him company, begging him to fire at the first token of danger, and wishing him fare well, with words and looks which showed they deemed him doomed to the mysterious fate of their lost companions in arms. The man, after examining the lock of his musket, commenced pacing his prescribed distance with every faculty full awake to his danger. An hour passed, and nothing disturbed him. He grew confident. Another hour and he would be relieved. One half of that hour too had expired, and he was still safe. But now, through the deep gloom, he saw something moving stealthily toward him. He lowered his musket and kept his eye fastened upon the approaching object. It moved so slowly, he fancied sometimes it was but a delusion of the brain.

Then, again, he felt sure it did move, and was on the point of firing; but the idea of giving a false alarm restrained him. Presently he felt sure it was really advancing, and it seemed to him to be a black bear. He hesitated to alarm the camp for such an enemy; but observing that it made a quickened movement, and stimulated by a strong impulse, he fired. The seeming animal sprang upward, groaned, and lay still. All the sentinels along the line discharged their pieces, the camp was aroused, the troops came rushing to the rescue and found the foe to be an Indian concealed in the skin of a bear! The soldier's ball had pierced his heart and he was dead.

The mystery was now solved. The Indians had stolen in this guise upon the previous sentinels and strangled them. The poor men, unsuspecting of the trick, and fearing to give an alarm by firing at a bear, had permitted their wily enemies to steal toward them; until near enough to spring upon and disarm them; when they fell an easy prey. The scalped bodies were afterwards found in a swamp, covered with leaves and branches.

Here, then, we have the idea of unsuccessful watchfulness illustrated. The men who perished, unquestionably were intent on guarding both themselves and the camp. But not understanding the stratagem of their crafty adversary, they knew not how to detect his approach. After it was discovered they were prepared to defend it, if attempted again.

So in the spiritual life, it is essential to understand the purpose of the great adversary, and the plans by which he aims to execute it. Without such knowledge, the believer is almost sure to be overcome, despite his watchfulness and care; for he cannot know what to watch, or where to expect his foe, and must therefore fight disadvantageously.

Now the grand object of the tempter of men is to persuade believers to cast away their confidence; that being the only means by which we can finally destroy them. Hence the stress laid by the Scriptures on the necessity of keeping the faith. Paul sums up his Christian life, and states as its triumphant result, that he had "kept the faith." To keep the faith, therefore, is the object for which the good man contends. To induce him to cast it away, is the aim of Satan. The whole battle of life is fought at this point, and for these issues. The man contends for his faith; the tempter seeks to destroy it.

Knowing this, how studiously should the Christian disciple watch his faith! How suspiciously should he scrutinize every fact, suggestion, influ-

ence, or solicitation which in any way, tends to weaken his confidence in God, or to dim his vision of spiritual objects! With what keen attention and guardedness of mind, should he observe the relation of his habits of thought, of conversation, of business, or of indulgence, to the growth or diminution of his faith! For thus to observe is to watch, and thus to watch is to be saved from surprise, and consequent defeat—for a faith thus resolutely guarded will in all probability, be kept; until, standing in full view of the heavenly city, with its golden light pouring a flood of glory upon his soul, the victorious believer exclaims with Paul, "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness!"—*Zion's Herald.*

## LEAVES, WITHOUT FRUIT.

Christ cursed the fig-tree, and it withered under his frown because when he came to it he found leaves upon it but no fruit. It wore the appearance of thrifty, vigorous, and productive life; but that life came to nothing. It had no results. The tree did not accomplish its office. It did not fulfill its promises, even; and when he looked to pluck ripe figs from it, to satisfy his hunger, it offered him only the useless foliage. Therefore he cursed it; and the very same power that gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, and strength to the lame, and life to the dead, the power that was always controlled by wisdom, destroyed the fig-tree, instantly and utterly, because of his barrenness in the midst of large premises.—There is a moral in this fact.

How many Christian professors are there, who have leaves but no fruit! The doctrines of Christianity, intellectually believed, frequently announced, perhaps argued for, gloried in, are these leaves; and beautiful they are, glossy, complete, the creatures of God. But there is no fruit, of piety, noble and self-denying action, beneath the foliage and so it is worthless.—The forms of religious observances are such leaves; attendance on prayer-meetings; an austere countenance; or certain habitual tricks of speech, by which all men may recognize them as "professors." But the fruit, of progress in spiritual knowledge, of philanthropic action and of pure affection, is not found in their life. They are trying to live with no other expenditure of resolution, and no other reliance on Divine assistance, than is needful to preserve this external leafiness, and to have their foliage rustle in all winds. So it signifies nothing.—Perhaps a habit of excellent morality, cheerfulness of temper, constitutional hopefulness and buoyancy of spirit, are their leaves; and still amid all this glad and green array so rich and refreshing to the eye of taste, the golden fruit of Christian affections is utterly wanting. There is natural cheerfulness of demeanour, but not a personal love for Christ, that will transform trial, and conquer temptation, and overcome Death!—The fruits of the Spirit, as Paul enumerates them, are LOVE; JOY; PEACE; LONG-SUFFERING; GENTLENESS; GOODNESS; FAITH; MEERNESS; TEMPERANCE.—Against such, he adds, as with a beautiful smile, "there is no law," of God or of man. Except then we have and show these FRUITS of Christianity, in the life, we have reason to fear that all our glowing dream of sentiment, of doctrinal conviction, of pious formalities, is simply foliage; not beautiful to Christ, who understands its real character, but only obnoxious and hateful to him because hollow and insincere; a semblance, without substance.

The same rule of judgment applies as readily to Institutions as to men; to churches, for example, that are full of worshippers, and solemn or splendid in their usages and forms, but within which is pride, ostentation, and not charity; ambition for popularity, and not the beauty of self-denial. It applies to philanthropic and missionary associations; whose machinery is ample, whose apparent operations are wide and imposing, but who still accomplish little of spiritual good to those for whom they act; who are more intent on the reputation of large action, than on the fruits of knowledge and well-being in the souls which they affect.—Everywhere there is peril, lest the trial shall be made to substitute foliage as an equivalent for fruit; and everywhere it is certain that it cannot be made with success or with safety beneath God's administration. Christ is not deceived by it; and against precisely this his frown and his curse are most unsparingly revealed.

It is a reason for cautions and frequent self-examination; a reason for prayer, for humility, and for activity, ever increasing and ever renewed, in the service of the Master. And let him that thinketh that he standeth surely, take heed lest he fall before all others!—*N. Y. Independent.*

## THE DIFFERENCE.

As a gentleman was walking in the street, he saw at some distance ahead, half a dozen men proceeding at a slow and measured step to their day's work. In a minute or two, he overtook them, and soon looked back upon them far in the distance. "What makes the difference?" said he to himself. "I was the son of a poor laboring man. Why am I not like these men, now plodding on in the same condition of poverty and toil? Evidently for the same reason that I have left them far behind me. From my earliest childhood whenever I have had anything to do, I have done it with my might, whether working by the day or by the job. These men are working for others—I suppose by the day. They will take a 'slow and easy' motion. They will plod on so, through life, and never rise any higher. If we would win the prize, we must run for it."—*N. Y. Observer.*

## CHINESE REBELLION.

The Bishop of Victoria, in his charge delivered to his Clergy, at Shanghai on the 20th October last, referred to the important movement in China, in connection with Protestant Missions there, in the following manner:—

We have arrived at an important era of Protestant missions in China. Unwilling to count our converts by the measure of promiscuous baptisms, we have in past times chosen rather to await the descent of God the Holy Spirit upon our work; than to build a spiritual fabric on the rotten foundation of a barren formalism. We were often asked, "Where are the proofs of success, or the signs of progress in Protestant missions?" Rome, with her 14 bishops, her 84 European missionaries, her 135 native priests, her 14 colleges and seminaries, her 326 churches and chapels, and her estimate of 315,000 baptised converts—counts her children in every province. "Where are those who form the beginnings of the Protestant Church in China?" We had a reply which, while it satisfied the student of missionary records of the past, awakened no sympathy in unfriendly minds. It has been a distinguishing principle of Protestant missions in China to give pre-eminent honour to the inspired Word of God. The translation and circulation of the Holy Scriptures have from the commencement of the present century occupied a prominent place in the attention and labour of Protestant missionary societies. Unable to point to numerous instances of positive submission to the holy restraints of the Gospel, we nevertheless trusted in the Divine promise and patiently abided God's time. We looked forward, in faith to the results of a wide spread moral impression, assured that the seeds of Scriptural truth, sown widely and sinking deeply into the minds of the people, would hereafter, under the vivifying power of God's Holy Spirit, become pregnant with life, produce a harvest of joy and long forth the fruits of a spiritual influence in the hearts and lives of the people.

And now at length a sudden gleam of hope streaks the horizon, and the dawn of a brighter day succeeds to our dark and dreary night of depression. The Holy Scriptures and the Christian books, distributed in past years along the coast and especially in the province of Canton—have at length, as messengers of mercy, winged their flight into the far interior, and given an impulse to a movement which appears likely to issue in the most remarkable revolution of modern times.

It is well known that the leader of the insurgent party, is considerably informed in the doctrine of the Bible; and various have been the conjectures as to the channel through which he obtained instruction. The Bishop's charge has the following in relation to this. The native preacher, Leang Afa, referred to, was the first convert to Christianity; the fruit of Dr. Morrison's labour, the first Missionary sent out by the London Missionary Society:—

Numerous, doubtless, have been the unknown channels through which a wide-extended moral impression has been communicated to the distant localities of the interior. But at the present time, and in the absence of more intimate access to the insurgent army—the only known facts refer to the circumstances under which the insurgent chief arrived at his knowledge of Christian truth. Twenty years ago a native preacher who now survives, Leang Afa, distributed several thousand copies of a Christian book composed by himself, and containing lengthened extracts from the Bible in the form of Scripture lessons, interspersed with his own summary of Christian doctrine. In the journal of the late Dr. Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to China, there occur notices of this Christian native having disposed of large numbers of this and other books among the crowds attracted to the city of Canton on the occasion of the provincial examination, for literary degrees. According to information recently supplied by a relative of the insurgent chief who visited Hong-Kong, it appears that in the year 1834 one scholar destined in all probability to fulfil a conspicuous part in the history of the empire, received from an aged man, whose description evidently points to no other than Leang Afa, a copy of the above mentioned work entitled "Keuen She Leang Yen," "Good words for exhorting the Age." He took with him to his distant home these first elements of Christian truth, and pondered over the important doctrines which they contained. Seven years ago the same native returned to Canton, and as an inquirer after Christianity, became for two months an inmate in the house of an American Missionary. Partially enlightened as to the Christian religion, and before he was even admitted to Christian baptism, he retired to his native district in the interior. The dreams of his excited brain during a period of sickness, under which he laboured after his first acquaintance with Christianity, appear to have been mistaken for a personal revelation from God. He communicates Christian doctrines to others; and the number of Christian professors multiplies. In the strength of awaking earnestness, they decry and denounce the idolatry of their neighbours.

The sect attracts the notice of the magistrates. Persecution essays its power; resistance follows; and at length a collision ensues. What at first was a mere local rising in many of its adherents, engendered perhaps more by civil discontent than by religious fervour grows at length to a formidable rebellion. The infusion of a religious element imparts an energy and vigour to the movement, for which the usual impassability of the native mind rendered us unprepared. The corruption and weakness of the native Government, and the popular hatred of the dominant Manchow Tartars—strengthen