

The Religious Intelligencer

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER, FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ—PETER.

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The Religious Awakening.

We cannot recommend too highly the following letter addressed to the *British Ensign*, from which we copy it. We trust it will not be passed over without a careful perusal.

—ED. INTELLIGENCER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BRITISH ENSIGN.

SIR,—I feel humbled and astonished that so much slight has been cast by professedly good men on the work now going on in our own land. Whilst the Lord has been making thousands of churches, once dead or in a Laodicean state, each one a Bochim—a place of tears—and whilst over five counties pray—the Spirit's own breath—has been without ceasing, numbers of professed Christians and ministers are still standing at a distance, or coldly speculating concerning it. I know of one minister who ventured to tell his flock that, if any physical manifestation appeared in his own church, he should take summary (violent) means to repress it. I have known of others who will not believe that a revival exists, unless there are bodily cases, and who, when they are told of bodily cases, declare that they are simple disease; others, who believe in the work as a revival of religion and joy, yet compromise and apologize respecting the physical phenomena, as if that, without receive, should be avoided and condemned. I am not ashamed to confess to a far different mind. I have seen too much during my visit to the North not to say, in regard to many bodily cases which I witnessed, "This is the finger of God." Let it be granted that such phenomena are disease; are disease from the will of man? Did cholera spread its dark shadow over myriads of human lives unprovoked? Shall there be evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it? And how is it that this disease—hysteria, let us say—is invariably in the North associated with a sense of sin and a desire for salvation? Mere disease in Paris, Berlin, London, or Dublin, is not so associated; it is disease—Nothing more—nothing less; the soul, salvation, heaven, hell, eternity, and the day of judgment, as a rule, have no association with it. Nor are such bodily prostrations as I have seen in the North to be disposed of as the simple effect of an excited oratory. Were it so, what thousands of slain would lie around the pulpit or platform of such men as Gough and Spurgeon. What eloquent, solemn, and even dramatic appeals have I heard from them! How they could make them, I know not; and how men could endure them, I know not, yet no hysteria!

I make all due allowances for "exercises" and "extravagances," whilst I justify what I have seen as the effect of some spiritual exercise, in-so-far, the work of sin on the soul, that sin being revealed to the soul by the Spirit of God. Excesses and extravagances may be expected where so vast a surface lies open before the enemy of souls. Tares are usually found wherever there is wheat; mire and dirt will be flung up by the deep sea of spiritual conflict with Satan; clouds of wrath will cross the fairest heavens; and we may expect that, when the wheels of salvation are a stir, dust in abundance will follow in their course.

But I have seen the most hallowed results in the minds and lives of persons who were stricken under circumstances where no natural cause could be traced. The following cause will indicate what I mean.

I said to a young man in the North, who had been lying in stricken state for three days, in appearance tall and strong, and of education—
"Did you ever wish to be stricken?"
"Never." "Did you ever dread it?" "Never."
When it occurred were you in a heated atmosphere?" "No." "In a crowd?" "No."
"How did you feel when lying in a stricken state?" "Of the external world I knew nothing internally I felt a dreadful loss of sin."
"Had you never suspected it before?"
"Never. I had always thought that I was a Christian." "How was your mind occupied during the long period in which you were stricken?"
"I had a dreadful conflict. The idea of being a Christian was like a voice within me, telling me that I was such, but the darkness of sin on my soul, like another self, declared that I was not." "How did you feel when lying in a stricken state?" "Of the external world I knew nothing internally I felt a dreadful loss of sin."

My earnest prayer, then, is, that God, in mercy to our condition, may deepen this work wherever it is, and extend it wherever it is not. Especially blessed would it be if it were to come to our own city—to come, that all the little streams and pools of our separate and divided life in religion may be lost in one vast flood of Divine awakening, of spiritual union, of life abounding in all true Christians, and sincere love towards all saints. May the Lord, the Spirit, give it and may He lead His people to seek it!

I told him that though his sense of Christ may undergo many a vicissitude, and doubtless would, Christ Himself, who was the alone ground of our hope, never would; that He was "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," and that it was in regard to Him, who is thus unchanging and unchangeable, that St. Paul thus strenuously exhorts us—"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice." He seemed to know it all, so soon and so blessedly was his mind imbued with the truth as it is in Jesus.

One thing in this case struck me most forcibly, and I may add, solemnly. I said, "As I supposed Christian you were in the habit of the daily perusal of the Bible?" "Yes, daily; but I read it because I wished to know it, and because it was only consistent for me to study it; and also, that I might understand its truths in relation to surrounding controversies; but (he added) I know that I never loved it,—that I never, until now, had any sense or intelligence in my mind or affections of its true value or blessedness." Alas! I thought, how many are like this; they think they are Christians, they appear such to others, but they are not so in reality. How well it such could be unlearned in time, for after time eternity! And then, if not Christians, how dreadful those last words of Him whom they rejected—"I never knew you," May God impress this solemn lesson upon every one who reads it!

And now, turning from this case, I have the most precious remembrance of two dear little girls, both of whom had, along with some others, been stricken in a National School. They were very poor, and very young,—one nine and the other seven years of age. The eldest was deeply interesting. Her face and feet were as brown as the sun could make them. Her sabbath looks hung in hung in careless beauty over a countenance covered with smiles. I said to her—"Mary" (for that was her name). "You don't love the Lord Jesus Christ, do you?" "Thinking that I had denied the fact of her love to the Saviour, the tears broke down her face, and her hands were clasped in the greatest earnestness whilst she replied, "Oh! Sir, I do love the Lord Jesus Christ! I do, I do love him!" "Mary" I asked, "how long is it since you commenced to love him?" "Oh! Sir, ever since we first began to seek Him." "Nay, nay, dear," said her little companion, a thin, pallid-faced child, of dark, intelligent eyes: "Nay, nay, dear, we did not first seek the Lord Jesus. He it was who first sought us."

Wonderful! I thought; what a praise!—is that I hear thus from the mouths of babes and sucklings!—and what truth! How sound is the theology! How suggestive and comprehensive! I said, "Mary, would you like me to pray with you?" "Add, "Remember you must pray for each other." "Ere I had risen from my knees this little disciple, taking me at my word, began in a low, soft voice to warble such a prayer as I had never heard. She prayed for her companions, then for her poor neighbors. She said—"Lord Jesus, Thou hast come into our hearts with Thy love: wilt thou not go into all their hearts with Thy love?" She then extended her requests for our country, that all its people may know the Lord Jesus; and to the whole world, that the poor heathen especially may soon hear of him and love Him. Having prayed most fervently for the whole human race, she concluded by saying, "And now Lord Jesus (or dear Lord Jesus), have nothing more to say. Amen."

The tenderness of these children towards each other, together with their fine spirit of benevolence, showed that the revival, and even the bodily affections, could do no harm, but much good, in any school, national or otherwise, where such "stricken ones" existed.

And now, if these cases, and hundreds of such cases, be of God, why should we throw a slight over them?—why depreciate or deny them?—why speak of them apologetically, with bated breath, as if they were of Satan? Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God may so powerfully affect our nature that the body should succumb under the alarm and anguish of his companions, the soul? When John saw the angel he fell at his feet as dead. When Daniel beheld the vision, his comeliness departed. Isaiah, Saul, the goaler of Philippi, and Felix, might also be excited. There is truly a wonderful sympathy between all parts of our mysterious and complex nature—a sympathy allowed, indeed, under calamities which are of the earth, but denied under such as belong to what is eternal and infinite. My own wonder is, not that only once or so in an age or generation, men are known to succumb under a sense of coming wrath, but that it is not commonly and always so. Alas! the time will come of which it is said, "The signers in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?—who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

My earnest prayer, then, is, that God, in mercy to our condition, may deepen this work wherever it is, and extend it wherever it is not. Especially blessed would it be if it were to come to our own city—to come, that all the little streams and pools of our separate and divided life in religion may be lost in one vast flood of Divine awakening, of spiritual union, of life abounding in all true Christians, and sincere love towards all saints. May the Lord, the Spirit, give it and may He lead His people to seek it!

I have strong hope that the Lord is commencing a work of awakening at our own doors. It is the habit of a true philosophy not to conclude in haste, or without sufficient grounds. Such a habit cannot be too carefully adhered to in judging of a revival of religion. The tree is known by its fruits. A revival must be known by an increased desire for the preached Word, by a deeper interest in the ordinances of the Church, by the growth of earnest believing prayer, private and public; by an increase in the manifold works of the Spirit in the minds of believers—such as faith, joy, love, peace, holiness of life, and spirituality of mind; by the solemn awakening and true conversion of dead souls, by a tender life and freer vigour in preaching Christ and speaking of Christ; by a deepening sense of the value of souls and a corresponding effort for their salvation. These are fruits which belong to a revival, and which, in answer to prayer and the ministry of the Word, are, I believe, beginning here and there to appear in our midst. Already, at times, a wonderful spirit of prayer has been poured out. Men who, not long since, were Sabbath-breakers, drunkards, profane, are now publicly praying in the house and service of God. Fathers, mothers, sisters, and brothers, servants, and little children, are in deep anxiety about their souls; many who have passed before me as Christians, declaring with sadness and alarm that they were never truly converted. What can we say to these things? That it is religion in a dead state. No; that it is religion in a false state. No; that it is religion in an awakened state; that is, in fact, a revival of religion. Let us, then, Christians of every name in Dublin and its vicinity, "pray without ceasing," and "quench not the Spirit."

Commanding these remarks to your readers, and begging of them not to confound "the excesses and extravagances of men" with the sure and welcome operations of the holy and blessed Spirit of God. I am, sir, sincerely yours,
J. DENHAM SMITH.
Kingston, Oct. 15, 1859.

For the "Religious Intelligencer."

One True Friend.

We are told in the Word of God that there is a friend who sticketh closer than a brother—encouraging thought, indeed, when we see how frail and changing our other friends often are, that we can take the Bible and there read the soul-sustaining assurance that we have one true friend.

How often is it the case, dear reader,—and bitterly has the writer experienced it,—that we become acquainted with one whom we think worthy of our confidence, and that acquaintance on our part ripens into true and disinterested friendship, and we harbor no doubt but that it is the same on the part of those whose esteem and regard we so anxiously striving to merit.—But let us meet one of those supposed friends in a populous city, or some fashionable assembly, and instead of expressions of pleasure, which as usual we expect to hear, we receive only a withering look of utter contempt and a scornful frown of the head, and we are left alone to ponder with a bleeding heart, over this cruel and unexpected blow. Is it so with Christ, our friend in heaven? Ah, no! he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, the same at all times and in all places, a faithful, unchanging friend; he has said though all others forsake us, yet will He not forsake us; yea more, He has promised to be with his children even to the end of the world.

Again we have a friend, a tried friend, a friend everywhere the same, and we rest assured that there is no deceit there; we confide our little difficulties—ask counsel—receive instruction, and set upon it—stop, what truth is this, that in spite of our struggles to keep it out, has forced its way into our hearts, and intruded itself upon our thoughts? Yes, our friend is changed: the joy that beamed upon that countenance has suddenly changed to a look of carelessness indifference—the warm pressure of the hand has become a cold and formal salutation—the prolonged visit is reduced to a flying call, and finally even this is omitted. What can be the cause of all this, we ask? What have we done to make such a change? We look over our past life, but can find nothing there, in word or deed, that could merit such a reward. We turn from ourselves to the busy multitude to continue the search there. What has brought such a rapid change over your countenance? The angelic smile that was ever seated upon those features has fled, and in its place rests a look of sullen hatred—those eyes so calm and dove-like are now restless, and refuse to meet the glance of injured innocence. The veil of hypocrisy that has so long covered the dark workings of the treacherous heart beneath, is too thin longer to conceal the increasing burden of guilt. Horror struck our hearts sickened as the awful truth roll in upon us in one terrible volume that falsehood has been breathed into the ears of our friend,

evidently has given it success, and the work is complete. But Jesus, our one true friend, cannot be deceived in that way; though earth and hell were to array all their black hosts before Christ, and each one had an accusation against us, he would not believe them; he looks into the heart, and if that is right he still holds us in his bosom, and bids us rest there. O what a resting place is the bosom of Christ! How precious to the child of God is Jesus, his heavenly friend! What a glorious hiding place is the Rock of Ages! No matter what the world may say; no matter what stigmas it may cast upon us; no matter how it may scandalize us to our friends; while we are within the cleft of the eternal Rock we are secure,—while we have Christ for our friend we are safe: his friendship, his love is free, boundless, and unconfined; no pen can describe it, no language picture it.

A friend when prosperity gladdens our way, A friend when adversity darkens our day, A friend though all others may leave us alone, A friend the depth of whose love is unknown.

A friend when the clouds of affliction are dark, When life's turbid billows are tossing our bark; A friend not like earthly ones, fickle and frail, A friend whose integrity never can fail.

A friend whom the hypocrite cannot deceive, A friend who no evil report will believe; A friend who slurs him, no falsehood beguiles, Nor Satan enthralls in his treacherous wiles.

Our friend is almighty and strong to endure, A friend ever faithful, a friend ever sure, A sheltering rock in a strange, weary land, A rock of defence from the enemy's band.

As the water of life we his benefits prove, As the heavenly manna we feed on his love, We lean on his bosom and rest in his arms, We bask in his smiles and feast on his charms.

O Jesus, my Saviour, how can I declare Thy love all so boundless, thy beauties so rare? Look into my heart, and there, O behold, The love overflowing that cannot be told.

LIZZIE.

How to begin to be a Christian.

It was a time of revival in — College. A young man had left the breakfast-hall, and stood upon the steps of the building, gazing thoughtfully on the scene before him. It was early in summer; the college grounds were covered with their richest verdure, and the leafy tresses of the overhanging elms hung motionless in the balmy atmosphere. One by one the students were passing to their rooms, exchanging with each other here and there a morning greeting, but mostly silent, as if feeling the awe of an invisible Presence resting upon all hearts.

The person spoken of was struck with this peculiar aspect of stillness and solemnity. For several weeks the Spirit of God had been working there, and already not a few souls had found peace in believing. Many others were deeply impressed; some seeking to resist their convictions by affected levity, others borne down by them as by an insupportable burden. Every recitation showed how for the lessons were from having the first place in the thoughts; every hour of morning and evening prayer witnessed countenances bright with new-born hope, or down-cast under the gloom and anguish of their conscious sinfulness.

Young S— had been trained by pious parents, and was irreproachable in principles and habits; but he was not a Christian. The visible solemnity which rested upon the college excited his attention, and pressed that fact with unwonted force upon his heart. The thought of the venerated father and saintly mother who, he knew, prayed for him daily with unutterable desire, rushed as never before upon his mind. Suddenly the inquiry sprang up within him, "Why shall I not be a Christian too? Often have I promised myself that in the next revival I would attend to this subject. Is not this the time? Why not now?"

He descended the steps of the breakfast hall, and slowly sauntered to his room. The inquiry hung in his ear, "Why not? He entered his room, and seated himself for study. But he hesitated. "What," thought he, at length, "is it to be a Christian? How shall I begin?"

"To be a Christian," he said, "is to love God and to love to please him. This I know I have not done. I have been a diligent student, but it was because I was interested in my studies, and was ambitious to excel. I have come to colleges in hope of fitting myself for distinction in life. Alas! I have not thought of God in all; I have not cared to please him. I have not asked his will. This, I see, is all wrong. And now, if I would be a Christian, I must begin to do as he would have me, I must begin by doing the first thing I have to do to please God. This lesson," laying his hand on his book, "is to be learned from regard to him: to-day, in all its duties and occupations, is to be given to his service; my college training is to be made preparatory to a life devoted to his glory. And so I am to give myself to him—my soul, my body my talents my acquisitions, my all."

"Yes," said he, after some moments of profound thought, "I will. First, I will kneel down and say so to him, and ask his aid and his blessing." He did so. A classmate came in just at that moment, to urge him to seek his salvation. "It is done," he replied—"that question I have settled. I have given myself to God, and henceforth I purpose to serve him." Surprised at this unexpected avowal, and fearing that he was deceiving himself, his friend suggested that he should seek an interview with Prof. — for instruction.

He consented readily, but remarked that, so far as the decision was concerned, it was unnecessary—that had been made. And the sequel proved it indeed true. With characteristic promptness S— took his place among the most active Christians in his class. He graduated with high honour as a scholar, and yet higher esteem as a servant of the Lord. After this, he passed the preparatory course of all three of the professions, receiving his degree in each, and then devoted himself to the work of missions; in which, after a few years of the most self-sacrificing toil, he died, leaving a name endeared to all who knew him, as an eminent servant of the Lord.

It is not claimed, of course, that said act of resolve alone was his conversion. There was a work of the Spirit with and beneath it, undoubtedly, of which he was not conscious at the time, producing conviction, and renewing his heart, at his divine will. At the same time, this, as related by himself to the writer, was his conscious experience, this the turning-point from which he ever dated the beginning of his religious life.

Often has the inquiry been made by persons under conviction. How shall I begin to be a Christian? Tell them to repent, to believe in Christ, to give themselves to God, and they will still ask, "Yes; but how shall I do this? How shall I begin to do it?" What better reply can be rendered than this which the convicted student answered to himself: Begin by doing the first thing you have to do to please God?—*Tract Journal.*

The Mysterious Stranger.

—OR—
"I AM TO DIE—I AM TO DIE."

In a remote period of antiquity, when the marvellous obtained a reader's credence than now, it was fabled that a stranger of extraordinary appearance was observed passing the streets of one of the magnificent cities of the East, remarking with an eye of intelligent curiosity, every surrounding object. Several individuals gathering round him, questioned him concerning his country and his business; but they presently perceived that he was unacquainted with their language, and he soon discovered himself to be equally ignorant of the most common usages of their society. At the same time the dignity and intelligence of his air and demeanor forbade the idea of his being a barbarian or a lunatic. When at length he understood by their signs that they wished to be informed whence he came, he pointed with great significance to the sky, upon which the crowd, concluding him to be one of their deities, were proceeding to pay him divine honour, but he no sooner comprehended their designs, than he rejected it with horror; and bending his knees in the attitude of prayer, gave them to understand that he also was a worshipper of the powers above.

After a time, it is said that the mysterious stranger accepted the hospitalities of one of the nobles of the city; under whose roof he applied himself with great diligence to the acquirement of the language, in which he made such surprising proficiency, that in a few days he was able to hold intelligent intercourse with those around him. The noble host now resolved to take an early opportunity of satisfying his curiosity respecting the country and quality of his guest; and, upon his expressing this desire, the stranger assured him that he would answer his inquiries that evening after sunset. Accordingly, as night approached, he led him forth upon the balconies of the palace which overlooked the wealthy and populous city. Innumerable lights from its busy streets and splendid palaces were now reflected in the dark bosom of its noble river, whose stately vessels laden with rich merchandise from all parts of the known world, lay anemored in the port. This was a city in which the voices of the harp and of the viol, and the sound of the millstone, were continually heard; and craftsmen of all kinds of craft were there; and the light of a candle was seen in every dwelling; and the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride were heard there. The stranger mused awhile upon the glittering scene, and listened to the confused murmur of mingled sounds. Then suddenly raising his eyes to the starry firmament he fixed them with an expressive gaze upon the beautiful evening star. "Marvel not," said he to his host, "that I gaze with fond affection on my silvery star. That was my home; yea, I was lately an inhabitant of that tranquil planet; from whence a vain curiosity has tempted me to wander; often had I beheld with admiration this brilliant world of yours, ever one of the brightest gems of our firmament; and the ardent desire I had long felt to know something of its condition was at length unexpectedly gratified. I received permission and power from above to traverse the mighty void, and to direct my course to this distant sphere. To that permission, however, one condition was annexed, to which my eagerness for the enterprise induced me hastily to consent; namely, that I must thenceforth remain an inhabitant of this strange earth, and undergo all the vicissitudes to which its natives are subject. Tell me, therefore, I pray you, what is the lot of man; and explain to me more fully than I yet understand, all that I hear and see around me."

"Truly, Sir," replied the astonished noble, "although I am altogether unacquainted with the manners and customs, products and privileges of your country, yet methinks I cannot but congratulate you on your arrival in our world, especially since it has been your good fortune to alight on a part of it affording such various scenes of enjoyment as this our opulent and luxurious city, and be assured, it will be my pride and pleasure to introduce you to all that is most worthy the attention of such a distinguished foreigner. Our adventurer, accordingly, was presently initiated in these arts of luxury and pleasure which were there well understood. He was introduced by his obliging host, to their theatrical diversions and convivial assemblies; and he was just beginning to be in some measure reconciled to the manners and customs of our planet when an incident occurred which gave an entirely new direction to his energies.

It was but a few weeks after his arrival on our earth, when walking in the cool of the day with his friends in the outskirts of the city, his attention was arrested by the appearance of a spacious enclosure near which they passed. He inquired the use to which it was appropriated. "It is," replied the nobleman, "a place of public interment."
"I do not understand you," said the stranger.
"It is the place," replied his friends, "where we bury our dead."
"Excuse me, Sir," replied his companion with some embarrassment, "I must trouble you to explain yourself yet further."
The nobleman repeated the information in still plainer terms.
"I am still at loss to comprehend you perfectly," said the stranger, turning deadly pale. "This must relate to something of which I was not only totally ignorant in my own world, but of which I have as yet had no intimation in yours. I pray you, therefore, to satisfy my curiosity; for, if I have any clue to your meaning, this surely is a matter of more mighty concernment than any to which you have hitherto directed me." My good friend," replied the nobleman, "you must be indeed a novice amongst us, if you have yet to learn that we must all, soon or later, submit to take our place in these dismal abodes; nor will I deny that it is one of the least desirable of the circumstances which appertain to our condition; for which reason it is a matter rarely referred to in polite society; and this accounts for your being hitherto uninformed on subject. But truly, Sir, if the inhabitants of the place whence you came are not liable to any similar misfortune, I advise you to betake yourself back again with all speed for be assured there is no escape here; nor could I guarantee your safety for a single hour."
"Alas!" replied the stranger, "I must submit to the conditions of my enterprise, of which till now, I little understood the import. But explain to me I beseech you, something of the nature and consequences of this wondrous metamorphosis, and tell me at what period it most commonly happens to man." While he thus spoke his voice faltered, and his whole frame shook violently; his countenance was pale as death, and cold dew stood in large drops upon his forehead.
His companion now finding the discourse becoming more serious than was agreeable, declared that he must refer him to the priests for further information, this subject being very much out of his province.
"How!" exclaimed the stranger, "then I could not have understood you—do the priests only die?—are you not to die also?"
His friend, evading these questions, hastily conducted his importunate companion to one of their magnificent temples, where he gladly consigned him to the instructions of the priest-hood.
The emotion which the stranger had betrayed, when he first received the first idea of death was yet slight in comparison with that which he experienced as soon as he gathered from the discourses of the priests, some notion of immortality, and of the alternative of happiness or misery in a future state. But this agony of mind was exchanged for transport, when he learned that by the performance of certain conditions before death, the state of happiness might be secured. His eagerness to learn the nature of these terms excited the surprise and even the contempt of the sacred teachers. They advised him to remain satisfied for the present with the instructions he had received, and to defer the remainder of the discussion till the morrow.
"How!" exclaimed the novice, "say you not that death may come at any hour?—may it not then come this hour?—and what if it should come before I have performed these conditions? Oh! withhold not this excellent knowledge from me a single moment!"
The priests then proceeded to explain their theology to their attentive auditor; but who shall describe the ecstasy of his happiness, when he was given to understand that the required conditions were generally of easy or pleasant performance; and that the occasional difficulties or inconveniences which might attend them, would entirely cease with the short term of his earthly existence!
From that period, continues the legend, the stranger devoted himself to the performance of those conditions, on which, he was told his future welfare depended. If ever he was tempted for a moment to violate any of the conditions of his future happiness, he bewailed his own madness with agonizing emotions; and to all the invitations he received from others to do any thing inconsistent with his real interests, he had but one answer—"Oh! no," he would say, "I die—I am to die!"