

# 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 INTELLIGENCER

An Evangelical Family Newspaper,

FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

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G. A. HARTLEY, }

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An Angel Visit.

On the evening of the 31st December, I had been cherishing the humiliating and solemn reflections which are peculiarly suitable to the close of the year, and endeavouring to bring my mind to that view of the past, best calculated to influence the future. I had attempted to recall the prominent incidents of the twelve months which had elapsed; and in this endeavour, I was frequently to regret how little of my memory would retain even of that most important to be remembered. I could not avoid, at such a period, looking forwards as well as backwards, and anticipating that fearful tribunal at which no occurrence shall be forgotten, whilst my imagination penetrated into the distant destinies which shall be dependent on its decisions. At my usual hour I retired to rest, but the train of meditative I had pursued was so important and appropriate, that imagination continued it after sleep had slumbered. "In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon man," I was mentally concerned in the following scene of interest:

I imagined myself still adding link after link to the chain of reflection, the progress of which the time for repose had interrupted; and whilst thus engaged, I was aware that there remained but a few moments to complete the day. I heard the clock as it tolled the knell of another year; and as it tolled slowly the appointed number, each note was followed by a sting of conscience, bitterly reproaching me for my neglect of precious time. The last stroke was ringing in my ears—painful as the groan announcing the departure of a valuable friend, when, notwithstanding the meditative posture in which I was sitting, I perceived that the dimness of the apartment became brighter; and on lifting my eyes to discover the cause, I was terrified at perceiving that another being was with me in my seclusion.

It was one whose form indeed was human; but the bright, burning glance of his eye, and the splendour which beamed forth from every part of his beautifully proportioned form, convinced me, at a glance, that it was no mortal being that I saw. The elevation of his brow gave dignity of the highest order to his countenance; but the most acute observation was indicated by his piercing eye, and inexorable justice was impressed on his majestic features. A glittering phylactery encircled his head, upon which was written, as in letters of fire, "The Faithful One." Under one arm he bore two volumes; in his hand he held a pen. I instantly knew the recording angel—the secretary of the terrible tribunal of heaven. With a trembling which convulsed my frame, I heard his unearthly accents. "Mortal," he said, "thou wast longing to recall the events of the past year—thou art permitted to gaze upon the record of the book of God. Peruse and be wise." As he spoke thus, he opened before me one of the volumes which he had brought. In fearful apprehension, I read in my own name, and recognized the history of my own life during the past year, with all its minutest particulars. Burning words were those which the volume contained; all the actions and circumstances of my life were registered under their respective heads in that dreadful book. I was struck by the title "Mercies Received."—Some were there the remembrance of which I had retained—more which were recalled, after having been forgotten—but the far greater number had never been noticed at all. Oh! what a detail of preservations, and deliverances, and bestowments! I remember that "Sabbaths" stood out in very prominent characters, as if they had been among the greatest benefits. In observing the recapitulation, I could not but be struck with one circumstance—it was, that many dispensations, which I had considered curses, were enumerated here as blessings. Many a sin which had given the heart—a many a cup whose bitterness seemed to designate it as a poison, was there, verifying the language of the poet, "Even crosses from his sovereign hand Are blessings in disguise."

Another catalogue was there, it was the enumeration of "transgressions." My hand trembled as I remember them! What an immense variety of classes! Indifference—thoughtlessness—formality—ingratitude—unbelief—sin against the world—against the church—against the Father—against the Saviour—against the Holy Spirit—stood at the head of their crowded columns, as if for the purpose of driving one to despair. Not one sin was forgotten there—selected Sabbaths—abused ordinances—misim-

proved time—encouraged temptations;—there they stood with no excuse, no extenuation. There was one very long class I remember well—"idle words;" and then the passage flashed across my mind—"For every idle word that men speak, they shall give account in the day of judgment." My supernatural visitant here addressed me—"dost thou observe how small a proportion thy sins of commission bear to those of omission?" As he spoke, he pointed me to instances in the page like the following:—"I was thirsty, and thou gavest me no drink"—"I was sick, and thou didst not visit me." I was conscience stricken. In another part of the record, I read the title, "Duties Performed."—Alas! how small was their number! Humble as I had been accustomed to think the estimate of my good works, I was greatly disappointed to perceive that many performances on which I had looked back with pride were omitted, "because," my visitor informed me, "the motive was impure." It was, however, with feelings of the most affecting gratification, I read beneath this record, small as it was, the following passage: "Whosoever shall give a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

Whilst I gazed on many other similar records, such was the intense feeling which seemed to be awakened within me, that my brain grew dizzy, and my eye became dim. I was awakened from this state, by the touch of my supernatural instructor, who pointed me to the volume in which I had my own terrible history, now closed, and bearing a seal, on which with sickening heart, I read the inscription, "Reserved until the day of judgment." "And now," said the angel "my commission is completed. Thou has been permitted what was never granted to man before. What thinkest thou of the record? Dost thou not justly tremble? How many a line is here, which 'dying, you could wish to blot!' I see you already shuddering at the thought of the disclosure of this volume at the day of judgment, when an assembled world shall listen to its contents. But if such be the record of one year, what must be the guilt of your whole life? Seek, then, an interest in the blood of Christ, justified by which, you shall indeed hear the repetition, but not to condemnation. Pray that, when the other books are opened, your name may be found in the book of life. And see the volume prepared for the history of another year; yet its page is unrolled. Time is before thee—seek to improve it; privileges are before thee—may they prove the gates of heaven! Judgment is before thee—prepare to meet thy God." He turned to depart; and as I seemed to hear the rustling which announced his flight, I awoke. Was it all a dream?

Pleasures Peculiar to Piety.

What can the world offer thee, my young friend, that will compare with the preciousness of this divine peace? Is a lifetime of carnal delight worth an hour of such heavenly repose? Think! can gold, ambition, glory, lust, grandeur, or amusements compensate an immortal soul for its anxieties respecting the results of its conflict with God, and for the absence of the "peace of God?" It cannot be. Peace is necessary to true enjoyment. And peace is to be found only in the service of Piety. "Her ways, and her only," "are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace!" Enter her service and she will confer this precious peace upon you.

A delicate child once lost her mother at an early age. She was very affectionate, and the image of her sainted mother lived in her heart. Clinging to the neck of her lady attendant, she would frequently say, "Now tell me about my mamma!" After feasting on what she had heard awhile, she would say: "Now take me into the parlor, I want to see my mamma!" Carried to the parlor, and placed on a sofa opposite a portrait of her mother, she would gaze for hours on the silent picture. But she was a frail flower, and the dew of death was on her brow. One day she became unconscious for hours. Then a sudden brightness broke over her pale face, her eyelids opened, her lips parted, her thin hands were stretched out as if reaching for some object which her eyes beheld in the distance. After a few moments she cried: "Mother! mother!" and expired.

In this touching fact you see the operations and power of love. Love was the life of that child. It was her soul's atmosphere. To commune with the memory of her mother was her meat and drink, her chief delight, her highest bliss. This was an earthly love, yet it illustrates the operations and power of that divine love which is brought into the heart of every believer in Jesus.

Love to Christ is the principal thing in piety. It is born in the moment of conversion, and when born it immediately becomes the life of the newborn believer and the mother of every Christian virtue. Like the child, he dwells with ever increasing delight on the character of his beloved, and communes, not with his memory merely, but with the Saviour himself, for "his fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" And that communion is real rapture. It stirs the depths of his emotional nature. It causes his heart-strings to give forth their most delicious music. It swells his soul with throbs of unexpressed joy. It makes him a participant of those pleasures, which constitute the felicity of heaven. When not too happy to give expression in language to his joy, he sings with the poet:

"O love, thou bottomless abyss!  
My sins are swallowed up in thee;  
Covered is my unrighteousness,  
Nor spot of guilt remains on me;  
While Jesus' blood through earth and skies,  
Mercy, free, boundless mercy, cries.

"By faith I plunge me in this sea;  
Here is my hope, my joy, my rest;  
Hither, when hell assails, I flee;  
I look into my Saviour's breast;  
Away, sad doubt and anxious fear!  
Mercy is all that's written there."

Let me give you a few testimonies, from the lips of the children of God; to the bliss of divine love.—Hear Augustine. "He says: 'Come, O thou joy spirit! Let me behold thee, O life of my soul! Appear unto me, O my great delight, my sweet comfort! O my God, my life, and the whole glory of my soul! Let me embrace thee, O heavenly bridegroom! Let me possess thee!'"

See yonder cottage standing alone on the edge of a bleak, barren moor. The day is cold and stormy, yet a faithful pastor has just dismounted from his horse at that cottage door. He is going to visit the resident of that cottage. Let us enter with him.—What a lone and cheerless room! The snow has been drifting through the roof, and under the door, on the uncarpeted floor. There is scarcely an ember burning on the hearth. Mark that old, trembling man, seated in a broken arm-chair, with an open Bible upon his knees. How serene his aspect! See the rapture in his eyes, the sweet smile upon his lips. Hark! the pastor speaks, and says:

"What are you about to-day, John?"

"Ah, sir," the happy old man replies, "I am sitting under His shadow, with great delight!"

Sitting under His shadow with great delight! What an overflowing fountain of bliss must the love of Christ have been within that child of poverty to make him so sublimely superior to outward circumstances! No wonder that another holy man—the persecuted Rutherford, could say: "There is more to be had of Christ than I conceived. Christ is so good that I would have no other tutor, if I could have choice of ten thousand besides. The saints at their best are but strangers to the weight and worth of the incomparable sweetness of Christ. He is so new, so fresh in excellency every day to those that search more and more in Him. O, we love an unknown lover when we love Christ!"

Such is the love which is the life of pious souls. It absorbs all their emotional nature, and satisfies its highest demands, for its object is the Infinite One.—Pleasant Pathways, by Daniel Wiles, D. D.

A Cure for Discouragement.

It was one of those cold, lowering, forbidding days of autumn, when nature is wont to wear her gloomiest aspect, that a worn and wearied mother sat down discouraged and exhausted. Five little ones, the eldest but ten years old, were about her, but they too had caught somewhat of the mother's spirit, and they were tired and fretful. It had been washing-day—a long, hard day. Every thing had gone wrong. The clothes line would break, and the linen so carefully washed was dragged and soiled. The mother's only help was an inexperienced girl of 14, and with the labours of preparation for winter, and increased cares just before her, her children still unprovided with clothing adapted to the inclement season, and her own almost unaided hands to accomplish it all, it is strange that she yielded for once to despondency, and tears flowed freely?

Presently the children's faces brightened. "Father is coming." "Dear father is coming," sounded from tongue to tongue. Ah, there was magic in that sound, which at almost any other time would have sent a thrill of joy to the mother's heart. He had been absent through the day in those arduous duties which only the faithful pastor knows, and should have found a cheerful home, a warm inviting supper, and smiles instead of tears. Before disposing of the horse, he hastened into the house. It needed but a single glance to show him the state of things.

"Wife," he presently explained, "the horse is not unharmed, and it is not quite so windy as it has been through the day, and I want you should go and ride a little way. It will do you good." "I cannot go," she replied; "it was the thought of having more to do than I could possibly accomplish, that made me feel so bad; I am very tired, and was wishing that I could go directly to bed, instead of doing all I must do before I sleep." "I know you are tired," said her husband; "you have already done more than you ought; but perhaps a ride will rest you. We will go but a short distance." "The children are hungry and fretful," she said, "and I have nothing prepared for supper. No, I cannot go. Yet the sympathy of that warm, loving heart was already doing its work. The clouds had begun to disperse before its genial influence and when the husband still urged, "Let Catherine get some milk for the children, and we will defer supper till a later hour to-night," she had yielded; and soon, though still desponding, was ready for the ride. "But where are you going in this direction?" "This is a more sheltered road, he answered; "the woods will keep off the wind."

They stopped before an old, dilapidated building, and the husband remarked, "There is a sick

man here I wish to see a moment. You had better come in. It will be cold sitting in the chaise." They entered the house. It consisted of but two rooms. In the only habitable room lay the sick man, who had been entirely helpless for weeks. His poor imbecile wife, and pale, sat with a puny infant of two weeks in her lap. Four others (making the lady's own number) were playing about the floor, but in the faces of two of them the light of intellect had never shone. Idiotic and helpless, they formed a strange contrast to the group she had just left with a murmuring and repining heart.

She glanced at her husband who was speaking words of kindness and sympathy to the sick man, and she wept again; but they were not such tears as had greeted his return. Oh, how different her own lot appeared to her now. With a penitent subdued heart, she approached the mother, and inquired after the health and wants of her children. Alas, the bare and cheerless room, the thin and tattered garments, and the few empty and unwashed dishes upon the uncovered table, told but too plainly their wants. The ever-considerate husband saw that his work was done, and fearing the effects of too great sympathy on the part of his wife, proposed to leave, but first he took from his pocket a small Testament, and after reading a short but comforting passage, he prayed that "healing mercy might be bestowed; that whatever of earthly good was denied them they might put their trust in Israel's God, and at last attain to that inheritance which fadeth not away."

They took their leave. I will not describe their ride home, nor the greeting the children received. All was changed. It required no effort to prepare an inviting supper.

After a grateful meal, "Dear husband," remarked the wife, "I rode before tea to please you; now will you ride again to please me?" "Certainly, with pleasure." A basket was filled from the table, and several articles of warm clothing were found, that her own children had outgrown, and once more they sought the sick man's home.

Do you wonder that the mother, as she heard the prayers of her little ones, and placed them in their beds, forgot that she had been weary, or sad, or discouraged?

That man of God has since gone to his rest in a brighter home, but to the wife, the widow, the lesson he conveyed is not yet lost. A voice still speaks, "Though troubled, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; cast down, but not destroyed." When with increased cares, and an overburdened heart, she has again sought the dwelling of the wretched and helpless, she will be returned with a full heart's gratitude for unmerited blessings which still surround her own path.—American Missionary.

An Absent Brother.

BY CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH.

In the last work of this popular writer, which has been republished in this country, are some fine passages. The object of the work is to show the superiority of religious over worldly and sinful pleasures, and the following passage closes with a sweet thought:

Two gay and thoughtless girls called upon Laura a young lady of piety and elegant accomplishments, but who seldom went into company. The young ladies commenced, as soon as the first reserve wore off, with exclamations of piety and indignation at her being so immersed; assuring her that she ought at that moment to be doing the honors of the table to her brother's visitors. Laura mildly replied that she was under no restraint—that her mode of life was precisely what she wished, and that it was the greatest possible kindness in her brother to indulge her wishes.

"O, I suppose you have not got over that shocking affair of your poor father's death yet; and wish to be retted for a longer time out of respect to his memory. Well, nobody can blame you for that, but you will never get up your spirits by living like a nun in a cloister."

"I do not deny," answered Laura, "that I should under any circumstances wish to remain, as you say, retired for some time longer; but I will not make a false excuse. It never was, and I hope never will be, my desire to mix in those parties of pleasure that you have been describing."

"And why not, may we ask? Is it not natural at your age to like pleasure?"

"My idea of pleasure," said Laura, "is something that pleases me; and I can fancy nothing but fatigue and restraint in a round of visiting and dressing. I have noticed that, among those who live in what the world calls pleasure, there is a great difference of opinion and taste, as to what it really consists in: only on one point they are all agreed, it must be something that drives from their minds all thoughts of God and eternity."

"And no wonder," remarked the girl who had spoken last; "such gloomy subjects would damp all the enjoyment of life."

"Very true, Bell," said her sister, "but one thing is to be said for Miss Keith: she has never been out. She is like a person born blind, who has no idea how pleasant it would be to see. Poor thing! I am sure I pity her; and if I was cooped up as she is, I dare say I should be as fond of thinking of death, to get rid of such a miserable existence."

Laura took no notice of this speech; it pained her, as implying a censure on those whose me-

mory was most precious to her. The young ladies proceeded to look over what was lying about, and seeing some music, Bell inquired, "Don't you think it wicked to play?" then opening the volume, "Dear, dear! I protest Kate, here's nothing but that fusty old Handel. The bare thought of his noisy clang splits the drum of my ear."

Having criticised the rest of the music, they turned away with a shrug, Kate saying, "Do you draw, Miss Keith?"

"A little."

"Any thing besides churches?" asked the young lady, with a look so desponding, that Laura could not forbear smiling as she replied, "My drawings are chiefly sketches of the surrounding country; but I will show a portfolio of very fine prints."

After looking at two or three, Kate suddenly called out, "O, Bell! look at this head, is it not the very image of Frederick?" Bell agreed, and they appeared to forget their affection, and everything else, in the delight that the engraving afforded them.

You must know, Miss Keith, Frederick is our brother; a great deal older than we. He was quite a father to us, for we lost our parents very young; and you can't think how very dearly we love him. It is now six years since he went to India; and he is on the way back, with a large fortune, and he will settle at home and take us to live with him. We reckon of it, talk of it, dream about it. The friends we live with are well enough in their way; but so different from our own brother."

"We have fifty disagreeable things to put up with," said Bell, "but we comfort ourselves by thinking how different it will be when we live with Frederick; and indeed I think we do nothing now but with a view to that. We practise his favorite music, and try to recollect all his tastes, in dress and every thing; for, you see, setting aside our love for him, if we don't suit his habits he may not like us to live with him." "I have no fear of that," interrupted Kate, "he would never break his word; and it is because I know that good or bad, he will take care of us, I feel anxious to please him in everything. But we are tiring Miss Keith, talking about a person she never saw."

"O! no, no!" exclaimed Laura, who with sparkling eyes was gazing on the sisters, enjoying this burst of nature, and eager to take advantage of it. "I never could be tired hearing sisters praise a brother. Besides, I am much in the same situation myself. I have a friend who is now absent, and with whom I hope to live in his own home. Like your dear brother he has been every thing to me; and at great sacrifice too—the giving up of more than I can tell you. Like you, I find comfort under all present vexations in looking forward to my abode with him. I strive to do what I know he would have me do; and accustom myself to the ways that are best suited to his house. Like you, too, I rely not upon any deservings of my own for so much happiness, but upon his promise, which he will not break; and I love him because he first loved me."

"How very curious!" said Kate; but Bell hung her head and was silent.

Laura resumed, "does it make you melancholy, and spoil your present enjoyments, to be thinking of this absent brother?"

"Dear! how can you ask such a foolish question, begging my pardon? It makes things seem of no consequence that it would vex us if they were to last; and it keeps us in good spirits to enjoy the more what is agreeable."

"Then you have answered for me," said Laura, with great animation; "and you see your kind pity is not needed. I am not made melancholy by thinking of the precious Friend I have above, and of the happy home where I am to dwell with Him forever. On the contrary, it softens present sorrows, and heightens present joys. It keeps me contented; it makes me happy!"

For the Religious Intelligencer.

Christian Charity.

The word charity, in Scripture, generally signifies love; and is often referred to, in the word of God, as the brightest christian grace; but how negligent many professors of the present day are in cultivating christian charity. It appears as if some people think themselves unworthy the name of Baptists, Free Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, &c., unless they denude and persecute every other branch of Christ's Church. True they do not cast them into prison or burn them at the stake, but there are various other ways by which one denomination can persecute and annoy another. By this means they not only hinder the prosperity of the Church against which their animosity is particularly directed, but the cause of God generally, including their own denomination—much as they think they are doing for its growth, and for the approval of their brethren. It is true they are applauded by some who are as narrow minded and little-hearted as themselves, but not by those who exercise charity; neither do they receive the approbation of Christ the great Head of the Church; because He said to His disciples: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you that ye also love one another; by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13: 34, 35. He did not say to Peter and John, you love each other, but have no intercourse with the

rest of my disciples; or to the others—live in union and love together; but do all you can to injure Peter and John. He commanded them to love each other; that by this the world might know they were his disciples. How frequently we see it the case, that by the disputations and contentions between those professing christianity the worlding is led to declare the whole plan of salvation to be a cunningly devised fable. Dear Christian reader, is it not a fearful thought that we who have professed the religion of Christ should, by our conduct, be instrumental in the ruin of our fellow men? Let us examine ourselves, and so order our lives that men may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. Paul said, "Though he could speak with the tongues of men and angels, and had the gift of prophecy, and understood all mystery, and knowledge; and had all faith so that he could remove mountains; and though he bestowed all his goods to feed the poor, and gave his body to be burned, and had not charity it would profit him nothing."

This declaration of the Apostle may seem strange; that notwithstanding he should perform this catalogue of great and benevolent acts it would profit him nothing without charity; strange as it may appear, it is nevertheless the word of God, and that word is truth. Then we must exercise love to each other as Christ did to us; that our good works may be acceptable to God and profitable to ourselves. "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. I John, 4: 8. That God is love, is a truth we cannot deny if we would; his love to fallen man must have been boundless, or he would never have given the darling of his bosom to die for our salvation. "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another; if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us; if a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" How many within the pale of the Church are liars? Let us not deceive ourselves, for God is not mocked. However successful we may be in concealing our hatred to our brothers, from the limited knowledge of man, we cannot hide it from the all-searching eye of God; and awful will be our condition if we appear at the bar of God as liars: our right to heaven forfeited, we must take up our abode with all other liars. Again, John in his first epistle, 3: 18, writes: "My little children let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." Here is the grand point. It is very easy to make professions of love with our tongues, while our hearts are filled with hatred to each other. It is also possible to love in deed and not in truth. We may perform many deeds of love and at the same time nourish bitter feelings against our brother; this is loving in deed and not in truth. To love in truth is to be constrained to perform these acts of charity, by the love we feel for our brother. How can we expect to attain to holiness when we are bound down by sectarian prejudices? How can we hope to bear the likeness of Christ and reign with him in eternal glory, if we continue to practise hypocrisy and deceit? Are we not loved with the same love? Are we not redeemed by the same blood? Have we not the same God for our Father? Have we not one Saviour and Mediator? Have we not one aim and purpose in the Christian life—that of saving souls and advancing Christ's Kingdom? Then why not love each other and exercise charity one towards another? How low, how grovelling, how far beneath what God would have us to be, thus to harbour bigotry in our own hearts instead of Jesus; let us open wide our hearts and receive Christ as the only occupant of His temple; and while He with His holy principles is within, there will be no room for that root of bitterness that bears so many kinds of poisonous fruit. If all christians were acquainted with this beautiful angel, love, if she could occupy a place in the bosom of all who profess to love Christ,—how many days of sorrow, and nights of anguish, would those be spared who have resorted at any cost to act on the principle of charity. How many hearts now bleeding from deep wounds inflicted by the neglect of those who should watch over them and pray for them, would then be happy in their care; how many spirits now crushed by a knowledge of the fact that those who should be their friends are their secret enemies, would then be buoyant in their love. Lovers of charity—you who are contending with all these sorrows that you may be approved of God, and known of men as the disciples of His Son—be not weary in well doing; "For we have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities;" but one who sympathizes with us in all our afflictions.—What if our hearts are pierced till the life-blood oozes out drop by drop, and they become withered and die—did not the life of the Son of God flow from his side? What if our souls are oppressed with grief, did not Christ say, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death?" What if our pillows are nightly wet with tears—"Jesus wept." If we would be like Christ, we must be willing to share in a small measure his sufferings; yes, we should think it all joy that we are counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake. If we wish to follow His example, we must bless those who curse us—pray for those who despitefully use us—and in all things follow after charity.