

The Religious Intelligencer.

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY NEWS PAPER FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

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"THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."—Peter.

[Editor and Proprietor.]

Vol. IX.—No. 24.

SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 1862.

Whole No. 440.

THE INTELLIGENCER.

FAULTS IN PRAYER MEETINGS.

One fault is not *suited to the size of the room to the congregation.*

Two or three dozen persons in a room large enough to accommodate two or three hundred, cannot pray. They are too far apart; the electric wires of sympathy are cut, the social principle is lost. They are like so many pieces of anthracite coal scattered over the hearth. Ignite them if you can, without putting them compactly in the grate. I have known many a prayer-meeting killed in a large church, but never one injured by the smallness of an "upper room."

Another fault is a *want of promptness in attending, and in conducting the meeting.*

The meeting is appointed at seven o'clock, to continue one hour, and is conducted alternately by the brethren. Mr. B. who conducts the next meeting is known to carry a watch five minutes too slow, and the rest regulate their steps accordingly; so that ten or fifteen minutes are gone before the meeting is opened. Then the next hour is so treasured upon as to interfere with the appointments of some present. Hence dissatisfaction, complaints, and a determination to stay away if there cannot be a better watch, and prompt steps. Now let Mr. B. know, and remember, that he has no right to carry such a watch; no right to waste the five minutes each; the one or two hours belonging to the dozen or two persons who wait his tardy movements; no right thus to injure the prayer-meeting. When the clock has told seven, let him at once strike, and stop when the appointed hour is out. And let other tardy feet be quickened lest they also trespass against the hour of prayer.

Another fault is *in making long, miscellaneous prayers.* Said a lady of much intelligence and piety:

"The fault I generally perceive with most prayer-meetings occurred again to-night. The prayers were too long and not to the point. Everything was touched upon but the one thing we had agreed to meet and pray for. I do wish there was less praying in prayer, and more beseeching, as poor needy sinners, for what we want."

"I know not why it is that some men, good men, too, make such interminable, pointless prayers, unless it be to try the patience of the saints. Knock on every claspboard and shingle of the house before you touch the door of mercy! Pray, cut short your prayers, even if you begin and end in the middle. Knowing, feeling what is most wanted, go directly to the door, and knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Another fault is *in not making such meetings sufficiently instructive.*

Much need not, and should not be said; yet an appropriate passage of Scripture, good news from a far country, tidings of a revival, or a word spoken in due season, how good is it!

The best of the beaten oil is not too good for this hallowed hour. Let the mind then be enlightened, and the heart impressed with truth and duty; and how fervent, how believing, how humble, how persevering, and how acceptable to God, will be the prayers offered!

Another fault is *injudicious confessions.*

A brother—perhaps he is the holiest in the church, and consequently the most sensible of his imperfections—rises, and acknowledges how comparatively cold, and unfaithful, and far from God he is; how unworthy he is to bear the Christian name, or take the name of Jesus on his unholiness. He is very sincere, and sits down, perhaps, thinking he has done God and his Church some service. But no such thing. Such a confession is better suited to the closet. It is a cold shower-bath on the meeting, without the compensating warmth of reaction. It does more harm than good. When a confession is forced on a flood-tide of emotion, let it come. *Spring up, O wall; sing ye unto it.* It is the welling up of a penitent soul. Then the words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook. Such a confession sometimes breaks up the fountains of the great deep in a whole congregation.

Another fault is exhibited in a *caustic spirit.*

It is the spirit of Jehu slaying in Jezreel, and putting on the whip for bloodier work in Samaria. When will good men learn that a *soft tongue breaketh the bone*, and that love is more persuasive to duty than a cudgel!

We shall return to the subject. Meanwhile, these hints may be of use.—*N. Y. Evangelist.*

THE SICKLES.—"Let the sickles alone," said a farmer to his son, who was left in the field while the reapers went to dinner. James obeyed his father for a time; but at length he grew lonesome, and took up a sickle "just to look at it." He then felt its edge, and then thought he would cut "one handful." In so doing he cut his little finger, inflicting a wound which rendered the middle joint useless for the rest of his life. When it was healed, an ugly scar and a stiff finger were lasting mementoes of his disobedience.

Disobedience to his heavenly Father leaves a scar on the sinner's soul and lessens his capacity for virtue. What a frightful appearance would many a soul present could its scarred and maimed condition be made visible. Unseen facts are as real as those which are seen by the eye. Every sin leaves its mark on the soul. Every sin increases the soul's tendency to sin, and lessens its power for virtue. Every sin thus effects a change for the worse in the condition of the soul. It is not merely registered in the book of God's remembrance. It is registered in the very condition of the soul.

TRAMPLING ON ATONING BLOOD.

An earnest preacher made a solemn appeal to the unconverted at a crowded meeting, where the Spirit of God was moving many hearts. These words, "All who go away unbelieving, go trampling on the blood of Jesus," were as a sharp arrow to the consciences of some. One man, who had been a reputable professor, but not born again, went away greatly troubled. The following Sabbath the words of his minister drove the arrows further in. After walking several miles homewards with his wife, who was also anxious, he spoke of his distress, and she proposed to have prayers as soon as they got home. "No," he said, "that won't do. Isn't it an awful thing that every step we are taking we are trampling on the blood of Christ?" He would go no farther. There on the roadside they knelt down to cry to God. Soon he arose rejoicing in Jesus, and ever since he has made a manly, consistent, and useful profession of being a follower of the Lamb. His wife's distress was increased; and next day she, as a sick soul, unable to see or trust the Good Physician, called for an elder of the church, and, after explaining the way of peace, he left her at her request *alone with Jesus*. Returning soon, he found her countenance radiant with a new joy, and she too ever since has been apparently keeping her face Zionward.

Reader! the blood of the cross has come near thee in the Gospel Word: so near that you have either plunged into it as an open fountain for thy sin-polluted soul, or trampled on it with unholiness and contempt—so near that at this moment it has either left the proof of its efficacy in a cleansed conscience, or the stain of your crowning crime in its rejection. The blood of the cross will be the subject of grateful songs in glory; and the remembrance of the blood despised will awaken many a bitter wail in the world of woe. That blood is sure in some way to be connected with the eternal future of every one of us.

THE NIGHT OF DESPAIR.

A TRUE NARRATIVE.

Rev. Mr. J. relates the following very impressive history of a parishioner. Jane B. was a young lady of wealthy parentage, and had all the means of culture and enjoyment of the world that affluence and affection could furnish. She was also a child of many prayers. The power of "things seen and temporal" was upon her spirit like a spell; and her golden dreams were disturbed only by the still small voice of the Holy Ghost, which at times made her weep. She resolutely stifled her convictions. While at a boarding-school, completing her education, she was taken ill. No attention and medical skill were spared to save her from the embrace of the skeleton destroyer of all things terrene. When it was apparent that the effort was vain, the physician advised her removal home. She was borne to the bosom of domestic sympathies and care. As she crossed the threshold, and met her mother with such tears as she alone can shed, the invalid exclaimed: "Mother, I have come home to die; and I am lost! I am lost!"

She continued to waste away, often repeating the same words; and when only the faintest whisper could be heard, it was still "I am lost!" In Virginia, where she lived and died, the weather was intensely warm, which, with the nature of the disease, made it necessary to have the burial the same night. At nine o'clock in the evening, the procession moved to the cemetery. When the coffin was lowered, and the light of the lanterns fell into the gloom, the silence was broken by the sudden and convulsive starting of a sister of the dead, who, stepping forward to the margin of the grave, cried in tones of piercing agony, as she gazed into the narrow home of the decaying body, "Jane is lost! Jane is lost!"

It is not strange that the good pastor should say, "those accents of woe, ringing out upon the still air of night, and over the place of graves, are still in my ear, and will be while I live." How true of the impenitent are the words of the living Oracles "Madness is in their hearts, and after that they go to the dead."—*Congregationalist.*

THE REBELS IN CHINA.

The Rev. Josiah Cox, Wesleyan Missionary from England, has written some valuable letters to the *London Watchman* on the rebels in China. He places no confidence in their pretended friendship for Christianity. He says:

A large portion of their followers, probably a third, are mere boys from 12 to 16 years old, who enjoy the fun of brandishing a sword and bedecking themselves in the gay and comfortable spoils of a rich man's wardrobe. Being taken so young, they are indissolubly bound to the movement; they know no other home or associations, and their characters must be formed under the demoralizing influence of battle, plunder and slothfulness. All the soldiers are well fed and clothed, but it is difficult to find a man amongst them who can read. Many of them know the orthodox dogology employed at Nankin, and the names "Heavenly Father," "Heavenly Brother," whom, with the "Heavenly King," they profess to worship; but nothing like pure and undefiled religion has been discovered among them. The majority of those I saw are in complete ignorance of any element of true Christianity. Gambling, opium smoking, and other vices are prohibited under penalty of decapitation, which, being sometimes cruelly put into execution in Nankin, represses such practices openly in that capital; but I have witnessed them every day in the other rebel cities I have visited, though they are much less common than in ordinary towns of China.

The advent of these so-called rebel Christians has brought calamity on missions, as on all other interests in Ningpo. The excellent men of the Church Missionary Society, who resided within walls, and remained there during the capture, have since vacated their houses, and with all the other missionaries, have closed their chapels. They have actively employed themselves in conversing with and instructing the rebels, but neither leaders or followers care for these things; and those amongst them who are best acquainted with the pretensions and tenets of their Heavenly King, appear to be least willing to listen to the Christian missionary. The native members share the distresses of the other populations, and are scattered; and the missionaries must confine their labors to the refugee Chinese of the foreign settlement, and to villages within easy reach of Ningpo.

Even Rev. I. J. Roberts, the independent Baptist missionary, who was the original teacher of the Tai-Ping Pretender, or leader of the rebellion, has lost all confidence in him. He says, in a letter dated January 22nd, 1862:

From having been the religious teacher of Hung Sow-chuen in 1847, and hoping that good—religious, commercial and political—would result to the nation from his elevation, I have hitherto been a friend to his revolutionary movement, sustaining it by word and deed, as far as a missionary consistently could, without vitiating his higher character as an ambassador of Christ. But, after living among them fifteen months, and closely observing their proceedings—political, commercial and religious—I have turned over entirely a new leaf, and am now as much opposed to them, for good reasons, I think, as I ever was in favor of them.

Not that I have ought personally against Hung Sow-chuen; he has been exceedingly kind to me, but he acts like a crazy man, is unfit to rule, and has no organized government; nor is he, with his coolly knaves, capable of organizing a government, of equal benefit to the people, with even the old Imperial Government. He is violent in his temper and lets his wrath fall heavily upon his people, making a man or woman "an offender for a word," and ordering such instantly to be murdered without judge or jury. He is opposed to commerce, having had more than a dozen of his own people murdered since I have been here, for no other crime than trading in the city, and has promptly repelled every foreign effort to establish lawful commerce here among them, whether inside of the city or out. His religious toleration and multiplicity of chapels turn out to be a farce—of no avail in the spread of Christianity—worse than useless. It only amounts to a machinery for the promotion and spread of his own political religion, making himself equal with Jesus Christ, who, with God the Father, himself, and his own son, constitute one Lord over All! Nor is any missionary who will not believe in his divine appointment to his high equality, and promulgate his political religion accordingly, safe among these rebels, in life, servants or property. He told me soon after I arrived that if I did not believe in him, I would perish, as the Jews did for not believing in the Saviour.

And yet this crazy man exerts a tremendous influence, and is revolutionizing large parts of that old empire. That it may prepare the way for a pure gospel, is by no means impossible.

THE ISLAND OF MADAGASCAR.

A correspondent of the *New York Observer* give the following exceedingly interesting account of the change in religious affairs in Madagascar since the accession of the new king to the throne:

In 1828, Queen Ranavalona succeeded King Radama 1st. She was a depraved, cruel woman, ardently attached to the most degrading, superstitious of paganism. I need not relate the barbarous persecutions which she inflicted on all who bore the name of Christians—whether Protestants or Romanists. These accounts have been often repeated in religious journals. Many new converts were massacred, others imprisoned, others forced to leave their native land. Several concealed themselves, and celebrated their worship in hidden retreats. Bibles were secreted under the domestic hearthstone. It seemed as though Christianity had disappeared from the island, under the persecutions of this bloody queen!

But it was not so. In the month of August last, Ranavalona died, and her son Radama II. ascended the throne. This was the signal for an entire change of things. Radama does not share at all in the hatred which his mother showed towards proselytes. Some travelers, who have lately visited Madagascar, think even that Radama has embraced Christianity, and has been baptized. The fact is doubtful; for other correspondents say that as yet he only professes a sort of deism, being under the influence of his chief Secretary, who was educated in an English school. However this may be, Radama II. opened the doors of the prisons at Antananarivo, his capital, and the people were surprised to see the poor Christians again free, and walking about, though with pain, on account of the heavy chains with which they had so long been fettered.

This new state of things did not come about without opposition, for the old party of pagans, choosing Prince Ramboasalama for their leader, tried to crown him king. This plot was discovered, and the prince, with the officers, judges, and leaders of the people who had espoused his cause, were banished. It is remarkable that none of the conspirators were condemned to death. Radama II. refused to shed human blood. His disposition is mild and peaceable.

The new king wrote to the English Governor of the Island of Mauritius, that he was ready to

enter into commercial relations with Great Britain and the other countries of Europe. The Governor hastened to send an embassy to congratulate this prince. The members of the delegation were well received. They said, on their return, that they found in the capital quite an intelligent and industrious people, who had made some progress in civilization, and desired to go still farther. Some of the Hovas understood the French and English languages; they know how to forge metals, and show in general an aptness for the useful arts. "It was thought," say the delegates in their official report, "that Christianity was entirely suppressed; but Christians are now found in every part of the capital. Already one school has been established under the special patronage of the King, and, considering the short time of its existence, it has prospered marvelously. The want of books, and especially of Bibles, is most felt."

A pious Protestant pastor in the Island of Mauritius, Rev. M. Lebrun, soon embarked for Madagascar. He visited the King, accompanied by an interpreter, and obtained great encouragement from the prince. Radama II. granted him permission to celebrate Protestant worship in the Royal Palace. M. Lebrun is thus a sort of chaplain to the monarch! He is at the same time the superintendent of the school, and preaches the Gospel to all who will listen! What a happy change, and what a prospect for advancing the Kingdom of God upon these distant shores. May it please God to send soon more Protestant ministers, with Bibles and religious tracts, so that the good seed of the Gospel may be largely diffused from one end of the island to the other.

AN ILLUSTRATION.—"I only wish I saw people as eager to be saved from hell, as I once saw a man to be saved from drowning. It was at yonder ferry. Procrastination, the ruin of souls, was almost his death. The time was up; the bell was rung; the gangway withdrawn; the boat in motion; when, after too many delays, he came running along the pier, and deaf to the cries of warning, took a bold and desperate spring to catch our bulwark. He caught it, but lost his hold; fell backwards; and went down instantly—engulfed in the roaring sea. Sucked out by the receding wave, he rose to the surface a good way off. And though it was a blessed sight to see his head emerge from the water, every eye was still anxiously fixed on him. He floated on his back, but could not swim; and therefore must soon perish. And he had perished; but that then one, bearing a life-buoy aloft in his hand, came rushing down the pier at the top of his speed. Anxiety was now wound up to the highest pitch. Shall he save him? He stops; and with the spray of the stormy sea flying in his face, takes aim; now he bends like a bow; and then, rising to the spring, with herculean arm he sends the life-buoy spinning through the air, away over the waves, to the drowning man. What a moment of suspense for him; for us—the on-lookers! Well pence for him; and well directed by a watchful providence, it fell right over his sinking head. With what joy he caught it! How he laid hold of it! Never lover embraced lover with such of eager, happy arms. I saw him holding on, pulled from a watery grave; and thought, Would to God, that poor sinner, that every man ready to perish, laid hold as eagerly of eternal life! I gave God thanks that he was saved! He might have been damned if he had been drowned. Besides, I rejoice to think how happy that night his wife and children to have him safe at home; and how bright the home which held a living father, rather than a widow stunned with grief, and children weeping by a cold, livid corpse."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

EDUCATION FOR ETERNITY.—Education, to have its legitimate scope, ought to be for eternity. Our connection with this world, at the longest, is but for a few years, it may be for a few days; it is the merest folly, therefore, to qualify children only for the duties of the present life.

Education, too, for time and for eternity, are not in opposition to each other. The best preparation for the one is the best preparation for the other.

Nor is it possible to convey complete information on many secular subjects but by taking into account our relations to eternal things.

The world is all a riddle excepting as resolved by Christianity, and it were as unphilosophical as profane to allow the mind, which terminates its inquiries only in the highest causes of things, to revel in secondary ones, while an ascending path is open to it, to him, of whose perfections his works are but a mirror, and a recognition of whom lends them their greatest charms.—*Dr. Ralph.*

City Correspondence.

St. John, June 4, 1862.

From my window this evening I have been looking out on an enchanted land. Two hours ago it was the goodly city of St. John; but, as the daylight faded and Heaven lighted its lamps, behold the change; objects new and strange rise on every hand, until it would be almost easy to believe that the wand of some diviner, waving back the ages, has brought again the scenes and actors of other centuries. An ancient fortress frowns from a high cliff before me; I see the loopholes from which cannon—grim watch-dogs—bay at intruders; sentinels stand on its walls, and shadowy banner-folds float from its summit. The castle is beleaguered; serried columns of tall, lithe figures surround its rocky base; from the dense ranks innumerable bayonets point skyward, while silently as shadows the whole force invests the fortress walls. From the hill opposite a huge,

shadowy form, scarcely distinguishable in the dim light but for its many glowing eyes, keeps watch over the sleeping valley.

Nearer, a mysterious group is gathered; majestic figures wrapped in flowing robes, and standing mute and motionless, with their stately heads inclined upon their breasts. They might be old chiefs of that wrecked race which dwelt here long before us, who, waking from their unquiet sleep, have wandered from their graves to the hunting grounds and fishing places that the pale-face calls his now.

The very atmosphere is spectre-filled. What is that white vapor which floats by me? It comes from the sea; and I think, with a sigh, of the white lives buried under its waves, until I seem to see in that cloud of mist the fair outlines of a young form, crowned with budding hopes that never blossomed, and robed in glowing promise for whose fulfillment the sweet life was too short. "But all this is only an optical illusion, caused by the moonlight."

Yes, I know it is; by daylight these weird and unfamiliar objects would probably resolve themselves into a hospitable mansion or a tree-covered hill, a church—lighted to-night—a cluster of budding willows, and a gathering fog. But did you ever think how much of the beauty which charms us, how much that awakens our deepest emotions, is only the effect of moonlight? I do not mean in the natural world, but the world within us. You have noticed, perhaps smiled at, the incorrect judgment of an author for his book, a parent for his child. You can see that in these cases there must be a reflected light, an intellectual moonshine, through whose transforming influence very common-place men come to be demi-gods to those who see them through its medium. You know, too, that in the nights of human life, when some great joy or hope has gone down, like the setting of the sun, how vague, and undefined, and oftentimes spectral are the images which throng the mental vision. Troubles that would have seemed small in the sunlight of prosperity, loom up vast and terrible; fears, unknown in the open day, come like beasts of prey in that uncertain light; and even the dead past seems to rise from its grave, with angry eye and unforgiving lip, dimly but fearfully seen through the shadows. Yet all this, cruelly real as it seems in passing through it, is but the exaggeration of an untrue light; when the day comes back all is right again; the shadowy giants shrink to their true proportions, craven fears vanish with all other shadows, and "The dead past buries its dead."

A different manifestation of the same principle is observable in memoirs and biographies. Their hero is faultless; virtues of majestic growth guard his heart, princely gifts adorn his intellect, magic charms invest his person, wonderful providences protect his life. Thus it is with our memories of our forefathers; their deeds of daring, their hate of wrong, their fearless hearts and generous hands; and, most of all, the grand corner-stone they laid for the greatest nation the world ever saw—what soul but thrills at their memory! And if they were ignorant, and prejudiced, and intolerant, we cannot see it. You have looked at a ship lying in port; it is not the best place to see one; the masts are strong and high, but they look out of proportion and out of place; great trees, without leaves or branches; the ropes are black with tar, and the sails grimy enough. But watch her as she goes down the harbor, and you shall rarely find a fairer scene; how graceful now the tall, tapering masts; how snowy white their clouds of canvass; what fairy tracery seems the rigging; how stately her progress over the gleaming waves! And thus we, the beauty of the souls that sailed upon it, but not their blemishes; where the character was white it shows down the ages; but where it was darkened the shadows hide it. And this is right, and proper, and beautiful; but it is moonlight nevertheless.

Even so in the uncertain light of human reason, the reflected rays of natural religion, those nations who have never known of Christ seek after God and their destiny; space, undefined and dimly lighted, stretches before them; forms, vague and vast, rise upon their vision; scenes, wonderful but unintelligible, pass before them; and, over all, broods a silence more fearful than any words; their trembling souls are overwhelmed with awe at the power from which they cannot escape, and dismayed at dangers they know not how to flee. The mystery lies before them unread through all the ages, for its key is LIGHT, and that they have not.

But there are Arcadian scenes which the moonlight glorifies; thus the poet looking at all things through a transforming medium, they become to him magnified in importance and spiritualized in essence; his fancy peoples the uncertain light with all lovely forms, until at last the beautiful scheme of his fairy creation is complete, and his conceptions are embodied in a romance or poem. Unquestionably very many works of that class abound in moonshine of a less pleasant description; yet who can doubt that the world is better and happier than if the whole order of visionaries were removed!

And so we have all some moonlight view from the windows of our hearts; some sweet scene that is to our vision what it is to that of no other human soul; something dear, and perfect, and precious, because our thought makes it so. With one it is some coveted position, with another some longed for love, with another some fair possession, with another some towering ambition. And we see them not as they really are, but through the strange and bewitching medium of which I have spoken. Therefore it is that human hearts cling so sadly close to worldly things; an