

# The Religious Intelligencer.

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

REV. E. McLEOD.]

"THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."--Poter.

[Editor and Proprietor.]

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## THE INTELLIGENCER.

### THE PROGRESS OF GRACE.

IN THREE LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

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#### FULL CORN.

"First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."—MARK IV. 28.

#### LETTER III.

C; OR, THE FULL CORN IN THE EAR.—MARK IV. 28.

DEAR SIR—By way of distinction, I assigned to A the character of *desire*, to B that of *conflict*. I can think of no single word more descriptive of the state of C than *contemplation*. His eminence, in comparison of A, does not consist in the *sensible* warmth and fervency of his affections; in this respect, many of the most exemplary believers have looked back with a kind of regret upon the time of their espousals, when, though their judgments were but imperfectly formed, and their views of Gospel truths were very indistinct, they felt a fervor of spirit, the remembrance of which is both humbling and refreshing; and yet they cannot recall the same sensations. Nor is he properly distinguished from B by a consciousness of his acceptance in the Beloved, and an ability of calling God his Father; for this I have supposed B has attained to. Though, as there is a growth in every grace, C having had his views of the Gospel, and of the Lord's faithfulness and mercy confirmed by a longer experience, his assurance is of course, more *stable* and more *simple* than when he first saw himself safe from all condemnation.

Neither has C, properly speaking, any more strength or stock of grace inherent in himself than B, or even than A. He is in the same state of absolute dependence, as incapable of performing spiritual acts or of resisting temptations, by his own power, as he was at the first day of his setting out. Yet, in a sense, he is much stronger, because he has a more feeling and constant sense of his own weakness. The Lord has been long teaching him this lesson by a train of various dispensations; and, through grace, he can say, that he has not suffered so many things in vain. His heart has deceived him so often, that he is now in a good measure weaned from trusting to it; and therefore he does not meet with so many disappointments. And having found, again and again, the vanity of all other helps, he is now taught to go to the Lord of *ones* for "grace to help in every time of need." Thus he is strong, not in himself, but in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

But C's happiness and superiority to B lie chiefly in this, that by the Lord's blessing on the use of means, such as prayer, reading and hearing of the word, and by a sanctified improvement of what he has seen of the Lord, and of his own heart, in the course of his experience, he has attained clearer, deeper, and more comprehensive views of the mystery of redeeming love; of the glorious excellency of the Lord Jesus, in his person, offices, grace, and faithfulness; of the harmony and glory of all the divine perfections manifested in and by him to the church; of the stability, beauty, fulness, and certainty of the Holy Scriptures, and of the heights, depths, lengths, and breadths of the love of God in Christ. Thus, though his sensible feelings may not be so warm as when he was in the state of A, his judgment is more solid, his mind more fixed, his thoughts more habitually exercised upon the things within the veil. His great business is to behold the glory of God in Christ; and, by beholding, he is changed into the same image, and brings forth, in an eminent and uniform manner, the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God. His contemplations are no barren speculations, but have a real influence, and enable him to exemplify the Christian character to more advantage, and with more consistency, than can, in the present state of things, be expected either from A or B. The following particulars may illustrate my meaning.

1. *Humility.* A measure of this grace is to be expected in every true Christian; but it can appear only in proportion to the knowledge they have of Christ and of their own hearts. It is a part of C's daily employment to look back upon the way by which the Lord has led him; and while he reviews the *Ebenezer* he has set up all along the road, he sees, in almost an equal number, the monuments of his own perverse returns, and how he has, in a thousand instances, rendered to the Lord evil for good. Comparing these things together, he can, without affectation, adopt the apostle's language and style himself "less than the least of all saints, and of sinners the chief." A and B know that they ought to be humbled; but C truly so, and feels the force of the text which I mentioned in my last. Ezek. 16:63. Again, as he knows most of himself, so he has seen most of the Lord. The apprehension of infinite majesty, combined with infinite love, makes him shrink into the dust. From the exercise of this grace, he derives two others, which are exceedingly ornamental, and the principal branches of the mind which was in Christ.

The one is, *submission to the will of God*. The views he has of his own vileness, unworthiness, and ignorance, and of the divine sovereignty, wisdom, and love, teach him to be content in every state, and to bear his appointed lot of suffering with resignation, according to the language of David in a time of affliction: "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." The other is, *tenderness of spirit towards his fellow-Christians*. He cannot but judge of their conduct, according to the rule of the word. But his own heart, and the knowledge he has acquired of the snares of the world, and the subtlety of Satan, teach him to make all due allowances, and qualify him for admonishing and restoring, in the

spirit of meekness, those who have been overtaken in a fault. Here A is usually blamable; the warmth of his zeal, not being duly corrected by a sense of his own imperfections, betrays him often into a censorious spirit. But C can bear with A likewise, because he has been so himself, and he will not expect green fruit to be ripe.

2. *Spirituality.* A spiritual taste, and a disposition to account all things mean and vain, in comparison of the knowledge and love of God in Christ, are essential to a true Christian. The world can never be his prevailing choice. 1 John. 2:13. Yet we are renewed but in part, and are prone to an undue attachment to worldly things. Our spirits cleave to the dust, in defiance of the dictates of our better judgments; and I believe the Lord seldom gives his people a considerable victory over this evil principle, until he has let them feel how deeply it is rooted in their hearts. We may often see persons entangled and clogged in this respect, of whose sincerity, in the main, we cannot justly doubt; especially upon some sudden and unexpected turn in life, which brings them into a situation they have not been accustomed to. A considerable part of our trials are mercifully appointed to wean us from this propensity; and it is gradually weakened by the Lord's showing us, at one time the vanity of the creature, and, at another, his own excellence and all-sufficiency.

Even C is not perfect in this respect; but he is more sensible of the evil of such attachments, more humbled for them, more watchful against them, and more delivered from them. He still feels a fetter, but he longs to be free. His allowed desires are brought to a point, and he sees nothing worth a serious thought, but communion with God and progress in holiness. Whatever outward changes C may meet with, he will, in general, be the same man still. He has learned, with the apostle, not only to suffer want, but which is perhaps the harder lesson, how to abound. A palace would be a prison to him without the Lord's presence, and with this a prison would be a palace. Hence arises a peaceful reliance upon the Lord; he has nothing, which he cannot commit into his hands, which he is not habitually aiming to resign to his disposal. Therefore he is not afraid of evil tidings; but when the hearts of others shake like the leaves of a tree, he is fixed, trusting in the Lord, who he believes can and will make good every loss, sweeten every bitter, and appoint all things to work together for his advantage. He sees that the time is short, lives upon the foretastes of glory, and therefore accounts not his life, or any inferior concernment dear, so that he may finish his course with joy.

3. *A union of heart to the glory and will of God*, is another noble distinction of C's spirit. The glory of God and the good of his people are inseparably connected. But of these great ends the first is unspeakably the highest and most important; and into which every thing else will be finally resolved. Now, in proportion as we advance nearer to him, our judgment, aim, and end, will be conformable to his, and his glory will have the highest place in our hearts. At first it is not so, or is so but very imperfectly. Our concern is chiefly about ourselves; nor can it be otherwise. The convinced soul inquires, What shall I do to be saved? The young convert is intent upon sensible comforts; and in the seasons when he sees his interest secure, the prospect of the troubles he may meet with in life makes him often wish for an early dismissal, that he may be at rest, and avoid the heat and the burden of the day. But C has attained to more enlarged views; he has a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which would be importunate if he considered only himself; but his chief desire is, that God may be glorified in him, whether by his life or by his death. He is not his own, nor does he desire to be his own; but, so that the power of Jesus may be manifested in him, he will take pleasure in infirmities, in distresses, in temptations; and though he longs for heaven, he would be contented to live as long as Methuselah upon earth, if, by any thing he could do or suffer, the will and glory of God might be promoted. And though he loves and adores the Lord for what he has done and suffered for him, delivered him from, and appointed him to, yet he loves and adores him likewise with a more simple and direct love, in which self is in a manner forgot, from the consideration of his glorious excellency and perfection as he is in himself. That God in Christ is glorious over all, and blessed for ever, is the very joy of his soul; and his heart can frame no higher wish than that the sovereign, wise, holy will of God may be accomplished in him, and all his creatures. Upon this grand principle his prayers, schemes, and actions are formed. Thus C is already made like the angels, and so far as consistent with the inseparable remnants of a fallen nature, the will of God is regarded by him upon earth as it is by the inhabitants of heaven.

The power of divine grace in C may be exemplified in a great variety of situations. C may be rich or poor, learned or illiterate, of a lively natural spirit, or of a more slow and phlegmatic constitution. He may have a comparatively smooth, or remarkably thorny path, in life; he may be a minister or a layman: these circumstances will give some tincture and difference in appearance to the work, but the work itself is the same; and we must, as far as possible, drop the consideration of them all, or make proper allowance for each, in order to form a right judgment of the life of faith. The outward expression of grace may be heightened and set off to advantage by many things which are merely natural, as evenness of temper, good sense, a knowledge of the world, and the like; and it may be darkened by things which are not properly sinful, nor unavoidable, as a lowness of spirit, weak abilities, and procreancy of

temptations, which may have effects that they who have not had experience in the same things cannot properly account for. A double quantity of real grace, if I may so speak, that has a double quantity of hindrances are likewise known and attended to; and a smaller measure of grace may appear great when it exercises meets with no remarkable obstruction. For these reasons we can never be competent judges of each other, because we cannot be competently acquainted with the whole complex case. But our great and merciful High Priest knows the whole; he considers our frame, "remembers that we are but dust," makes gracious allowances, pities, bears, accepts, and approves, with unerring judgment.

The sun in his daily course beholds nothing so excellent and honorable upon earth as C, though he may perhaps be confined to a cottage, and is little known or noticed by men. But he is the object and residence of divine love, the charge of angels, and ripening for everlasting glory. Happy C! His trials, sufferings, and exercises, will be soon at an end; soon his desires will be accomplished; and He who has loved him, and redeemed him with his own blood, will receive him to himself, with a "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

If this representation is agreeable to the Scriptures, how greatly are they mistaken, and how much to be pitied, who, while they make profession of the Gospel, seem to have no idea of the effects it is designed to produce upon the hearts of believers, but either allow themselves in a worldly spirit and conversation, or indulge their unsanctified tempers by a fierce contention for names, notions, and parties. May the Lord give to you and to me daily to grow in the experience of that wisdom which "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good works, without partiality and without hypocrisy." I am, etc.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROPERTY.

God has endowed men with the talents and propensity to accumulate possessions. The right to hold property is inalienable—hence, strictly speaking, no man has a right to sell himself, or to make slaves of others. But property may be alienated at the owner's will in any honorable pursuit and for a fair equivalent in trade.

It is patent to every man that has matured the subject, that property may be properly used in the three following ways: For the owner's uses within proper limits; for the support and education of children and dependents; and for the needs of Christianity and charity. In all these applications, property has justly its principles of disbursement and its responsibilities. The property which its possessor uses for his own personal needs or pleasures, should be expended within proper limits. Because God gives to a man the tact, health and success which shall in a few years amass wealth, it does not follow that he is utterly irresponsible for the use he makes of such accumulations. If the Creator has bestowed talents, he justly requires the judicious employment of them; so in respect to the gains those talents have secured, he likewise requires a frugal and useful disposal. He who by industry and thrift has made property honestly, may be allowed to expend a portion of it to improve his farm, better his buildings, purchase himself a library, or otherwise to enhance his own conveniences and enjoyments. But he may not waste on intemperance or injurious luxuries the wealth that Providence and a well planned industry have so luxuriantly bestowed on him. For if he shall say, Son, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry; God shall say unto him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." The rich must give account how they spend that portion of their possessions, which they may expend on themselves.

Property may be alienated for the education and support of children and other family dependents. But even here, the great Master holds all his servants responsible for a right use of riches. Christians may not be *lavish* on the unreal wants of children, so long as heathen nations and the home charities call so loudly for aid. It is a wicked thing, and it does the world a sad wrong, that so many men of wealth are too miserly to educate their own children properly. We know of instances where men of eight or ten thousand will keep their sons away from the common school of winters, because they can make a dozen dollars a month by teaming or cutting wood. Again, we have known penurious men worth their thousands cast their dependents on the public charities, a meanest that but ill comports with the munificence of the Heavenly Father. Such men ought to remember that all property given brings along with the gift the serious responsibility of a just disbursement, on some such plans as shall be acceptable to God.

Parents to whom God has given success, in some cases are not fully aroused to their duty to educate their children. We have known families worth but two to four thousand dollars, who have thoroughly and fully educated their sons and daughters, nor filling posts of great usefulness. And another family, of about equal means, at this moment, taking just the same course, whose children are now just ready to assume the same important stations. On the other hand, there are multitudes of parents, to whom God and their own talents have given abundant means, who are neither benevolent to their own comfort, nor generous to fit their children for enlarged usefulness. These should study the responsibilities of property in the two directions now discussed. Another time we shall treat of the responsibilities of property in its religious and charitable uses.—*Morning Star.*

#### NO MANSION TO GO TO.

Many years ago, you might have noticed, in one of our large cities, a sorrow-stricken young man, with a lady leaning upon his arm, entering a large, handsome house on—street. They ascend silently to a chamber in the third story, in the north-west corner of the house. The room is spacious and airy, the furniture all rich and elegant, but the room darkened to the sombreness of twilight, for a sick man lies stretched upon the couch. He is panting for breath, yet he is fully conscious of all that is passing around them.

The young man who has just entered is his eldest son. In that same room are a group of younger children, from Anna, the child of seven, upwards to the eldest brother. The wife of the sick man, the mother of the children, is well-nigh prostrate in her grief, for it has come upon her in an unexpected moment. Two weeks ago, her husband was the strong active man of business, full of his plans, and prosperous in them all.

These two weeks, how quickly have they been numbered! The slight illness, the feeble, pallor-stricken frame, then the deep-seated fever, and the mastery of disease—these have brought the strong one to the gate of the grave, and he has summoned his family together, that, in as brief a manner as possible, he may dispose of his property to them.

"Henry must have the house on—street, and half the ownership of—block; Adnan and James the block of houses on—street. Wife and Anna must remain here, and—"

But the father can proceed no further. Choking with emotion, and his great weakness, have overcome him; he falls back, draws his arms across his eyes and remains silent. Dear little Anna, his pet, his darling, she comprehends but slightly the meaning of their doings, but her heart is breaking for her father. He is going to die, to leave them; this she knows; but where is he going?

It is not a religious family; they have been kind, amiable, and true to each other, but they have been living for this world. In the bosom of this child, untrammelled thought pierces beyond the present; and in that deep, and stillness, with the sick man just about to step into the dark, unknown future, she makes the startling inquiry, "Have you a house papa, where you are going?"

Oh! no; the poor man had not a house prepared for him. He had never wanted the Saviour to prepare a place for him, and nobody in the wide universe could give him a heavenly mansion. Are there not many, very many, in his condition?

#### BE YE ALSO READY.

A gentleman said he lately attended an ecclesiastical meeting, the object of which was to examine, and if the way was open, to induct a young man into the ministry, by ordination and installation over a pastoral charge. The candidate was a young Scotchman, who had gone through the College and the Theological Seminary in this country. He had stood at the head of his classes in each institution. It would occur to any one who heard his confession of faith, drawn up in writing, that the young man must have been thoroughly instructed in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism in his childhood, the sentiments being so thoroughly wrought into this confession. The examination was a very rigid one. It was easy to see that examiners were highly pleased with the modesty and ability with which the candidate acquitted himself.

When this part of the examination was completed, the young man was requested to give some account of his religious experience and of his call to the christian ministry, which he did in nearly the following words.

"I had," said he, "pious parents—a father and mother—who instructed me in things of religion with great earnestness and care. But I am sorry to say that I neglected all their pious counsels. I rejected the admonitions which were given me. I had a pious young friend who often pressed me on the subject of religion. It was my constant effort to evade the subject, and when it was introduced, to change it to something else. In this I often succeeded but too well. Still he seemed bent upon his purpose. One evening he pressed me to come to his room at a certain hour, in a certain street. And he said to me: 'Be sure to be there at precisely seven o'clock, because if you are not there at that time, afterward I shall be away.' Remember, seven o'clock." I promised I would come promptly at the hour. We were to talk over the subject of religion and its personal necessity and application to my own soul. My friend was very earnest.

"The appointed night for the meeting came, and the hour, seven o'clock drew near. I hurried through with my tea and then hurried to the street and number. As I flew along the street, I found I was likely to be a little behind the hour, and I quickened my pace. When I rung at the door, I looked at the watch and found that I was a few minutes past the appointed time. When I entered, there was bustle and running to and fro, some weeping and all in evident distress. I inquired what was the matter? Some one answered, 'Your friend died precisely at seven o'clock.' You may judge of the startling effect on me. I saw my need of the grace of God through Jesus Christ. Suffice it to say God had mercy on me. The lesson to me was effectual."

The candidate paused, overwhelmed with emotion, till he broke the dead silence by saying, "And now, brethren, can you wonder that I am in haste to preach the glorious gospel of the blessed God? Can you wonder that I am in a hurry to get into the pulpit and use my efforts to per-

suade sinners to come to Christ? I feel urged; I can say—'Woe is me if I preach not the gospel.' I wish to make full proof of my ministry."

"And now"—continued the speaker—"I wish to make an application of this matter to every one in this prayer-meeting. Here are pastors and elders and Sunday school teachers and church members, and fathers and mothers and children, and brothers and sisters. Remember, your seven o'clock is coming. What you do, you must do quickly. The great mistake we make all along in life—we are not living for 'seven o'clock'—the hour of our death. We live as if that hour was at a most remote distance; as if it never would come. Look about you and see how much you have to do! How many interests are hanging upon your doing something to save the 'ready to perish.' Oh! up, up, and be doing with your might what your hands find to do. Who will wonder, thus warned, that the young man was in a hurry to preach the gospel? We should be equally in a hurry. We are in haste, we should find enough to do, and little time enough in which to do it.

"We need a higher tone of piety. We need to live the highest forms of spiritual life, and to be alive in the highest sense every day. We need perfect consecration to our great work of promoting the kingdom of Christ in the hearts of our fellow men; and, not least, promoting that kingdom in our own hearts. Let us all remember that seven o'clock is coming, and to some of us may be very near."

#### "LET ME SLEEP."

"Let me sleep," said my companion once, half pettishly turning from my touch, "let me sleep." The words haunted my memory for hours afterwards. How often has the wish been breathed in this weary world, "O, let me sleep!"

The man whose conscience lashes him for misdeeds—evils committed and unrepented of, cries as he drops his head upon his thorny pillow, "Let me sleep!—with sleep comes oblivion."

The mother who has seen some bright and beautiful one fade from his embrace, like a summer flower nipped by the too early frost, bows his head over the pallid face of the prostrate from below him, and sighs in the agony of his soul, "Let me sleep!" "Sleep with the loved one whose smile shall never welcome my footsteps more."

"Let me sleep," says the traveller, who, sore-footed and weary, has toiled long in the world, and seen hopes perish, unfulfilled, joys wither ere they were tasted, friendships which he thought enduring, changing hue like the chameleon, and rainbow promises fading and melting into thin, colorless air, "O, let me sleep, for I am weary." The rosy-cheeked child, the bright-eyed maiden, the thoughtful matron, those for whom life puts on its finest aspects, its most enduring smiles, all have periods in which they long for sleep, for oblivion to all care, hours in which the waters of Lethe may flow darkly and deeply over them.

There comes a sleep to all; a sleep deep, hushed and breathless. The roar of the cannon, the deep-toned thunderbolt, the shock of an earthquake, or the rush of ten thousand armies cannot break up its still repose. With mute lips and folded arms, one after another take their place in the chambers of these pallid slumbers; one after another the ephemeral of earth sink down into the grave and into the darkness of nothingness. No intruding footsteps shall jar upon their rest—no disturbing touch shall wring from them there the exclamation—"LET ME SLEEP!"—*Madison Family Visitor.*

The *another sleep*—a sleep in Jesus. Yes, glorious thought; as the redeemed sons and daughters of a Father's love fall asleep in death, it is in the arms of a loving Saviour, and folded in the bosom of a compassionate Redeemer. "So He giveth his beloved sleep." Are you ready for that sleep in Jesus?

"Asleep in Jesus! O, how sweet To be for such a slumber meet, With holy confidence to sing That death has lost its venom'd sting."

Asleep in Jesus! O, for me, May such a blissful refuge be: Securely shall my ashes lie, Waiting the summons from on high."

FAITH.—The soldiers that, like Cromwell's march with Bibles in their boots, load the cannon by the grace of God, and fire it with a psalm, cannot easily be beaten. Give us plenty of the substance of things hoped for, and an evidence of things not seen. Let one feel that he stands on earth, and that the law of the universe, and the attributes of the Almighty are pledged to his support, and you might as well try to chase a rock as him. Faith justified Abel and translated Enoch; floated the ark and founded the church; crossed the Red Sea and shook down the walls of Jericho.—In all ages it has out of weakness become strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens, and led out willing martyrs for the mountains or the flames.

PROTESTANTISM IN FRANCE.—Dr. Baird states that, in his recent visit to France, he was astonished and delighted to find that in Lyons, the most intensely Roman-catholic city of that country, there are now five Protestant chapels with 620 communicants and nearly 3,000 attendants, and five Sunday schools and three suburban chapels, four ordained ministers and ten evangelists, one of whom, during the last six years, has distributed 60,000 copies of the New Testament among the troops stationed there, mostly by sale. In Paris there are 32 places of worship where Christ is preached. During fifteen years, Protestant chapels have been opened in 121 places, and in 23 others the way is prepared for opening more.