

# 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."--Peter.

[Editor and Proprietor.

Vol. IX.—No. 23.

SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY, JUNE 6, 1862.

Whole No. 439.

## THE INTELLIGENCER.

### "COVETOUSNESS, WHICH IS IDOLATRY."

BY HON. G. F. DISOWAY.

It is certain that men cannot eat gold, nor can they secure with it any covenants from death. If badly spent it will lead to selfishness, and hoarded up badly, will be gotten in vain. Some writer strikingly remarks: "Thus the ass carried wood and sweet herbs to the baths, but was never washed or perfumed himself; he heaped up sweets for others, while himself was filthy with smoke and ashes. The Bible says, 'Man walketh in a vain shadow and disquieteth himself in vain; he heareth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.'"

The effects of covetousness on those whose history we find in the Bible is very plain and full of instruction, and it applies as much to the poor as the rich, for the laborer may be and often is more covetous than the man who works more by his head than his hands. It is true that Dives perished and Lazarus was saved; the former lost his soul, not because he was rich, but because he was faithless, while the latter was saved; not on account of his poverty, but because he was faithful. Gehazi, living in a Prophet's house and engaged in a Prophet's service, was not above temptation. He kept not the commandments of God, "he had other gods but him," and making a graven image he fell down and worshipped it. Covetousness tempted him to lying, when this sin became the servant of covetousness, and then the leprosy of Naaman was made to cleave to Gehazi, and he went out from the presence of the prophet, a leper white as snow. The idolatry of Naaman's wealth led him to forget the God of truth, of knowledge, and of power, for lying lips are an abomination unto the Lord. And to God "all hearts be opened, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid." And it was his own impotent power which smote Gehazi with a most sore disease. He is a living sermon on the text, "Be sure your sin will find you out." "Is it a time," exclaimed the prophet to him, "to receive money and to receive garments, and olive yards, and vineyards, and sheep and oxen, and men servants and maid servants? the leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and to thy seed forever."

Balaam is another striking example among the idolaters of wealth. Gifted with the sight of prophecy, the love of money tempted him to find some excuse for cursing the people of the Lord. Balak sent messengers to offer him a bribe, if he would only come and curse the Israelites. At first he seems to have loved money much, but to have feared God more, the promised wicked rewards were refused, and the princes of Moab, failing in their errand, returned to Balak. But "Balak sent yet again princes, more honourable than they." Now covetousness became idolatry to Balaam; and although we know that he uttered that cheering and holy prayer, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his," yet St. Peter presents him to us as the type of those "which have forsaken the right way and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness." It was the love of money that makes Balaam's character such a mass of contradictions—one of the most astonishing in the world. Here we behold a very wicked man, with a deep sense of God and religion, still persisting in his wickedness, and preferring the wages of unrighteousness, even when he had before him a prospect of death. All this, too, joined with an ardent wish to leave the world in the joyful condition of a righteous man! What a mystery and inconsistency!

Lot was another who owed many of life's evils to a covetous spirit. His faith was strong enough to go with Abraham from Haran to the land of Canaan; and when the famine came, he accompanied him into Egypt, and he stayed "with the friend of God." But when they came again to Bethel, and Lot had flocks, and herds and tents, covetousness crept into his heart. "He lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere. \* \* \* Then Lot chose him the plain of Jordan, \* \* \* and pitched his tent toward Sodom." We cannot but fear that gain directed this choice, and in the richness of the pastures he seems to have lost sight of the wickedness of those among whom he was about to cast his lot, for "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before God exceedingly."

How awful was the fall of Judas Iscariot? He was engaged in a higher service than Gehazi—with God incarnate before him, he became an idolater of money. Holy words were always sounding in his ears, and the most holy life of his Redeemer ever before his eyes, yet he murmured at the outpouring of the precious ointment. He became a thief, and also treacherously sold his Lord and Master. In both cases hypocrisy marked his steps—a pretended care for the poor, with a pretended love for his divine Master. "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?" And St. John says: "This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bore what was put therein." The same sordid principle made him commune with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him unto them, and they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. Why did Demetrius, the silversmith of Ephesus, so resolutely oppose the spreading of the gospel?—Why did he fill the city with confusion, calling his fellow workmen together to form a kind of anti-religious trades-union, on account of the preaching of "this Paul," as he scornfully called the apostle? It was be-

cause of making silver shrines, of "no small gain," for the heathen goddess Diana. Paul's preaching of the truth was "persuading and turning away much people," and the craft of the silversmiths was in danger to be set at naught. How closely in this case, is the connection between covetousness and idolatry?

As a last instance from God's word, we refer to Ananias and Sapphira. They had received baptism and were numbered with those on whom "there was great grace," but the idolatry of covetousness drove from them the true worship of God. The wicked desire of seeming to give, with the inordinate inward love of money, made them sin away given grace; and they failed in what God has said is impossible—the joint service of God and Mammon. Their idol was Mammon, and selling a possession, they kept back part of the price, when Satan filling their hearts, through the idolatry of covetousness, they lied unto the Holy Ghost. They fell down and "yielded up the ghost," and were buried, by the young men, together.

From this same source of evil, gambling takes its rise, a sin very prevalent in our own land, with lotteries, and tends to the same fatal end,—misery and ruin. "Making haste to be rich," is the striking trait and error of our day; and how often does this covetousness meet us in the daily walks of life! The employer, master-workman or farmer, has in many cases yet to learn, "that there is not a more wicked thing than a covetous man; for such an one setteth his own soul to sale." (Eccl. x. 9.) Covetousness very often enters into many rooms where a will is read. A legacy, like a whisperer, frequently separates chief friends, and is a constant "fountain of evil" in many a family. It has chartered many ships for the present war, and supplied vast amounts of "Army Contracts" at inordinate rates; and its favourite dwelling-place is among city brokers and stock-jobbers. No gains can satisfy the covetous desire of wealth—in fact, want itself, would do some of these covetous men more good than plenty.

To be free from this wicked spirit of covetousness, we should daily on our knees ask strength and grace from God; with our Bible before us, we should seek instruction in the deep meaning, but simple old English proverb, "enough is as good as a feast;" or from the highest authority, "Godliness with contentment is great gain;" and "having food and raiment let us be therewith content." God knows that the ways of this mortal life are full of perplexity to man, and that we are constantly longing for that which if we had would do us ill. We often shun that salutary discipline which is intended to purify our hearts from the stains and pollutions of this transitory life. Without the divine guidance, we know not what path we should walk to be most secure, for events are constantly happening to mar the wisest plans, and which Providence alone can overrule for our good.

Deeply impressed with the value and excellency of God's word, meditating it by day and by night, it will become a light to our feet and a lamp to our path, and its precepts will purify our thoughts and actions from selfish covetousness. This will make us faithful and just in all our dealings—our consciences tender, our life pure; and amidst the many vicissitudes of the world, we shall never lose the good ambition of being the faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.—*Zion's Herald* (New York).

### EARLY PIETY.

BY THE REV. JOHN LOGAN.

Although both Scripture and experience testify that man is fallen, and that our nature is corrupted, yet it is equally certain that our earliest passions are on the side of virtue, and that the good seed springs before the tares. Malice and envy are yet strangers to your bosom. Covetousness, that root of evil, hath not yet sprung up in your heart; the selfish, the wrathful, and the licentious passions, have not yet obtained dominion over you. The modesty of nature, the great guardian of virtue, is not seduced from its post. You would blush, even in secret, to do a deed of dishonesty, and shame. High sentiments of honour and probity expand the soul. The colour comes into the cheek at the smallest apprehension of blame; the ready lightning kindles in the eye at the least appearance of treachery and falsehood. Hence, says our Lord to his followers, Unless you become as a child; unless you assume the candour, the innocence, and the purity of children, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Therefore, whilst you are yet an offering fit for heaven, present yourselves at his altar; devote yourselves to his service. How beautiful and becoming does it appear for young persons, newly arrived in this city of God, to remember the end for which they were sent into it, and to devote to their Maker's service the first and best of their days! When they are in the prime of youth and of health, when the mind is untainted with actual guilt, and alive to every generous impression, to consecrate to religion the vernal flower of life! The virgin innocence of the mind is a sacrifice more acceptable to the Almighty, than if we should come before him with the cattle upon a thousand hills, and with ten thousand rivers of oil. If there be joy in heaven over a great and aged sinner that repenteth, how pleasing a spectacle will it be to God, to angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, to behold a person in the critical season of life, acquit himself gloriously, and despising the allurements, the deceitful and transitory pleasures of sin, choose for himself that better part which shall never be taken away!

Dare then, O young man, to remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth. Have the

courage to be good betimes. Beware of falling into the usual snare of the inexperienced; beware of thinking that you have time enough to be religious, and for that reason may defer the work of your salvation to maturer age, when as you foolishly imagine, seriousness and sanctity will come of their own accord. \* \* \* Whilst he now calls upon you in the sweetest language of heaven, "My son, give me thine heart," ought it not to be the natural movement of your heart, to answer with the good man of old, "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; with my spirit within me, will I seek thee early." "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in all the earth whom I desire beside thee." \* \* \* I shall conclude with one consideration, which I hope will have weight, and that is, if you seek God now in the days of youth, you are certain of success. Go out in the morning of youth, and you are sure to gather the manna of everlasting life. God himself will bend from his throne, and teach your spirits to approach unto him. They who seek him early shall find him, and shall be guarded from evil on his holy mountain.

"In the soft season of thy youth—  
In nature's smiling bloom,  
Ere age arrives, and trembling waits  
Its summons to the tomb,—  
"Remember thy Creator God;  
For him thy hours employ;  
Make him thy fear, thy love, thy hope,  
Thy confidence and joy."

### THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, EXEMPLIFIED IN ANECDOTES.

The late Mr. Jay of Bath was one day traveling in the country, when he chanced to meet with a farm labourer, who had been busy threshing corn. "Good morning, friend," said Mr. Jay, in his usual free and hearty manner; "Solomon says, in all labour there is profit, and I hope you have found it so." "I have laboured long in sin, sir, and never had much profit by that," replied the stranger. "Then I should hope," said Mr. Jay, "that you know something of the apostle's meaning when he asks, 'What fruit have ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?'" "I trust I do," returned the labourer, "and that through divine grace being made free from sin, I have become a servant of God, and have my fruit unto holiness, that the end may be everlasting life." Christian faith and Christian character were thus expressed and exemplified, and Mr. Jay felt that he had that morning been taught a lesson which he could never forget. In itself, the colloquy is a fine illustration of the power of Christian feeling, and suggests to all who would honor Christ the duty of living out the apostolic injunction, "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

First.—As to how we may glorify God in eating.

An English ship-of-war once touched at one of the ports of the Sandwich Islands, when the captain gave a dinner to the royal family and several of the chiefs. The table was spread upon the quarter-deck, and loaded with viands and delicacies of all kinds. After the company were seated, and everything was ready, the islanders seemed unwilling to begin. The captain could not understand them, and thought the hesitation arose from a fear to partake of such entertainment. He assured them it was such as they might enjoy, but still they refused to begin. A pious steward, guessing the cause of the delay, whispered, "They are waiting for the blessing, sir." "Ask it, then," said the captain. The steward did so, in a very earnest and simple manner. No sooner was this done than the royal party and the chiefs did ample justice to the feast, and thus taught the English Christians a lesson how to eat to the glory of God.

Some time ago a landed proprietor in the north of Scotland was visiting his tenantry, and happened to call on one of them at the dinner-hour. The farmer, a pious man, was seated with his wife and family at the dinner-table, and was just about to begin their frugal meal. Apologizing for his intrusion at such an unseasonable hour, the landlord very familiarly urged his tenant to go on with his dinner, and he would wait. The tenant, with much earnestness, asked a blessing. After dinner, and when the landlord left, he said to himself, "I stand reproved. Here is a poor man, with his simple fare, thanking God for it, and praying for the bread of life, while I, with every necessary and luxury which can be desired, have never once acknowledged God's goodness in his gifts." His conscience smote him. He could visit no more that day. His mind was led to think over his state, and becoming alarmed as to his condition before God, was led to seek for mercy and grace. He found the blessing, and now lives to advance the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom.

Secondly.—As to how we may drink to the glory of God.

A great drunkard in the Highlands of Inverness-shire was led to attend a lecture on temperance. He was induced to become a member of a temperance society. For months the craving of his appetite for strong drink was excessive, but, true to his resolution, he set his face like a flint against every temptation. The marsh of his heart being thus drained of one poison, he next received the seed of the Word into its soil. It was hid there until quickened by the Sun of righteousness, and nourished by the rains and dews of the Spirit, when it brought forth fruit in Christian life and character. Having no settled occupation, he yet could not be idle, and having, by the help of a few friends, managed to stock a little box with trinkets and other cheap ware, he set out as a peddler. In the course of his peregrinations, he found himself at Balmoral, and thinking that if he could get the patronage of the

Queen it would help him greatly, he resolved to make the attempt. There was something in his look and manner which at once commended him to the favor of some of the household officials, who had it in their power to put him under the notice of the Earl of Carlisle, then attending the court as a Minister of State. The noble Earl, with his usual frankness and goodness of heart, sympathized with Donald, and promised to recommend his case to the Queen. When her Majesty came to know it, Donald was commanded to appear in the royal presence, and met with a most gracious reception. Not only did the Queen purchase of his wares, but gave him permission to wear the royal arms as the Queen's peddler, and sent Donald away with a lighter heart and a heavier purse than he had when he entered the royal chamber. On leaving, the Earl of Carlisle took him to his room, and there Donald was presented with a glass of wine with which to drink the Queen's health. Looking at it, he felt at first a kind of trembling, but then, lifting his heart in prayer for divine aid, he said, "Your lordship will excuse me; I cannot drink the Queen's health in wine, but I will drink it in water." The noble Earl asked his reasons. "My lord," said Donald, "I was a drunkard. I became an abstainer, and I trust by God's grace I have become a Christian; but I know that if I were to taste intoxicating drink it would at once revive an appetite which is not dead, but dying, and I should most likely go the whole length of the drunkard again. God has only promised to support me in the path of duty, and that path, in my case, is plainly to abstain." The noble lord at once commended Donald for his frankness and honesty, and in taking leave assured him that it would afford her Majesty the highest satisfaction to know that she had amongst her loyal and devoted subjects one who, in the midst of such strong temptations, could maintain his principles with integrity and honor. Donald left rejoicing to think that he had been enabled to "drink" to the glory of God.

Thirdly.—How, in whatsoever we do, we may do all to God's glory.

When the late Doctor Milne of China was a working tradesman at Leith Hall, the seat of the late General Hay, now of Sir Andrew Leith Hay, in Aberdeenshire, he was ever ready to act out John Newton's principle: "I make it a rule of Christian duty never to go to a place where there is not room for my Master as well as myself." It so happened that on one occasion, when a ball was to be given in honor of some family event, orders were issued to send invitations to every person on the estate. When the grievance received the name of William Milne, he said to the steward, "You need not invite Milne, he won't come—balls don't do with his religion." "But you can take the invitation, whether he accepts it or not," replied the steward, "for my instructions are to invite all." The grievance sent the message to William Milne, who, on receiving it, gravely said, "Tell the grievance that when William Milne has no work for eternity he will attend to balls." The answer was an arrow from the quiver of divine truth. It pierced his heart, and he could get no peace until it was withdrawn by the great Physician, and the balm of Gilead applied. The grievance still lives, and in a higher sphere of labour has long been a useful and consistent member of the church of Christ.

A religiously disposed young man in the north of Scotland was present one evening when a devoted minister was preaching on the duty of Christians whose lot might be to live in worldly families; this was his position. He was grieved to think that, though he found every kindness at home, there was no true love for Christ in the head of the household. On the Sabbath evenings it was usual for some of the neighbors to call and talk about everything and anything but the "one thing needful." This vexed the youth sadly. But as if the minister knew the case, he said, "Should there be any one present who fears God, and must yet be in a thoughtless and prayerless family, let me advise him to be faithful to his Master, and he will make him a blessing in that household. If, on going home to-night, he should find the fireside surrounded by ungodly neighbors, let him quietly take his seat amongst them, open his Bible, and telling them where the text of our sermon is, at once begin to read. Let him continue to read, and the effect will be wonderful." The young man, on returning home, put this advice in practice. He met with no discouragement. There is a regard for the Bible in most families, which insures respect for it, if not attention, and so it was found here. By-and-by one neighbour "began to make excuse," and rose to bid the company good-night. Another soon after gave a yawn, and stretching his arms overhead, rose also to leave for supper. A third sat for a while thoughtfully, and then left in silence. The impression produced on those who remained was such that prayer was offered that night, and the divine presence was, there is reason to hope, to some extent realized.

Thirty years have passed away since then. But recently the remembrance of that night was brought up. The thoughtful neighbour, who left in silence, then an old man, told the story of his experience under this reading of the Bible to his daughter, who, there is reason to believe, has got saving good through the instrumentality of the same young man, who is now a minister in London.

Everybody has heard of how the brothers Haldane profited by the timely remarks of a pious sailor in the case of James, and a pious mason in the case of Robert, acting out the Christian duty to be "living epistles, known and read of all men." Most people have read the story of Richard Baxter's conversion, through the instrumentality of a

pious travelling bookseller, and how his "Call to the unconverted" awakened Doddridge, whose "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul" was blessed to Wilberforce, whose writings aroused Scott, whose "Force of Truth," produced a lasting impression on the mind of "Leigh Richmond," whose "Dairyman's Daughter" has done so much for the cause of God. Time would fail us to enumerate other instances of the power of example when rightly exhibited in life and character—in the work-shop, in the field, in the house, in the world, in the church, and in the market-place. Suffice it to say, that no man can live and not exercise an influence for good or evil; and as the Lord has put it into the power of every Christian to do something, and oftentimes much, to promote his cause and advance his glory, let the duty be realized as a privilege, and discharged with fidelity and zeal, in season and out of season, and in prayerful dependence on God, that he may enable us all in life and character, "whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we may do all to the glory of God."—*Rev. J. H. Wilson, London.*

### WHO SHALL BEAR THE BURDEN?

We are likely to fail, in making out our minister's salary. A subscription has been circulated, and the brethren have pledged themselves to the full amount they think they can conveniently pay, and still there is a deficiency of fifty, sixty, or a hundred dollars. Some have fallen off five, some ten, some fifteen dollars, from what they have been accustomed to pay, because, as they say, it is hard times. Now, what is to be done? We have been to nearly every individual from whom a dollar can be expected, and yet the full amount is not subscribed. What is to be done?

We will appoint a committee to wait on our minister, tell him the circumstances, and ask him if he is going to insist upon the full amount that has been pledged to him. He is in debt some, to be sure, and has nothing laid by for his family, in case he should be taken from them, or be laid aside from his labors. But then he is used to retrenching, bearing burdens and anxieties, and I dare say he will consent to relieve us by bearing this burden entirely alone. His best coat, it is true, is getting rather threadbare, and as he has worn it four or five years, it is getting a little out of date, but he can give it an extra brushing, and somehow he can get through the year with it. His frugal wife can remodel her worsted dress, for the third or fifth time, perhaps, add a little new trimming, and make that do for another winter. Deacon A.'s wife, in her husband's congregation, has had two or three new winter dresses since her's was purchased, but then the deacon's wife would take it hard if her husband should sign so liberally for the minister, that she should not have her usual complement of dresses.

After the matter has been thus carefully weighed, the committee is appointed to lay the matter before their pastor. The minister, all unconscious of what his brethren have been doing, is quite unprepared for such an emergency. He stammers out something in his embarrassment, that they construe into a consent to forego the amount named, and they leave, highly pleased with the result of their most unwelcome visit. They are much relieved, now that they have got the burden off from themselves on to their minister. Not so with the poor minister. A great load is added to his already numerous cares and anxieties. He had hoped to get out of debt, and procure, this year, a few things that he had long felt the need of. But now these must be given up, and his retrenchments increased (though he hardly knows where he can retrench any further than he has done), or his debts cannot be paid. Day after day he groans over it, for the sum, though only fifty or a hundred dollars, is a great one in his circumstances; and so heavily does it press upon him, that it not unfrequently obtrudes itself upon his hours of study, when he is trying to prepare a message adapted to the wants of his flock.

Is this right? No doubt some have done all that they are really able to do, and all it would be their duty to do, if the church generally would come up to the measure of their real ability. But if some are delinquent, must the burden all fall on the minister? We venture to say that there is not another member of the church (I say another member, for the minister is one of the members), though his income, besides supporting his family, may be more than equal to the full amount of the minister's salary, who would be willing to bear it alone, and yet he is, perhaps, of the number who are willing to have it all laid upon the minister. How many can appeal to God and say, "Lord, thou knowest I have done all my duty in this matter! Thou knowest I could not do more without subjecting myself to as great privations as the minister would be subjected to in doing without it!"

Is it right that our Baptist ministers should be required to live on just what they can, with all frugality, and not be permitted to lay by a dollar for their families, in the event of their being taken from them?

Is it right that the minister's family should become paupers the moment the husband and father is taken away from them, or laid aside from his labors?

I know a Baptist minister, with a large family, who, by an attack of paralysis, has been suddenly laid aside from his labors, and his family are to-day objects of charity; for, though several years have passed away, he is still unable to resume his labors.

O, that I could fix in the minds of my readers the stern realities of cases of this kind, that they might feel the injustice of heaping all the burdens upon their ministers, instead of sharing them themselves.

—*N. Y. Examiner.*