

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. 36.

SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1862.

Whole No. 452.

THE INTELLIGENCER.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE MINISTRY.

A SERMON.

Text.—"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."—1 Tim. 4: 13.

The word "doctrine," as employed in this instance, is sometimes used to signify the truth presented, and sometimes the act of teaching the truth. It is believed that in this instance it has reference to the work of communicating truth through the medium of the word. The language employed in presenting the thought of the apostle is highly important and expressive. Anticipating the time when he expected to meet his young son in the faith, he directed him to devote his mind and his strength "to reading, to exhortation, and to teaching." These words merit especial attention from the fact, that in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, we find embodied, nearly all the directions given in the New Testament, to those who are ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The qualifications necessary for the office, both moral and intellectual, are enumerated. We are told what the minister of the word is to be in spirit, what he is to be in the direction his affections shall take, and what he is to be in faith and conduct. These topics embrace a wide range; but it is not my design to notice particularly the moral qualifications of the preacher. There is a very general agreement on this topic.

It is a common and just opinion, that those who are enlightened by the word of God,—that the men who teach moral truth, should have experienced the power of that truth; that they should be able to present the motives, which God has embodied in his holy word, to their fellow-men, in that manner best adapted to lead them to righteousness, with that conviction of their reality which actual experience alone can give. Such men should know the energy of truth,—should possess an unshaken confidence in the testimony of God, and be established in "the faith once delivered to the saints;" they should be men who fear God; men, who enjoy the influence of the Divine Spirit, who have the mind of their Master, and that share of Christian courage that will enable them to stem the current of opposition to the revelation of God, which exists in a fallen world. These directions in the text, my hearers, were given in an age when men enjoyed the light of direct inspiration. It would be, however, difficult to show, that all the ministers of the gospel, even in the age of the apostles, were inspired, as they were. So many of the teachers were inspired, as were necessary for the peculiar circumstances in which God had placed his saints. They were thus made infallible witnesses to the truth, and thus prepared for the work that lay before them. They were made instruments to communicate to mankind that mass of truth, which fell from the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ, and which could not be found in the writings of the Old Testament. Beyond this, there was an economy in that communication of the Divine Spirit, which is termed "inspiration," as there was an economy in the working of miracles, in healing the sick, and opening the eyes of the blind. Beyond this, there was no display made, no useless exhibitions of the power of God.

Those who preached in that age, like those who preach now, were to give themselves to reading—to searching the Scriptures,—they were to learn the truth already on record, and to receive that portion of it peculiar to the New Covenant, through inspired men, like the apostles. I shall dwell a moment longer on this subject, lest the speaker should make any mistake, or mingle, even unintentionally, any error with the truth. It is obvious that he who speaks by inspiration, has no occasion to reason—to reflect, or to proceed with a cautious step, lest he should utter something not in accordance with the mind of the Spirit. I say, therefore, that when Jesus calls uninspired men to the office of the ministry, by giving them the moral qualifications which his word indicates as essential to their fitness,—when he puts in their hearts "a desire" for the "good work," a wish to advance his glory, and promote the salvation of souls, He always treats them as intellectual and moral beings. He places them within reach of the means necessary for an acquaintance with truth. They must then summon their own minds to the task of reading and meditation,—in other words, they must study the word of God with that diligence which its immense importance demands, relying on Him, while they do not neglect the aids for acquiring a thorough knowledge of the book of truth—that the entrance of that word may give them light. It is believed that the position of all the ministry (who were not inspired), has been exactly the same in all ages—that they were as much laid under the necessity of "understanding" the truth "by books"—as was the prophet Daniel.

It will easily be inferred from the Scriptures' enumeration of the qualifications of ministers and overseers of the Church of God, that there is an order of men in the Church especially fitted for the work of teaching, in that that all are not teachers, or evangelists, or prophets.

It has been a device of Satan to lead some into a belief that the ministerial office exists no longer. Those who have fallen into this error, have not unfrequently been misled through their own spiritual pride. That they might rise, they have wished to level down all the offices in the Church to the same standard. Thus their own supposed gifts, might have a wide field for exercise, and their fancied light no longer be hid under a bushel. Wherever this sentiment has become general in any church, confusion and every evil work has been the result. The attempts to maintain order or public instruction without a ministry, have been

most unfortunate. How should it be otherwise?—when all have claimed to be teachers, no hearers have been found—when all were shepherds, there has been no flock.

At this point we may properly inquire, whether every man who deems himself qualified for the New Testament ministry ought to submit his claims to the judgment of the Church, or can he, in accordance with the directions given in the Scriptures, act as the sole judge of his claims? Is his own conviction of duty a sufficient guide in the work of preaching the gospel, and administering the ordinances instituted by the Saviour? It is most difficult to answer these interrogatives. The rules as to ministerial qualifications, in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, imply that they are to be used as a guide to the judgment of the Church and its officers. Hence Timothy is told "to lay hands suddenly on no man." The hands of the eldership had been laid on Timothy himself. (1 Tim. 4: 14.) The apostle says to Titus (1: 5): "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain (appoint) elders in every city, as I have appointed (commanded) thee; if any be blameless," &c. The miraculous call of Paul to the office of an apostle and teacher, did not cause him to refuse communicating the gospel which he had received by the revelation of Jesus Christ, to the other apostles, that they might be convinced that he was one of the chosen vessels to bear the name of Christ before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. "I went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas . . . and I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them that were of reputation. . . . And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen," &c. Gal. 2: 1, 2, 9.

Let me remark as to Paul, that there could have been no doubt in his own mind that he was called to the ministry. Now, here we have an apostle who submits to the leaders of the Church his claims as a teacher: he communicates the gospel he preaches, and the truths he urges, and tells them frankly what his message is. They had nothing to communicate to him. We may learn a lesson from one of the chiefest of the apostles,—one who laboured most successfully to build up the cause of Christ in the world,—who turned the greatest number to righteousness,—one who received his commission directly from the lips of the Saviour.

It is important that our claims to the office of the gospel ministry should be submitted to the judgment of the Church, from the fact, that in weighing those claims we are liable to mistakes when acting in a case where we are interested. No prudent man will trust his own heart. It has been common in some churches with which I have been acquainted, for persons, whenever good exhorters, or often merely fluent speakers, to imagine, from the notice taken of their volubility, by some of "the weaker brethren"—that they were fitted for the ministry of the word. Self-sufficiency, and the crafty suggestions of Satan, have led them, without proper deliberation, to assume a public position, where they were brought into contact with men of superior minds, men who would receive nothing merely on their authority, and in the result the truth has been disgraced, and a reproach brought on the ministry. Such facts prove the importance of adhering to the scriptural principle of listening to the judgment of the Church.

My text shows that Paul did not regard "reading" as an exercise which was to be suspended by any influence of the Divine Spirit. Whatever others may have thought as to the influence of "much learning in making men mad," he evidently supposed that Timothy might give himself to reading, to meditation, and to doctrine, and yet be able to "speak forth the words of soberness and truth." His extensive experience in the work of the ministry gave him peculiar advantage in speaking on this subject. He had learned the most effectual mode for promoting the cause of Christ. If a minister listened to the advice of the Church, he did not think it made him less efficient, or that he would have less of the Holy Ghost.

The appropriate business of the ministry is to propagate the truth. The truth is to be disseminated through a knowledge of the Scriptures, which the Lord has made the medium of his communications to mankind. In the work of saving souls, it should be recollected, that the Lord has made it the duty of men to employ this truth, because that is the chosen instrument for that end. "The seed is the word of God." Our Creator regards man as a being who possesses a mind that is so constituted, that it may be influenced by motives. By the laws of human nature changes are produced in the mind or principles altogether different from the effects produced in matter. In the case of miracles, the change was effected by a direct exertion of omnipotent power. Thus, when Christ stilled the rolling deep, he did not reason with it, but merely said, "Peace, be still." A mere volition in the mind of the Saviour would have had the same effect, and those who witnessed the miracle, knew that it was his power that "made the billows sleep." So in all his miracles. He acted upon matter by a direct exertion of Divine energy. How did he act on the mind? It was by the force of truth, by motives fitted to act on man's intellectual and moral nature.

Ministers are not now called to work miracles. The few efforts of this kind which have been made in later ages, have thus far proved unsuccessful, and sadly disappointed the expectations of those who hazarded the experiments.

But to return. Christ himself was a preacher

of the gospel.—How did he act in that office? Precisely, my hearers, as he requires all his servants to act. He preached the truths communicated before he was upon the earth, and those which were delivered directly to him from the Father, and urged those mighty motives designed to influence the human mind. He was the creator of all things, visible and invisible, of mind as well as of matter. To this mind he gave laws rendering it capable of being influenced by motives. As a preacher, he seized the motives found in Divine truth, and urged them on the attention of those to whom he preached. The Lord converted no man by miracles—by the power he exerted on matter. He warned men to flee from coming wrath,—he appealed to their fears. Now many deem it entirely wrong, if preachers present the danger to which the wicked are exposed.

They tell us that men are saved by the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is true; but how are men made willing to be saved by the gospel, and to take up the cross and follow Jesus? Is it not by presenting the claims which God has on their obedience, and showing them the penalty of violating the law? If any one of my hearers imagines that the Saviour did not appeal to the fears of men, let me read his own language in testimony: "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." Here there is certainly an appeal made to fear. We find that the Saviour made the same kind of appeal, when he said to the Pharisees, "Ye serpents; ye generation of vipers; how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" To what did he appeal when he said, that all the nations of the earth were to be assembled before him, and hear his decision? or when he says, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." This is a fair example of his mode of appealing to the fears of men.

I have said, that the Saviour, when a minister of the gospel here on earth, pursued the same course which he demands shall be taken by all who speak in his name, till time shall end. Mark his language: "Now ye are clean." How? By some miracle,—something wrought without the word? No: "Now ye are clean through the word I have spoken unto you." So he prays to the Father that the truth might be employed in sanctifying men; "Now, then, if Christ took this course, if he drew his motives from the truths which were revealed from heaven to do good to men, to save souls, and to sanctify his people, we can easily comprehend why the apostle, who had been commissioned by Christ to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, and who adopted no different plan from that employed by his Master, should have urged Timothy to give himself "to reading," that he might be furnished from the storehouse of God with all those motives adapted to the great end for which the ministry of reconciliation has been instituted. It being an axiom in the economy of grace, that "the seed is the word of God,"—it will follow, that from this seed alone we are authorized to expect the fruits of righteousness. If we employ motives which are not found in the word of God, we may influence the human mind,—we may produce effects; but they will have no connection with the spiritual improvement of the human heart. If we sow the wind, we shall reap the whirlwind. The fruits which spring from that "seed, which is the word of God," or, as they are termed also, "the fruits of the Spirit," (Gal. 5: 22—26), are, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

In other words, while men are employed to preach the truth, to urge its motives on their fellows, the Divine Spirit renders it effectual, impresses it on the soul, and God thus works in man both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. Though it be true that if Paul preach, and Apollos water, God must give the increase, still, we have no scriptural warrant to believe that he will give the increase, if the seed is neither sown nor watered; or in other words, we must yield to the Divine declaration, that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The fact that Jesus became a man himself—not only that he might die as the propitiation for our sins, but that he had all the feelings, all the affections of one of our race, before he could preach the gospel of the kingdom—goes far to settle every question in reference to the instrumentality of man in the salvation of our race.

My hearers, Christ might have communicated the truths of the gospel by direct suggestion to every man who heard him while he was on the earth. There would have been no difficulty in this—his omnipotent energy was sufficient for such a result. Yet, instead of this, he comes to earth—God is manifest in the flesh. The angels announce the arrival of the Saviour, but the angels did not commence preaching the gospel. After the ascension of Jesus, when the Roman centurion was to hear the truth, an angel appeared to him. The centurion trembled when that angel appeared, but after all, he was not to learn the truth from him. The angel was sent merely to tell Cornelius where he could find Simon Peter, who not long before had, through fear, denied his Master. This very man, after he was brought to repentance, was ordered to go from Jordan to Caesarea, and preach the gospel to a Gentile. He went with his brethren. When this man—the fisherman—rose up and proclaimed the word of the Lord Jesus, the Holy Ghost fell upon them all, as it did upon the apostles at the day of Pentecost. Peter then learned that God was no respecter of persons, and those who had received the word were baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ.

(To be Continued.)

SMOOTH STONES TAKEN FROM ANCIENT BROOKS.

As there are no mercies equal to spiritual mercies, so there are no judgments equal to spiritual judgments. Oh! the slowness, the coldness, the deadness, the barrenness, that are abroad in the world! God suits his judgments to men's sins; the greatest sins are always attended with the greatest judgments. In these days men sin against more glorious means, more great love, more clear light, more tender bowels of mercy, than formerly; and therefore God gives men up to more sad and dreadful spiritual judgments than formerly.

Little sins (suppose them so) are very dangerous. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump; a little staff may kill one; a little leak in a ship sinks it; a little flaw in a good cause mars it; so a little sin may at once bar the door of heaven, and open the gates of hell; though the scorpion be little, yet will it sting a lion to death; and so will the least sin, if not pardoned by the death of Christ.

Earthly riches are called thorns, and well they may be; for, as thorns, they pierce both head and heart; the head with cares in getting them, and the heart with grief in parting with them.

Things satisfy as they suit. There is a good, and there is a suitable good; now it is only the suitable good that satisfies the soul of a man. A pardon is most suitable to a condemned man, and therefore it best satisfies him. Health is most suitable to the sick, and therefore it satisfies when it is attained. As bread satisfies the hungry soul, and drink the thirsty soul, and clothing the naked soul, so do the precious gifts that Christ bestows upon the soul satisfy the soul.

There was a holy man that rarely heard of other men's crimson sins, but he usually bedewed the place with his tears, considering that the seeds of those very sins were in his own nature. In thy nature thou hast that which would lead thee, with the Pharisees, to oppose Christ, and with Judas, to betray Christ; and, with Pilate, to condemn Christ; and, with the soldiers, to crucify Christ. Oh! what a monster wouldst thou prove, should God but leave thee to act suitably to that sinful and woful nature of thine.

"We walk by faith and not by sight" (2 Corinthians, v. 7). Christians, you must remember that it is one thing for God to love you, and another thing for God to tell you that he loves you. Your happiness lies in the first, your comfort in the second. God has stopped his ears against the prayers of many a precious soul whom he has dearly loved. And, verily, he who makes sense and carnal reason a judge of his condition, will be happy and miserable, blessed and cursed, saved and lost, many times in a day, yea, in an hour.

"I AM A LOST MAN."

The newspapers inform us that these were the last words of Bugeaud, Marshal of France, and Duke of Isly. When he uttered them, he was just closing a brilliant, many would say a useful life.—He had led vast armies to battle. He had governed extensive States. He had been conspicuous in the councils of nations. The President of France made anxious visits to his death chamber. The stern Cavaignac wept as he looked upon the dissolving frame of his old comrade; and the Convention was profoundly affected when the news of his death was announced. With all this accumulation of honor, he was by his own confession, "a lost man." How mournful the contrast between the glory of his life and the deep gloom of its close!

From the same source we learn that Bugeaud had a pious mother. In the history of his eventful life, this seems to have been the only quarter in which good influence was exerted upon his heart. His mother's voice alone warned him of his danger, and spoke to him of eternity; all other influences led him astray. In the camp he heard God only in blasphemy. In civil life he saw nothing but a desperate struggle for earthly place and power.—In the saloons of Paris he heard wit mocking, and philosophy denouncing the religion of his youth.—The quiet voice that warned him, and prayed with him, was, alas for him; overborne and lost in the midst of these babbling voices of the world.

In the hour of death, however, these voices die away and are forgotten. The exclamations of a world could not have made the failing pulse of Bugeaud beat faster. Other tones were in his ears; for the accents we will not listen to when they admonish us, we are often forced to listen to when they accuse. The dying moments are often the time of resurrection for abused privileges and neglected gifts. They "stalk from the burial place of memory," to foreshadow our doom, and to convince us of its undeniable justice.

Thus we explain that fearful expression that fell from the dying warrior. He heeded a voice which he had long neglected and forgotten. Across the waste of years, through the storm of battle, it comes clear and distinct upon his falling ear. It asks for the fruit of early counsel; it asks for the result of pious care and zeal. One comprehensive glance over his life satisfies the man that he has wasted it. His own conscience condemns him. In this he knows that he but anticipates the sentence of God, and he sinks into death, "a lost man."

The lesson of this sad incident is easily read.—It is only another instance of the case with which carelessness can turn our best blessings into curses. A mother's love and a mother's pious care are inestimable gifts of God's mercy. Indifference and impetuosity can make them causes of our deeper damnation, and so change the soft voice that sung our young infancy to sleep, that it will haunt our dying pillow with accusations that we can neither gainsay nor resist.—Rev. M. B. Grier.

WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

Certainly the signs of the times are full of encouragement. The world has seen nothing like it in all the history of the past. On all hands, obstacles which had hindered, and even prevented, all successful effort to spread the Gospel, are removing in the most remarkable manner. Access to the entire Heathen world now exists. This may be said almost without qualification. India, China, Japan, Madagascar, the Coasts of Africa, the Islands in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, savage tribes in North America, may now be approached and even entered by prudent and persevering missionaries, with good prospect of success. And nearly all this change in the state of the Heathen world has occurred within the memory of the present generation. We do not mean to assert that there are not still many difficulties to be overcome in all parts of Heathendom. "The carnal mind" now, as in all ages past, "is enmity against God." Ignorant and wicked rulers, and besotted priests, interested in upholding idolatry and even the basest superstitions, still live, and are ready to oppose. Even monsters in human shape are not wanting, as is seen in the land of Dahomey. But whatever the obstacles which still exist to impede the Gospel in pagan lands, they are not to compare with those which Christianity had to encounter in the earlier ages of its career. The vast power and far-reaching influence of the great maritime Christian Nations—England, France, Russia, and the United States—have been felt in a salutary manner over all the continental and insular world that is still Heathen. And thus "the way of the Lord is preparing," even a highway for the Word of our God, in the outlying nations of the earth, even the remotest of them.

A similar change is going on in the Mohammedan world. The respect, and even dread, in which the great Christian Powers are held by the Turks, the Persians, the Moors, and other Mohammedan nations, has led them to shrink from displaying the Moslem fanaticism and ferocity which they did even long since the present century opened upon the world.

The progress of the great principles of civil and religious liberty among the nations of Christendom has opened a large portion of the Papal world, and bids fair to open all the rest before many years pass away. The nations which did the most to give birth and add strength to the Papacy are just those Roman Catholic nations which are now the most prepared to receive the Gospel of our Lord. Italy and France have known by bitter experience the nature of Romanism, and are now receiving the glorious Gospel. So have Spain and Portugal, and the countries which they have colonized. Let us hope that their turn will soon come to hear the tidings of a free salvation, salvation through grace; not through the wretched penances and degrading and useless rites of the corrupted Christianity for which they are indebted to Rome.

Even the day of Israel's redemption is evidently drawing nigh. Portions of the "Diaspora"—of that wonderful nation which exists now only in its "dispersions"—are evidently more disposed to listen to the story of Jesus of Nazareth than ever before. We can but hope that the time will not now be long before "the blindness will be taken away" from the hearts of the descendants of Abraham, the Friend of God, and their return to the fold of the Saviour whom their fathers crucified, be the signal for an amazing outspread of the Gospel in all directions, as well as the epoch of the outpouring of the Spirit from on High, by whose mighty influences nations will be born in a day.

These are glorious times in which to live, and labour, and give, and pray. O that we were better fit to live in them, and more worthy of the high privilege! The Heathen world, the Mohammedan world, the Papal world, the Jewish world—all opening for the Gospel which they so much need! And, what is also cheering, the resurrection of a real Christianity is going forward in the Protestant world, and obstacles are removing which long had hindered the progress of the Truth. Let us hope and pray that even the distressing war that is still going on within our borders may not only be brought to a speedy and happy close, but overruled by the Saviour for the decided furtherance of His kingdom.—Christian World.

SINFUL HABITS.—Be not too slow in the breaking off a sinful custom: a quick, courageous resolution is better than a gradual deliberation; in such a combat, he is the bravest soldier that lays about him without fear or wit. Wit pleads: fear disheartens; he that would kill Hydra, had better strike off one neck than five heads; fell the tree and the branches are soon cut off.—Quarles.

WE CANNOT STAND ALONE.—In the disastrous campaign of Napoleon, when he returned from Moscow, and his soldiers, one after another, fell dead in the ranks, the only way of preserving life was, as one fell for the others to press together and fill the place of their fallen companions, and thus fewer lives were sacrificed, and a remnant escaped. It is so in the toils and struggles of the Christian host. God has united them in an organic body. They are an army of Christian warriors called to fight the good fight of faith; to battle against everything that exalts itself against God, the Kingdom of Christ, and the welfare of human society. For this they are divinely placed as lights in the world, bulwarks of righteousness, witnesses for God, watchmen, soldiers, defenders of the faith. They cannot stand alone. Aggregation, and not isolation, is the divine law for human society and aggressive Christian action.