

The Religious Intelligencer.

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

REV. E. McLEOD.]

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

Peter.

[Editor and Proprietor.]

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The Intelligencer.

"A GOOD MAN—A VERY GOOD MAN INDEED."

By J. Delisle of Amsterdam.

Concluded.

The better bread was the prize—two shops and no opposition.

The next morning, Frederic brought the money to the landlord. He was not a little astonished when he learned how he had come by it.

"He is a noble man," said he. "Yes, he is," added Frederic, "and, sir, he is better than both of us. We have shamefully wronged that man. We have committed a great sin against God and that man, sir. I have acted the part of a mean traitor. I have, as an ungrateful and unscrupulous villain, conspired with you to ruin that good man, whom you hated because of his righteousness, and whom I envied because of the prosperity God blessed him with. And had God taken me away in my illness, I should have been forever lost, sir, and it would have been better for me if a mill-stone had been tied round my neck, and I had been cast into the sea. And now, here is the money which that man has gained for me in the sweat of his brow. I give it to you because it is your property according to the contract between you and me. But it burns like molten lead in my fingers, sir, and so it must in yours, for it is the wages of our iniquity, and every coin of it should spring up into our face, for this money, together with all the money I have given you already, from the beginning of my business, is the harvest of our wickedness, gathered from a field which we have moistened with the sweat and tears of that good man and his family. And now he has revenged himself! He has moistened my parching lips when I was about to die from thirst at the brink of the grave, and his daughter has nursed me in my sickness, as if I were her own father, and his wife has stood by the sick-bed of my Jane as a loving sister, while he, day and night, was laboring hard to support us, as if we, all of us, were his children. Oh, what a monster I am! That I ever could lift up my heel against that man! Where shall I go to hide myself? The world is too narrow for me. My shame burns like a fire within me, and my conscience haunts me like a phantom."

"Under the weight of his remorse, Frederic sank down on a chair, burying his face in his hands. The landlord stared at him, as if a thunder-bolt had struck him. His conscience, too, awoke with a terrible shock. He felt that all Frederic had said was true. Yet he ventured one objection, to soften down, if possible, the rebuke of his speech.

"But why did he turn the whole village upside down, by his praying and preaching?" said he. "We were such intimate friends before that."

"And what harm was there in his praying and preaching?" answered Frederic. "Can you continue finding fault with him because of that, even after such heavy judgments of God as our village has been visited with? I have been lying in the sight of death, sir, and I have learned there terrible things. Whatever may be the effect which the rod of the Lord has produced upon this unhappy people, it has fully convinced me that the baker is right, and that all who oppose him are wrong, but give them a time of repentance, that they, like Paul, might, from persecutors of the Church, be turned into friends and allies, and fellow-labourers and defenders of the gospel in the sight of all the creature."

"Now while the baker was speaking and praying in that way, the person outside listened with such keen attention, that he had not observed the coming of another person, who kept standing close behind him, and like him, was quite absorbed in devotion. 'Amen,' said the baker with a loud voice, concluding his prayer, and 'Amen,' repeated the latter comer. His fellow-listener, who was standing before him, apparently a little startled by this unexpected company, turned round, and by the light from the window recognised Frederic."

"Is it you?" whispered he. "And you?" returned Frederic. "God be praised, sir. Oh, if those inside knew that the landlord of the 'Golden Plough' was with them, kneeling at the feet of Jesus! Shall we not go in, sir?"

"No, by no means."

"I pray, sir, let us go in and give praise to God," came along.

"Frederic took the landlord by the arm, and to his unspeakable joy, found that he allowed himself to be led into the house. A psalm was just being sung, and the crowd that had filled the passage was mostly gone. So they easily found their way to the door of the parlour. Picture to yourself the astonishment of the little congregation, and especially of the baker, when they noticed these two persons. The psalm was finished soon, and before the baker could offer the concluding short prayer Frederic proceeded onward, holding the landlord by the arm, and said, 'Dear friends, give glory to God. We come to give praise to the Lord in the midst of you.'

"Yes, my dear friends, the Lord has conquered us. Here we are, your enemies formerly, but your friends now. We have sinned against God and you, but we come to ask your pardon, as we have received it from Christ."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed several voices, and a joyful confusion for a few moments prevailed amongst the congregation. The shock of the surprise threatened to be too heavy for some, and the baker wisely gave out another psalm to give time for recovery. Meanwhile he beckoned the landlord to step up to the little platform, and to take his place by his side. When the psalm was finished, the landlord rose and in the simplicity of his heart told the audience how he was overpowered by the pressure of his conscience, to give up his opposition to God, and to bow down at the feet of Christ. 'I could no longer resist, my friends,' he concluded. 'I saw that this man, the baker, was doing the work of God, and that I was a servant of the devil. But God has had mercy upon me, and I have taken refuge under the wings of the only Saviour. God knows what fearful days and nights of despair and agony I have gone through. But I now am enabled with the thief to cry, Remember me! and I believe Jesus has said to me, To-day thou shalt be with me.'

"I shall not dwell upon the further proceedings of that remarkable evening. Suffice it to say that the next day the whole village knew

'Everything.' If God were to ask him, 'What hast thou done for me?' 'Nothing, nothing!' Ah, if it were but nothing! But it was worse than nothing. It was everything against God. He had prevented the course of God's word and had blasphemed God's name. How different his life's last ten years had been from those of the baker! He compared himself with his former friend. He fancied that man standing by his side at the tribunal of the heavenly Judge. What a different aspect he would exhibit! With what smiles of divine pleasure would his Master receive him at the close of a life spent in the service of his word, and in many benevolences and sufferings for his name sake. Alas, alas! The landlord found himself poor, and naked, and miserable, in the midst of all the desirable things he had heaped up round about himself. 'I must turn,' said he to himself, 'I must necessarily turn, if I desire to avoid the bottomless abyss. The baker's way is the right one, and I must walk in it. But how to get at it? Shall I go to him and beg his instruction? . . .

"He did not answer that question. He walked home in mournful silence. That night no sleep stole over the landlord's eyes.

A few days later the baker held his usual Scripture reading meeting in his little cottage parlour. It was a dark night. The place was crammed, and, as usual, the windows were open. A tall stout person cautiously skulked through the shades of the evening along the wall of the cottage, and kept standing close to the open window. He could perfectly hear every word that was spoken inside. It was the baker's voice. He spoke about the two thieves hanging by the Saviour's side on the cross. He pointed at the stubborn perversity of the human heart as exhibited in the conduct of one of the thieves. He described the wonderful power of God's grace, as exemplified in the contrition and confession of the other. He called the attention of his hearers to the willingness, the readiness, the power of a loving Saviour to save even there where life has been but one continuous series of hatred, blasphemy, and wickedness. 'Now where such a Saviour is ours,' he concluded; 'there, my friends, we have reason to hope that sinners may turn to God still, even though years and tens of years lie behind them like so many fields covered with thistles and thorns. Let us not despair, though we have sinned to plough rocks for the last time. Conversion is not our work, but the Lord's. And now, we have again to plough an old sinner from the gate of hell, as a young one from the entrance of a bad way. Thus let us not cease to hope and to pray for our fellow-sinners in this village. Who can tell but that perhaps many of them will soon turn their faces to Jesus, and say, Lord, remember me! Oh what more is there required but this simple ejaculation rising up from a broken heart to a Redeemer for sinners bruised. We have heard it again, my friends, it can no longer be whispered into Jesus' ears, without at once opening his blessed lips for the joyful answer: To-day, yes, to-day—thou shalt be with me in paradise.'

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that the landlord of the 'Golden Plough,' and Frederic, had turned Methodists. Many a one could not believe it, but soon every doubt was removed when the landlord sold his house and quitted his business. He bought a large house in another part of the village, and built a school-room in his garden, which, at the same time, was fit for holding religious meetings in the evening. Not less astonished were the villagers, when they saw the baker and his family removing to their old quarters, and resuming their former business. Two bakers' shops again were seen opposite, but not opposed to each other. The baker and Frederic entered into partnership, and the two shops belonged to one and the same firm. Most beneficial was the effect which this evidence of the gospel produced upon the population. The baker regularly continued holding his Scripture reading meetings in the landlord's schoolhouse, and the numerous attendance proved that he was gifted with the talent of preparing the spiritual bread as tastefully as the earthly.

"Thus this good man was for a number of years a blessing to the village, and a fertilizing fountain calling forth, under the agency of the Divine Spirit, flowers and fruits to the glory of God, where formerly nothing was seen but a barren wilderness. If now you were to pay a visit to the inhabitants of this place, you would find the Bible in most houses bearing marks of being the family instructor in the morning and the family comforter in the evening. Indeed, you would meet with a happy population ready to listen to a good word and willing to co-operate with their minister, the Rev. Mr. G.—in all that tends towards the spreading of the Gospel among old and young. I need not tell you that it was chiefly through the influence of the baker that Mr. G.—was called to this place, when the old minister took his pension. The two friends were permitted to enjoy each other's company for four years, during which they side by side laboured in the vineyard of their heavenly Master. It is only six weeks since a serious illness cast the baker on his last bed. It was not a sickness, however, but the couch of a triumphant hero rejoicing in the victory he had won under his almighty and faithful Chief Captain, and longing for the glory he was destined for by the side of Him for whom he had lived and laboured and suffered."

"And now, sir," thus concluded the stranger, while we rose from the bench and again approached the simple grave, "you cannot wonder that I have found me at this spot absorbed in a mixture of sadness, admiration and affection, nor can you accuse me of exaggeration, when I say, A good man is buried here; yes, a very good man indeed. There he lies now, resting from his labour, waiting for the day of his resurrection. It is a costly and that is soon here, sir, and when once it breaks through the cloud and rises up at the mighty word of Him who shall call the dead out of their graves, it will be something exceedingly beautiful and glorious that will come out of this dark chamber of death. For was he not already so like his Master in this body out of dust and ashes, how like will he be in that body that will be fashioned like unto the glorious first born of the dead?"

"We still kept standing for a while in solemn silence by the grave, and then walked down the main path to the gate. The stranger here kindly bade me farewell to turn off a footpath that seemed to lead to a large house conspicuous at a distance. 'Pray, sir,' said I, 'forgive my indiscretion. May I ask whose company have I had the privilege of enjoying?'

"My name is Sandring," answered he, but among the villagers I am better known as the old landlord of the 'Golden Plough.' 'Why, you?' I exclaimed, in great and joyful surprise. But he was going so evidently speeding along to escape further questions. I, however, kept looking after him till his tall stout form disappeared in the distance. Then casting a last glimpse at him, I said, 'And you also are a good man; yes, a very good man indeed.'

THE BEGGAR'S COUNTRY.

A wealthy merchant of this country once gave the following account:—As he was standing at his door, a venerable, gray-headed man approached him, and asked alms. He answered him with severity, and demanded why he lived so useless a life. The beggar answered that "age had disabled him for labour, and he had committed himself to the providence of God and the kindness of good people."

The rich man was at this time an infidel. He ordered the old man to depart, at the same time casting some reflections on the providence of God. The venerable beggar descended the steps, and kneeling at the bottom, offered up the following prayer:—"Oh, my gracious God! I thank thee that my bread and water are sure; but I pray thee, in thy intercession above, to remember this man; he hath reflected on thy providence, Father, forgive him! he knows not what he saith."

Thus the present scene ended. The words, "Father, forgive him! he knows not what he saith," constantly rung in the ears of the rich man. He was much disconcerted the following night. The next day, being called on business to a neighbouring town, he overtook the old man on the road. As he afterwards confessed, the sight almost petrified him with guilt and fear. He dismounted, when an interesting conversation ensued. At the close of it, the old man remarked, "Yesterday I was hungry, and called at the door of a rich man. He was angry, and told me he did not believe in the providence of God, and bid me depart; but at the next house I had a plentiful meal; and this, yes! was at the house of a poor woman." The rich man confessed that at this moment he was pierced with a sense of guilt. He then gave some money to the poor man, of whom he never could hear afterwards; yet the sound of these words being impressed on his mind by the last interview, "He knows not what he saith," never left him till he was brought to Christian repentance.

BLASPHEMY SUDDENLY PUNISHED.—In one of the southern towns of Vermont a man was engaged with others in washing sheep. He was so profane that his companions felt as if they could hardly continue to work in his company.

Presently he seized a sheep and baptized it in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Immediately he relaxed his hold upon the animal, gazed around him as if he did not know where he was or what he had done, fell back into the water, and before the other men could rescue him, was drowned.

Men must pray or perish.

"BE YE ALSO READY."

Matt. xxiv. 44.

Henry D.—was a servant in the farmhouse on the outskirts of my parish, and as the church of the adjoining parish was nearer to his master's farm than my own, he always attended the services there. For this reason—and because he was a servant living in his master's house, I knew very little of him. He was a fine powerful young man, his life had been steady and regular. He had been an excellent servant, and was a great favourite with his master and mistress. He had excellent health; but inflammation seized him. He was ill six days, and now his soul is before God.

To-day is Monday. It was only on Friday morning that I heard of his illness, and of course before the day closed I visited him. On that day and on Saturday, he seemed to take very little interest in what I said to him. Oh that I had pressed the subject more, that I had been even more importunate with him! On Saturday there was some apprehension of danger, but I was requested not to tell him, as the medical man feared that it might have an unfavorable effect upon the disease. I remonstrated, but to no purpose; and I left a message that I hoped the medical man who was expected that evening again, would tell him.

On Sunday I walked round to see him after my services, and found him better. There was hope that he would recover. There was a change also in his manner. I wished to know where the verses I had read to him were to be found; he joined heartily in the prayers I offered up; I felt especially on one verse I had read, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new;" and said "amen" to the petition that he might become such a new creature.

You will not wonder that I now dwell on these things. The end was close at hand, closer than I then thought; for this, of which I am speaking, was only yesterday, and I am writing in the early morning of Monday. I had intended to see him by nine o'clock to-day, but I was to see him before that time. This morning, at early dawn I was awoken by a request to go and see poor Henry. I at once feared the worst. I arose, and in a very few moments was on my way to the farm. The village was quiet, its inhabitants for the most part being wrapped in slumber. The busy smith, the stroke of whose hammer early and late has often been a reproach to me, was not astir. The birds were awake and glad in the early March morning. How weak I felt! how ignorant! how completely dependent upon God's Spirit!

Arrived at the house, all the usual signs of sickness and watching are apparent at once. Henry, I learn is much worse; they are applying a blister, and I must wait a few moments. In the interval, I call in the master and the fellow-servant of the dying man, that we may pray for him. As we rise from our knees, Henry's uncle, who had arrived last night, enters the room; he has been trying, he says, to arrange about his temporal affairs, but can get no definite answer. He thinks that Henry will tell me his wishes. I say, I try to induce him to attend to them. They have had all night to arrange about the few clothes, the watch, and arrears of wages; I may have only a few minutes to speak about the soul. Then I ask, Has any one told him his danger since the unfavourable change took place? Can he be believed, he has not yet been told? "O God, and he so near thy judgment!" I go up stairs; he knows me, and grasps my hand. Tenderly I tell him that he cannot live. My heart is full. I beseech him to give me all his attention. He takes some ice to cool his mouth; he has forgotten God, and that poor weak body, with that fevered brain, with that wandering attention. Is this condition in which to transact the business of eternity. But he is "ready." Every moment is precious. His mind may wander again directly.

"Henry," I remark to him, "I want you just to think of two things—your sin and your Saviour; put all else away except just those two things. Your sin great—in thought, word, and deed. Conscience will tell you. Try to recollect. You have been sinning since you knew right from wrong; you have forgotten God, refined his invitations, often transgressed against him; your sins in his sight cry against you for judgment; they are a fearful load, and will press you down to hell."

Here was a sermon, upon the receiving of which (humanly speaking) depended his soul's salvation; and yet it had to be compressed into two or three minutes, and that great truth of man's sin to be stated in a few broken words!

And then the Saviour ready to save him—dying to save the lost—willing to receive all who come to him—a perfect, all-powerful, loving Saviour, blotting out as a thick cloud transgressions. Oh, what a message is this to take to a dying man! What other message could suit such a one that, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts xvi. 31.)

How thankful we are at such times for the blessed truth of the salvation of the penitent thief—for those words, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah i. 18). He repeats those words, and seems to grasp at them as silted to his case. He takes hold thankfully of the hymn, "Rock of ages, cleft for me," and repeats it after me. "Do you repent of your sins, Henry?" "I do." "Do you believe that Jesus takes your sins away?" "I do." Oh! how the minister's soul clings to a straw in such a case. My reason and experience confess these expressions at such a time to be but straws; and yet I cling to them. They are all that I have.

Then the poor fevered brain wanders again. He rises up, and then throws himself down upon his pillow, crying, "It is all darkness." Poor that the windows of the body are growing dim and dark! Or is it that the soul is looking out upon the vast ocean of futurity, and can see nothing but thick darkness and a horrible tempest? Oh, how thick and murky dark it must be at such an hour to every soul that has not the eye of faith, to see Jesus, and the pearly gates of the heavenly Jerusalem to which he is conducting it! "It is all darkness," he cries, as he threw himself down on his pillow. He never stirred again.

By his side I sit, holding his hand in mine, speaking to him though he does not answer, pointing out the way to that poor blind soul,—knowing not what the soul is about, or what consciousness there still may be, but still pointing to Christ, the only refuge, seeking to show the way which is so

narrow, and to make it plain and easy, if I may, to this poor soul, after whom the avenger of blood is fast pressing. Is the soul hastening? Does it see the way? Is it faintly pressing on? Is it received within the refuge? Is it safe? Is it acting faith on Christ now, while the body is too weak to express it? I cannot tell. He does not answer my questions.

Still I continue. Text after text, slowly, solemnly, prayerfully, crying for help, I repeat; and then, "Do you hear me, Henry?" After an interval faintly comes the answer, "I hear." He hears; I thank God. The word of God is powerful. That is my hope, even against hope. Again the precious words of Scripture—again questions—no answer. The soul is looking closely at eternity now; no leisure to attend to me—no strength. The senses no longer do their office. Still, for the life's sake, I continue repeating the words of God:—a last moment may return.

Then we kneel and commend him to God, and cry aloud for him, pleading the merits of the sinner's Saviour.

We rise, and I bid the uncle take my place. The eyes are fixed; there is no pulse. "It is all over," said the uncle. He has passed away without a struggle.

"All over!" Far from it; rather all begun. New scenes are opening now upon that soul which has just escaped so silently from the body. What scenes they are—whether light or dark, whether full of joy or agony—I cannot tell. What messengers came to take him hence—whether the ministers of God's awful justice, or the angels of mercy—I know not. I only know that the soul which has just escaped from that body lying before me is now gone before God, to render its account of the deeds done in the body. Did it close, by faith, with Christ's offer of mercy before it left the body? That is the question now—a question which cannot be answered till I myself stand before the same great throne.

All is not over; a larger, longer life has begun, which can never end. Is it for this soul truly life, even life eternal? Or is it that living death, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched?" Reader, may these thoughts sink into your heart and mine. We may be nearer death and judgment than we think we are. The veil that separates time from eternity is very thin, and we may break through it when we least expect it. The moment we do so, a wondrous light will be thrown on all the things of time. How different will they seem to us to what they seem now! Even the minister does not truly realize the vast importance of his work, or the worth of the soul. But the moment we break through that veil we shall see and know it all. Then, if you be not in Christ, what misery will await you—what remorse! How you will hate yourself for throwing away eternal joys, and for laying up for yourself a treasury of wrath which shall never be exhausted.

Don't put off repentance and turning to God. You are not stronger than Henry E.—. Your life is not more secure. Your sickness may be as short as his—your death may come more suddenly. Even if, on your death-bed, you profess repentance and conversion, how untrustworthy these professions are at such a time! What hope will your friends be able to entertain? What reasonable hope have I of my poor parishioner? But the bodily life is over, and I turn to leave the room. "Be ye also ready," are my words; for at such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Going down stairs, I see in the kitchen the companion of this poor man. I tell him that he is gone, and I beseech him to give his heart to Christ. "I will," he said, sobbing. Will he? It must be my part often to remind of his promise and of his feelings at that time.

And now I pass out in the open air. It is still early; but what a solemn scene has this day already witnessed! The men are going to their work. The world does not stop though a soul has just departed. How true it is that in the midst of death we are in life, as well as that "in the midst of life we are in death." The activity, the common work, for the moment jars upon my feelings. I speak to the men as I pass. I tell them that the soul is flown; I press upon them the concerns of eternity. And then I come home to pray for myself and for those that remain, and to make this record, that I may be stirred up to remind in time to come. And may the Holy Spirit impress on every reader the solemn warning of the Saviour's words, "Be ye also ready!"

INFLUENCE OF A MOTHER'S LOVE.—The Rev. Thomas Binney, when preaching a funeral sermon for Mr. Birrel, who died while a student for the ministry, mentioned a striking fact in connection with his early career, previous to his conversion;—"What a mysterious thing," said Mr. Binney, as he related the fact, "what a mysterious, magical, divine thing is a mother's love! How it nestles about the heart, and goes with the man, and speaks to him pure words, and is like a guardian angel!"

This young man could never take any money that came to him from his mother and spend that upon a Sunday excursion or a treat to a theatre. It was a sacred thing with him; it had the impression and the inscription of his mother's image, and his mother's purity, and his mother's piety, and his mother's love. It was a sacred thing to him; and those things that he felt to be questionable, or felt to be sinful, were always to be provided for by other sources, and by money that came to him from other hands. O! there is the poetry of the heart, the poetry of our home and domestic affections, the poetry of the religion of the heart, and the altar, about that little incident; and it strikes me as being perfectly beautiful."

GOD BLESS MY MOTHER.—A chaplain in the navy writes: Not many nights ago the whole meeting was moved as the heart of one man by a noble-looking youth of eighteen, who in the midst of his broken-hearted prayer, burst forth in the earnest supplication: "O God, bless my dear mother! I thank thee thou hast heard her many prayers, and that I, so long the object of her love, have at last become the subject of thy grace!"

At the last night the feelings of every one present were again moved in like manner, by the testimony of a sailor in middle life, given with sobs and tears, to the blessed influence of a mother's prayers, in restraining a wayward son from sin, and in bringing him at length by the grace of God, to the hope of salvation.

Let the praying mother whose prayers seem not yet to be answered, take courage and exercise new faith in reference to the son of her love, from such proofs that praying breath is not spent in vain.

TESTIMONY OF INFIDELS TO CHRISTIANITY.

I.—BY LORD BOLINGBROKE.

"Supposing Christianity to have been a human invention, it has been the most amiable and the most useful invention that was ever imposed on mankind for their good."

"The Gospel is in all cases one continued lesson of the strictest morality, of justice, of benevolence, and of universal charity."

"Christianity was taught of God. Its simplicity and plainness show that it was designed to be the religion of mankind, and manifest likewise the divinity of its origin."

II.—EDWARD LORD HERBERT OF CHERRBURY.

"Christianity is the best religion."

III.—THOMAS ROBBES.

"Though the laws of Nature be not laws as they proceed from Nature, yet, as they are given by God in Holy Scripture, they are powerfully called laws; for the Holy Scripture is the voice of God, ruling all things by the greatest right."

IV.—DR. MORGAN.

"They who judge uprightly of the strength of human reason, in matters of morality and religion, under the present corrupt and degenerate state of mankind, ought to take their estimate from those parts of the world which never had the benefit of revelation; and this, perhaps, might make them less concerned of themselves, and more thankful to God for the light of the Gospel."

V.—DR. TINDAL.

"Christianity is the external revelation of the unchangeable will of God."

VI.—MR. CHUBB.

"If such power attended Jesus Christ in the exercise of his ministry as the history sets forth, then, seeing his ministry and the power that attended it, at least in general, to have terminated in the public good, it was more likely that God was the primary agent in the exercise of that power than any other invisible being."