

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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A FAREWELL SERMON

PREACHED BY THE REV. CHARLES P. PITBLADO,

At Milton Church, Yarmouth, N. S., July, 1863.

The spirit of just men made perfect.—Hebrews xii. 22.

Mind nothing but "highly refined matter."

Nonsense! The one who says so must surely be

either an idiot or a knave. Can matter see?

Poets may sing of the bright eyes of the sun, but

the sun never saw the hill it bathes in light, nor

the roses it kisses into blushing beauty. The

ocean never saw the fish that sports in its wave,

nor the vessel that hangs on its writhing bow.

The bright old stars saw no ark on the flood, no

tent in the wilderness, no cross on the hill, or

grave in the garden. Can matter hear? The rill

may sing sweet songs, but the daisy on its banks

hears no music. The cat may leap and dash

down the rocky mountain, but the mountain

hears no noise and no crash. The tempest may

maden on the deep, but the sea hears not the

trappings of the storm. Thunder may roar among

bending skies, but the firmament hears no

sound. Can matter think? Nor rolling planet,

nor blazing sun, nor majestic furies in the deep

know their age; nor bird in the bower, nor eagle

on the rock, nor gorilla in the wild; nor tiger in

the thicket, by the river, can study the beauties

and sublimities of nature around. Poetry can en-

rapure the man, but the brute can read it not. Can

matter love? The famed statues of Greece never

fell in love with each other. The diamonds of

the mines and the pearls of the main, did they

ever fall in love, although wrought into the same

coronet, or set into the same silken diadem? The

poet may bid the flower woo the balmy zephyr, and

the brook woo the sunbeam, but the philosopher

smiles.

Now, although matter cannot see, hear, think,

love, yet mind can do all; therefore we conclude

that mind cannot be matter, and that Volney must

have been raving when he said that "the soul is

but the vital principle of matter." Can that

reasoning principle which has constructed a tele-

scope highway among the stars, and revealed a

microscopic world in a dew drop; can that

microscopic of the Infinite, that God-head

of humanity, which reflects the eternal as the

well-spring reflects the star-powdered heavens, be

nothing but matter refined? Down with such an

absurdity! Crush such a notion! Then, what is

mind? It is spirit. Yes, but what is spirit? It is

immaterial. Yes, but what is immaterial? The

philosophy of the sage runs wild, and loses

itself when trying to define immateriality. But

although spirit cannot be defined, yet, in contradic-

tion to matter, it may be described, as an

uncompounded entity; as changeless in its essence,

as eternal, identical; as possessed of a consci-

ous and an unlimited progression; as possessed

of a power to study itself and read the lessons that

are shining upon creation's brow, and carved upon

its bosom; as possessed of a self-acting attribute,

and as having a tendency and capacity for worship.

But why should we linger, seeing that this

audience believes mind, or spirit, to be altogether

distinct from matter, and that it is no subtle

mechanism of material existence, no principle

which results from matter, but that it is, in short,

a miniature portrait of God? It is not with spirit

in general with which we have now to do, but

with spirits. The Bible tells us of different kinds

of spirits, one of which it calls, in the language

of text, "the spirits of just men made perfect."

Now, the spirits of the departed, just or righte-

ous have gone to a state of moral perfection and

glorious glory; have gone to inhabit "spiritual

bodies" of what mould or likeness, who can tell?

But the bodies whose countenances were seen in

our homes, and whose tread was heard on our

streets, are left behind. The sepulchre of genera-

tions is with us to-day. The marble stone gleam-

ing in the sun, and the green mould scattered

over the world, proclaim to us where our fore-

fathers were laid to crumble. Their bodies are

useful in the world still. God is using the dust of

or Homer, but in this dear old book is the immor-

tality of the soul established. The Christian

receives the doctrine of immortality not as a tradi-

tion from any nation. He gathers it not from the

Sages of Persia, or the Hermes of Egypt; not from

the wild tribes of Kalmea Tary, or the untutored

African on Guinea's coast; not from the Druids

of ancient Britain and Gaul, or the roving Indians

in the forests of the West; not from the priests of

Romanism, or the ministers of Protestantism, but

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and sounded along the streets of the Hebrew metrop-

olis, all showing that the theory of a sleeping soul

is a mere human figment. But we only shouted

you of the flowing joy which we had seen, when

nearing the banks of the river, "To die is

gain," because he knew that to be "absent from

the body was to be present with the Lord."

III. "The spirits of just men made perfect" are

actively employed to-day.

The body cannot act without the soul, any more

than the ship can sail without the wind, or the

engine move without the steam; but the soul can

act without the body as well as a man can act

without his coat, or a steed gallop and prance

without the harness, or the dog run without the

chain. The soul is essentially an energetic thing;

no chain can bind it, no dungeon confine it. The

spirit of departed believers are more energetic

now than ever. No clog now on the dazzling

wheels of their progress; no barrier now stands

in the path of their duty. "They rest not day

and night." They never tire. They grow strong

and young with years and work. They love their

employ; it is their delight. They are gardeners

in the upper gardens of God, among the flowers

of truth, where new flowers are ever springing,

and the old flowers are ever blooming with new

beauties. They love the work; it has no toil

and sweat and dust. They are mariners upon the

sea of glory, where the winds of truth are ever

blowing, and the waves of glory are ever rising

and falling into self-inflicted and reckless ruin.

Death and judgment will fearfully surprise alike

the nominal Christian and the openly profane.

Prepare, then, for the solemn hour of darkness

and judgment, as it comes nearer and nearer still;

and flee without delay to the shelter to which the

gospel points. The mercy of God is ready to in-

clude you within its ample embrace. The sacrifice,

intercession, and grace of the divine Redeemer

are offered to you as the appointed and only way

in which mercy can be found. The Spirit of God

waits to enlighten your mind to a sense of your

need, and you may seek his light and life in humble

prayer.

Believe, and live. Look to Christ with a simple

faith in his precious blood to take away your sins,

and in his merits and righteousness, through which

alone you can be saved and justified. Penitently

confess your sin, and forsake it. Let the grace of

God shine in your life by a loving obedience to his

will. Watch and prepare for the day of the Lord,

that "when he shall come to be glorified in his

saints, and to be admired in all them that believe,"

(2 Thess. 1, 10); you may be among the blessed

throng, and enter into his joy.

"NOT IN VAIN."

"My first sermon," said a pastor, "what a

vivid recollection I have of it! A ministerial

acquaintance with me to spend the Sabbath from

home, had invited me to go with him. On arriv-

ing, he said:—

"I shall depend on you to preach half the day."

The afternoon was left for me. There was a

heavy rain, and few ventured out, for which I felt

more and more thankful as the service advanced.

My discourse, partly written and partly extem-

porized, sounded to my own ears like the "foolishness

of preaching," indeed.

Some years afterwards, while settled over a

congregation in a distant part of the country, an

acute bilious attack laid me by for a few weeks

from the labours of the pastorate. One day,

while lying dejected on the sick bed, a stranger

visited me. He was also a pastor, residing some

twenty miles away. After some pleasant pre-

liminary words, he said:

"I have come on as an errand to you. It is a

message entrusted to me by a friend, whom you

remember spending a Sabbath in his house, some

years ago, in company with Rev. Mr. F."

"I do," said I, while a quick flush passed over

my face.

"Do you recollect what a great rain there was,

and how this attendance?"

"I could not forget it if I would."

"Well," said he, "I was pastor of that church

then, and you were here. I was sent for to converse

with a lady about to be married. She was ready for

the messenger. 'But,' said she, 'I have a special

request to make of you; then, referring to your

sermon, at that time, as being wonderfully blunt

to her, she added, 'I fear he went away discour-

aged; and I want you to tell him how God sent

home that discourse to my soul, that he may

know that his labour was not in vain in the