

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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(From Zion's Herald.)

THE MORAL POWER OF THE CHURCH.

It is conceded, that when Christ founded his church to evangelize and save this fallen world, he endowed it with power sufficient for such a result. Yet it is a question whether the general church itself is fully informed as to the nature and method of that moral power. The moral power of the church is its strength and efficiency in promoting the religious life of men from the death of sin—nothing less—nothing more. It is derived directly from Christ, the "Living Stone" on which the church is founded, imparting strength and power to all the building; so the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. "I am the vine," says Christ, "Ye are the branches. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in me, neither can ye, except ye abide in me." Cut off or disconnected from him, we have no life, no strength, no power, no fruit. If that life of Christ in the heart of a man, or in the heart of the church, is not attained, or dies out, no matter what is left, there is no spiritual power. There may be the power of numbers, the power of learning, wealth and influence, resulting in external church prosperity; such as fine churches, learned and eloquent ministers, with general defence of the world toward religion; but yet without one particle of moral power. If there are no converted souls and living Christians in such a church, its influence will be that of a dead weight, and will do nothing but drag down the souls of those who are connected with it. Here lies the fatal blunder of false, yet gifted humanity, as it struggles to build up the kingdom of Christ, by attention only to its external prosperity.

The beginnings of this power on earth, in the church, are Christ formed in the heart, and the life of God in the soul, attained in the regeneration of the heart. This divine power is retained by religious faithfulness; a growth in grace, and advancing holiness; or it is not retained at all. If that light in you be darkness, how great is that darkness? The lack of moral power in the modern church, we judge, is not so much from the reception of unconverted members, as from the declining and dying out of its once living converts. Why is it, we ask, that such fearful proportions of church members, grown less and less noticeable as spiritual members, rather than as they might and should abound more and more in spirituality? This is our answer: It is because that young and spiritual life is not nursed to growth by the proper aliment! The proper habits of Christian life, to cultivate such religious advancements, are not usually established with converts and carried forward. Non-action is ruin to a living piety. The first and strong impulse of a converted soul is, to speak of its new hopes and joys; not privately to some select friend only, but everywhere there is opportunity. Doing so, such a convert becomes strong, and puts forth a great moral power. Not doing so, he becomes weak—short of power. Refusing to let his light shine, it goes out, and becomes darkness. This is an invariable law of the Christian life. And what is true of the individual, is also true of the whole church. This is the method by which the church attains and uses its moral power or fails of it.

We hold that the aggressive power of the church in promoting revivals, is just in proportion as it is a witnessing, truth telling church, of its own inner spiritual life and experiences. We do not now speak of church enterprises, Christian benevolence, nor even of Christian morality; these are appendages which always accompany spiritual life, but are not in any sense a substitute for that life and its outward development. Nothing can take the place of it. God's method of saving men is *revelation*—making known spiritual truth. The revelation of his word, his Spirit and Christian experience, most people feel at perfect liberty to conceal. Then moral power is lost!

Social meetings afford the church the opportunity of telling what great things the Lord hath done for them; thus at once creating and giving great moral power. A hundred Christian men and women of blameless life, bearing testimony before the people, in few and significant words of what they know and feel concerning the power of Christ in pardoning and cleansing from sin, wield far greater religious power than a thousand persons loaded with wealth, learning and worldly influence, yet minus this simple, truthful story of the cross. You may crowd your Trinites and St. Peters with such unspiritual worshippers as these, with all the imposing and heartless ceremonies there overshadowing the weightier matters of the law, and they will not convert one sinner from the error of his way, nor save one soul from death. That is only a worldly power, which converts no souls.

The history of the church from its beginning till now, shows that as its worldly power has increased, the spiritual has declined. This is not a necessary but a natural result. When Christianity became powerful in the Roman empire, the Emperor himself embracing it, building churches, and endowing the clergy, and suppressing all persecution of the Christians, then rapidly declined spiritual power, and revivals of religion were soon unknown. Then began an empty, formal worship, and Romanism and the dark ages followed. Something analogous to this can be traced in the history of nearly every branch of the church since the Reformation under Luther, in the sixteenth century. The same is true of individuals. Notice how churches and individual Christians, in their early Christian experience, are simple-hearted, earnest, bold and outspoken in their utterances for Christ, and the variety of religion. Then and thus they exercise powerful religious influences, and revivals are the results. But just as soon as numbers, wealth and influence come to these churches and individuals by reason of their early moral power and the prosperity it secured them, then almost invariably spiritual power has given place to worldly power—then coldness, formality, pride and backsliding occur.

Is not this the condition of large portions of all the churches in our country, at this hour, including our own? What proportion of enrolled church members are now living, active, and powerful Christians. How bold and outspoken were their utterances for Christ, and the variety of religion, that they knew Jesus Christ, or who he is! They stand without along with the enemies of Jesus, while he is on trial at the tribunal of worldly power! They have nothing to say in his defence, nor against the sacrifice! Neither do they, more than one of old, like to be questioned about it. With the present driftings of the churches,

their future is not hopeful. Little power but the worldly is shown in them; and revivals seem to be less frequent, and less powerful, while churches and nominal Christians are increasing. The fault is primarily with the pastors, we judge, generally, who fall through a lack of perception or energy, to teach, practice, and insist upon those early religious habits which converts and young Christians, which alone keep alive and carry forward spiritual life and power. Most pastors seem to endorse the present growing state of things in the churches. When they show no alarm, no faithful dealing, when all the crosses are laid aside, so far as spirituality in religion is concerned, the sleep of moral death will rapidly steal upon their flocks! And not long hence, some Luther, Whitefield, or Wesley will be needed to break in upon our dead orthodoxy. A witnessing church is the demand of this hour, to hasten the conversion of the world and save our holy religion from becoming fossilized in a pompous formula, and dead liturgy, abounding in nothing but its mind, noise and cunning.

(From the Examiner and Chronicle.)

HOURS ALONE.

BROTHER HARTMAN'S SECOND EVENING.

If I hadn't promised to come here and talk with my soul this evening, I'm afraid that I should not have come; for after tea and the talk at my boarding-house, I felt more like going out for the evening with a friend. I suppose it was the effect of a sinful habit, of waiting to feel like doing duty, that made it so hard for me to come here from a sense of obligation merely; but after all, now that I am here, I am glad of it.

What an astonishing thing my heart is! Last night, as I sat meditating by poor Mr. D., after that hour of self-examination here, I thought how bravely I would fight to-day; and as my heart was all aglow with the old love to Christ and the soldier spirit, I felt that I could meet and conquer my old temptations; and yet by noon to-day I was nearly as apathetic and powerless as ever. But the merciful Saviour gave me strength just then to keep a promise, and in secret prayer the resolve came. "Well, I will serve to-day without feeling, if I must; and persevere till a proper feeling comes." With the help of that resolution, I have come up here this evening, and already my heart is more tender and grateful for the strength given. So it is: I am always resolving, and like Peter, often failing when trial comes, and yet never giving up the struggle utterly; and this reminds me of father Givall's second question. It was this:—

"What is the trouble with my religion? or why don't I live as I promised God at first that I would live?"

I find that the spirit of this question has been fitting through my thoughts for months, though I haven't met it fairly; indeed, I can see now that as often as it has come before me, I have thrust it away as an unwelcome visitor. How I have tried to make true with my conscience—I, who have promised to live by it in all things, to honor God as my Father, to obey Christ as my King, and to love him as my best friend! How I have shut my ears to his wishes and commands, acting on my own impulses, without inquiring whether I should please him or not—weakly shunning the issue, though I knew that all the time broken promises were fast gathering against my name on the great record, and that the summing-up time would come "there, if not here!"

Ah, how merciful, my Saviour, how long-suffering! I find that I have put these thoughts like a great moral power. Not doing so, he becomes weak—short of power. Refusing to let his light shine, it goes out, and becomes darkness. This is an invariable law of the Christian life. And what is true of the individual, is also true of the whole church. This is the method by which the church attains and uses its moral power or fails of it.

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reproach me. Here I must own that I have little, if any piety—that I have borne no fruit to thy glory!

Alas, what bitter work does the hour of long-neglected self-examination and repentance bring! Here I find out, at last, the bane of my spiritual life; here I see the folly and presumption in me which have prayed for strength when unwilling to use that already given—the wrong, the hypocrisy, of asking God's grace to control me, when I would exercise no self-control. I have prayed, "Lead us not into temptation," and yet, when I know how susceptible my heart was to every worldly influence—that its own promptings, even, were too strong for resistance—I have added power to them, shutting my eyes to everything save my own pride and gratification, by going deliberately into places and society where all worldly and no spiritual influences prevail; and this when I knew that, so far as I can do so, it is my duty to answer my own prayers. Here is the trouble: I have no Christian self-control, and so no consecration to Christ. God help me, in my weakness!

But there's to be a young man's prayer-meeting to-night, and I will go—there putting myself in the way of help. Perhaps there I shall find strength to answer Father Givall's third question. May it be so!

MOHAMMEDANISM.

The following interesting account is from an article by Professor Porter in the *Family Treasury*. The writer has spent nine years among the Mohammedans.

Next to Christianity, Mohammedanism is more widely diffused than any religion in the world. It extends in an unbroken line from the shores of the Atlantic to the wall of China. Two hundred millions of the human race, or about one-sixth of the population of the globe are Mohammedans, and more than twenty millions of these are subjects of Queen Victoria. Truth and fiction are combined in Mohammedanism as they are in no other system. The loftiest conception of the Divine unity and essence are linked to a moral code not only degrading but repulsive. The system, viewed as a whole, is an outrage on reason and common sense. The prayer of Islam is cold, heartless, meaningless; its deepest piety is the grossest and most abandoned profligacy. It is fierce, intolerant, vindictive. To renounce it, to speak, write, or act against it, to question the mission of its prophet, is death. It will listen to no argument, tolerate no liberty of thought. The Koran, slavery, or the sword the only alternatives which a dominant Mohammedanism offers to mankind.

Mohammed was born in Mecca in the year A. D. 571. His youth was passed in poverty and dependence, but his marriage with a rich widow released him from the necessity of toil. The evils of idolatry attracted his attention, and he resolved to become a reformer. He assumed that air of mysterious abstraction which has ever been attractive to the imaginative Arab, and practised those ostentatious virtues which were calculated to raise him in the estimation of his countrymen. He was humble in demeanor, sparing in food, fascinating in manner, and liberal to profusion. At the age of thirty-eight he began to retire at intervals for days together to a mountain cave, ostensibly to receive celestial messengers, but really to instruct his disciples—a Persian Jew and a Syrian monk—in writing the Koran. This work has been far too highly estimated. In reality, it is but a string of silly fables and common-place sentiments, relieved by a few beautiful pictures of the Divine perfection and attributes, taken from the Bible.

The creed of the Mohammedan, epitomized, is, "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the apostle of God." The doctrines of Islam are contained in the Koran, and are fully developed by orthodox commentators. The following are some of their articles of belief:—"The angels have four chiefs,—Gabriel the Angel of Revelation; Michael, the Angel of the Jews; Azrael, the Angel of Death; and Israfil, the Angel of the Resurrection. The devil is the chief of fallen angels. The *Jinn* or *Genii* are semi-spiritual beings, some good and some bad. The Koran is the last revelation from God, and the only one which is not so corrupted as to be unworthy of credit. The day of Judgment will be of extraordinary length, some say one thousand, other fifty thousand years. During this period, all creatures—men, genii, and beasts—must stand looking up to heaven. The good and bad deeds of every man will be put into the opposite scales of a balance. If the good predominate, Paradise is the reward; if the bad, *Jehannam*. When men are judged, an opportunity will be given to the beasts of setting off quarrels in an tremendous fight, in which the weak will triumph over their former oppressors. After this, an angel will breathe upon them, and dissolve them all into dust, with two distinguished exceptions,—Eve and Adam, and the dog of the seven sleepers. When all is over, some authorities tell us, Mohammed will make a triumphant entry into Paradise, mounted on the ass and leading the dog.

The Mohammedan mode of reckoning a man's good and bad deeds is somewhat singular. Attached to every individual are two recording angels, one to note the good deeds, the other, the bad. The former has authority over the latter, and stands at the man's right hand. When a good deed is done, the angel on the right hand notes it, and multiplies it by ten. When a bad deed is done, he says to the other, "Write it not for seven hours, peradventure he shall pray, or ask pardon, or make atonement." If, during the hours of grace, he prays, or repents, or gives alms, not only is the sin remitted, but the prayer, penitence, or alms goes to the credit side, and is recorded ten times. Beside all this, no Mohammedan, whatever his character, can be doomed to eternal punishment.

The doctrine of predestination, "perverted by Mohammed into a blind, irrational fatalism, became a powerful instrument in the establishment of Islam. It stimulated the faithful to fight fearlessly and recklessly, because nothing that they could delay or hasten by a second moment of death, and Paradise was the certain reward of all who died fighting for the faith, while hell was the inevitable punishment of the coward.

Islam enjoins four great rites,—prayer, alms, fasting, and the Haj. The Muslim prays five times a day. Before each prayer he must perform his ablutions, but if water cannot be procured, sand or dust will serve the purpose. Ramadan is the great and only fast of the Mohammedans. For a lunar month each year they are required to abstain from meat, drink, and all sensual enjoyments,

from dawn to sunset every day. They therefore reverse the order of nature, enjoying themselves all night, and sleeping during the day. The Haj or pilgrimage to Mecca, though enjoined in the Koran, is not thought much of by the Muslims. Its effects on the character of those who perform it are pretty accurately indicated by a saying current in the East: "If a man has been once at Mecca, watch him; if twice, fear him; if three times, avoid him as you would Satan."

The time has fully come, Professor Porter thinks, for the Christian statesmen of England to study with care the many centuries exercised a baneful influence on some of the fairest countries of the world. History shows only too plainly its effect on individuals, on society, on nations. It trains men to injustice, intolerance, nativity, and bloodshed. It prevents all improvement, it forbids all reform. The same great principles which made Britain what it is, can make India like Britain. Until those principles are instilled into the people of India, there can be no thorough social reform, no true national progress. All that we have owe to Christianity, and Christianity alone can regenerate the Indian empire.

FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP.

JOHN THORNTON.

More than a century and a half ago—when the wealth of London was petty and its merchants were few, and the South Sea bubble had burst, and the West Indies was trading, and a single factory held the traffic to the East Indies—in an old mansion, hard by the Clapham Common, now gilt with small villas, then bare, and compassed with a few ordinary houses, lived Robert Thornton, a London merchant. In his house, on the 1st of April, 1720, was born to him a son, whom he named John. Their business was in the Russian trade, then an important branch, cultivated by considerable mercantile houses in London and Hull. John Thornton, when he grew to man's estate, continued the traditions of his house, and raised the family fortunes. He was in business as an active merchant, keen in watching opportunities, and skillful in using them. Eminent for other qualities, he never lost the practical eye of the merchant, and his watchful observation. In one of his tours in Ireland, undertaken late in life, to recruit, as was his habit, his strength, and also to furnish a holiday at his own cost to hard-worked ministers of the Gospel whom he took with him, he showed the habits which peculiarly characterized him. Walking out in the early morning at Cork, he turned down to the harbor, where a number of vessels, laden with tallow, had just come in. A few questions, addressed by him to the persons connected with them, put him in possession of the facts, and by a stroke of his pen he cleared a handsome profit, more than enough to cover the cost of his tour. From the harbour he and his friend strolled into a nursery-garden, where they fell in with his humble proprietor. The poor man was in great perplexity, sore hampered for want of capital. Mr. Thornton talked to him, ascertained his circumstances, inquired into his character; and being satisfied by, by another stroke of his pen, he turned down to the harbor, where a number of vessels, laden with tallow, had just come in. A few questions, addressed by him to the persons connected with them, put him in possession of the facts, and by a stroke of his pen he cleared a handsome profit, more than enough to cover the cost of his tour. From the harbour he and his friend strolled into a nursery-garden, where they fell in with his humble proprietor. The poor man was in great perplexity, sore hampered for want of capital. Mr. Thornton talked to him, ascertained his circumstances, inquired into his character; and being satisfied by, by another stroke of his pen, he turned down to the harbor, where a number of vessels, laden with tallow, had just come in. 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