

The Religious Intelligencer.

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

Rev. J. McLEOD,

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

Peter.

[Editor and Proprietor.]

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SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1870.

Whole No. 871.

SPRING, 1870.

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30 CASES AND BALES OF

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Cotton and Linen Goods,

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THOMAS LOGAN,

Fredericton, June 3, 1870.

The Intelligencer.

COINCIDENCES.

Causes are often hidden from our view. We cannot with confidence speak of the connection of events. The real cause may be a secret to be fathomed by no human eye. But we can at least mark coincidences, and thus prepare ourselves for the study of causes. Much that happens in the history of individuals and nations appears to us as accidental. Yet there is nothing surer than that there is no room for accident in this universe. The doctrine of an overruling Providence is at once rational and scriptural. Deny it, ignore it, and you lose a key to the mystery of existence.

It was a striking coincidence that the veteran statesman, Lord Clarendon, was removed by death just before the trouble broke out between France and Prussia. Lord Clarendon was thoroughly acquainted with continental politics, and his influence was very great. Lord Palmerston and Lord Clarendon could manage the French Emperor better than any others. Earl Granville is a man of much ability, and he did his part in the present trouble in a manner that excited the admiration even of his political opponents; but it is no disrespect to him to suppose that Lord Clarendon might have succeeded where the younger and less experienced man has failed.

Then, again, it was at least a startling coincidence that the dogma of the Papal Infallibility was no sooner "defined" than this war burst upon the astonished world. When Lord Granville entered upon his work as Foreign Minister, Mr. Hammond, the permanent Under Secretary, congratulated him on the peaceful state of Europe. He said that the prospects of peace had not looked brighter at any time for the past twenty-five years! But that bright prospect was speedily clouded over, and all the efforts of the statesmen of Europe have failed to bring order out of confusion, and peace out of war.

It was a significant coincidence that when the Pope sat on his throne investing himself with one of the attributes of Godhead, the clouds lowered, the lightning flashed angrily, and the thunder burst in dreadful peals around St. Peter's cathedral. Was this a mere coincidence?

We thus see the thunders of the summer sky and the infinitely more dreadful thunder of war coinciding in point of time with the promulgation by the so-called Catholic Church of a new and impious dogma which claims infallibility for a sinful mortal. For twenty-two years the French have supported the political sway of the Pope. Once and again they fought his battles and steadied his tottering throne. Is it a mere coincidence that France is now the scene of unexampled warfare, that her government is disorganized, her armies annihilated, her cities captured, her harvest fields trampled under alien feet? It is noteworthy, too, that all this is the work of the German nation, the people who listened to the Message sent from God by the mouths of Luther and Calvin and their fellow Reformers.

It is one of the great facts which history will note and which the future will explain, that the "most Catholic" Emperor has been defeated and overthrown by the Calvinistic King. It is the old story. William of Orange triumphed over his innumerable foes, for he was the representative of the strong young thought of Europe at the time. He led on the right side of politics and in religion. And now William of Hohenzollern is doing similar work, and meeting with similar success.

Is it a mere coincidence that the families and powers in Europe which rejected the Reformation have been eclipsed, and in a sense overthrown; while those who accepted the Reformation have been established? The Bourbons have gone to the shades to mingle with all that is defunct in the universe. The Spanish royal, imperial family has become a thing of the past, so that Spain is now vainly seeking for a King. Austria took part against the Reformation, and she has descended from her lofty place among the nations to be second to her hated rival Prussia. Her voice is becoming heard in Europe only after she has broken off from the tyrannical shackles imposed on her by the Pope. The House of Hapsburg has proved less repulsive than that of Bourbon; but it, too, came near being rejected from among human rulers. Poland rejected the Reformation and Poland is no longer numbered among the nations. Spain burnt her Protestants, and all men pity Spain to this day, as a nation that is groping for the light three hundred years after date. Italy burnt her Protestants, and she is to-day, in respect to political organization and order, where England was two centuries ago. Regarding France let us quote the following from Carlyle: "France, with its keen intellect, saw the truth and saw the falsity in those Protestant times, and with its ardour of generous impulse was prone to adopt the truth. France was within a hair's breadth of becoming actually Protestant; but France saw good to massacre Protestantism, and end it in the night of St. Bartholomew, 1575. The celestial Apparitor of Heaven's Chancery has left his writ of summons; the writ was read and replied to in this manner. The Truth was stayed off; it withdrew, it kept away for two hundred years. But the Writ of Summons had been served; Heaven's Messenger could not stay away for ever; no, he returned daily, with accounts run up, on compound interest, to the very hour, in 1792; and then at last there had to be 'Protestantism,' and we know of what kind that was." The interest on that old Debt has not yet been paid.

Is it a coincidence merely, that Great Britain, Prussia and the United States—three Protestant nations—are the most powerful and progressive in the world? Protestantism, the principles of human liberty, and the methods of human progress have all been cursed by the Pope, but they flourish and advance none the less for that. Italy has made more progress since the Pope has cursed her than for the previous ten hundred years.—*Presbyterian Witness.*

DOUBTING THOMAS.

We confess to a strong sympathy for Thomas when he doubted the resurrection of Jesus. There is much that with justice may be said in his defence. Did he doubt the most stupendous event in history? So at one time did all the other apostles. When the women came from the open grave on that eventful morning and told what they had seen and heard, their words seemed to the apostles as "idle tales, and they believed them not." Did Thomas demand the strongest proof? The fact of the resurrection was so infinite in importance, and so difficult of comprehension, that it was proper that the proof be given. Why should we blame Thomas harshly? Jesus certainly did not. He gave to Thomas the evidence, and if reproach was uttered, it was a gentle one—"Be not faithless, but believing."

We love to linger on this incident as given by the evangelist. The scene as depicted is indeed worthy of careful study. It reveals, for the instruction of Christians through all time, the way in which James dealt with an honest skeptic. Happy indeed if the Church had always caught the spirit of its divine Lord and Master and followed his example!

We live in an age of skepticism. Its creed may be summed up in two words—"I doubt." Doctrines which have been the strength and consolation of Christians in all ages are thrown into the crucible of investigation. The Bible is weighed in the scales of careful criticism. Every word is subjected to the closest scrutiny. Geology and the kindred sciences have been brought to bear against its statements. It is clear that opinions must have the sacredness of truth, rather than of age, to claim reverence and reception to-day. In all this intellectual strife, we have nothing to fear for Christianity. We know that the "foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are his." We believe that the Bible is the word of God, and we know that the works of God will never destroy his word. More strongly assailed than any other book in the history of the world, it still speaks with the voice of undiminished authority. It has received many a hard blow, but it stands like an anvil, unbroken and unbroken, though it has worn and broken many a hammer.

Amid this discussion, skeptics abound. Some men incline to skepticism from one motive, and some from another. Some deserve our censure, and others deserve quite as much our sympathy and help. In general, there is too harsh a mode of dealing with those who disbelieve the truths which to us are so sacred and so dear. Perhaps it is their fault that they are not as orthodox as we are; but in some cases may it not be their misfortune? We have need to temper justice with mercy when we pass judgment on another man's belief.

One man is a skeptic from pride of reason. Perhaps he is young in years, and with increasing age will gain increasing wisdom. He sees a difficulty in some part of the Bible—probably in the Old Testament—which he cannot explain, and therefore hastily assumes that it is unexplainable. He gazes upon it until his vision is so strained that he can see nothing else. Therefore all that is clear, and would be comforting if he accepted it, he hastily rejects. As though there are not unsolved problems in the natural world, as well as in the revealed world. Perhaps his crude speculation is assailed with ridicule. His pride is wounded, and he refuses to believe that he can possibly be in error. Perhaps his argument is not answered by his weaker intellectual opponent, and therefore he thinks it is really unanswerable. Worst of all, he is assailed with ill-tempered words. He is called an "infidel," and an infidel he speedily becomes.

Another man is a skeptic through the promptings of an evil soul. Better disbelieve the Bible than accept the divine authority of a book which commands instant repentance of sin, exhorts to self-denial, and warns of a judgment to come. If the Bible must be received, let all which is gloomy and threatening be expunged. Do not hold that the "wicked shall be turned into hell," when we know that "God is love," says the man who is afraid to die in his sins, yet unwilling to break away from those sins. Well did that profligate infidel, the Earl of Rochester, declare, after his conversion, as he laid his hand upon the Bible: "There is true philosophy. This is the wisdom that speaks to the heart. A bad life is the only objection to this book." But here is a skeptic who differs from either of the above. He was born with a skeptical temperament. It has been strengthened by education. He demands a reason, it is his nature to be questioning. He is the incarnation of an interrogation point. He cannot, as other men, take religious truth from his parents, and receive it with undoubting faith, and then rejoice in a blissful experience of its power. While he blames the credulity of some men, he is in equally great danger from his marvellous incredulity. What is to be done with such a man? How should the Church deal with him? Always and ever with greatest charity. In error he may be; but he is sincere. He asks in all earnestness: "What is truth?" Let him but grasp it, and he will prove one of its firmest advocates. There are times when he is weary with being tossed on a sea of religious doubts, and longs for some sure resting-place. He seeks for rest, but finds none; calls aloud, but no certain response breaks upon his ear. Let not such a skeptic be too harshly blamed. He may have shown more of the hero in his struggle with doubts than a well-resolved Christian in holding fast to certainties. He has a lion-like spirit, but it is entangled in a net of speculation. We should strive to free such a man when he cannot free himself. Let him have the proof demanded, if such proof be possible. And he who says as Thomas did, "I will not believe," will yet turn with adoring wonder to Jesus and say: "My Lord and my God."—*Methodist.*

The man who is venial himself believes that everybody has his price.

THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE.

That France was utterly unprepared for the contest that has proved so disastrous to her arms, the event has clearly shown. But the extent of her military deficiencies, as they are now disclosed, is simply amazing, and one can scarcely avoid the conviction either that Napoleon is a far less able ruler than he has been imagined, or that he was hurried into war under the influence of such an infatuation as the Word of God ascribes to his judicial infatuation. The *Nation* has a valuable article on this subject which is worth quoting in full; we content ourselves with a liberal extract:

Now, how did it happen that, in spite of the uneasiness excited in France by the campaign of 1866, and the great show of preparation made afterwards for a conflict with Prussia, the Emperor should thus, after four years, and choosing his own opportunity for entering on the struggle, be found so completely unready as to have to witness the destruction of his army and the overthrow of the Empire within five short weeks? The answer is, first, that the law increasing the armaments, which was passed after much discussion, in January, 1868, has never been carried out. The regular force, including men actually embodied and the reserves, would not have reached its full strength under the Act till 1874; and the Garde Nationale (Mobile and Sedentaire) was never called out, the political condition of the country being such that the Government was apparently afraid to arm it; so that it was actually not summoned to the field till after the defeat of Worth, and worse than this, neither officers, rifles, nor uniforms were provided for it. All this is made the more extraordinary by the fact, which was acknowledged in the Senate by the Minister of War during the debates on the new law, that the Government was unable to put more than 100,000 men in the line at Solferino, and had no reserves. Secondly, the French Cabinet appears to have been totally deceived as to the condition of public feeling, both in the states lately annexed to Prussia, and in the States south of the Maine, partly, no doubt, owing to great reliance on the stories of the aristocratic malcontents with whom the French legations would most readily come in contact, and partly owing to the deep-seated, and we might almost add cultivated, incapacity of Frenchmen to understand the position of people who are illogical in their politics. No country in the world has furnished more brilliant examples of successful investigation of foreign modes of feeling and thinking and acting than France has; but this kind of work is done by a few writers and travellers, of unusual powers and training. The bulk of French society, and especially that section of it which has of late years controlled the Government, almost disdains to comprehend foreigners, or to acquire their language; and there is probably no race whose ways they find so inscrutable as the Teutonic. Since the Revolution, too, their natural scorn of what is outlandish has been intensified, and their love of logic increasing, by the exceeding order and regularity of their own institutions. The French Cabinet appear to have settled in their own satisfaction, therefore, that all the German States which bore Prussia a grudge would seize this opportunity of freeing themselves from her yoke, and that they were indeed bound by a proper regard for consistency to take arms against her. The Emperor's proclamation, in fact, showed that he expected the Bavarians, Wurtembergers, Badenese, and Saxons, who have helped to bring him to his doom, to march with him on Berlin, and he probably relied on reinforcements from this quarter to bring his forces up to the required magnitude.

It is not necessary to lay much stress on the other causes of his defeat, because it is difficult to know how much weight to attach to them. The French commissariat has apparently broken down, but a good commissariat has no place in French military traditions. It has always broken down where the theatre of war was a friendly country, or where nothing was to be procured on the spot. It broke down badly in the Crimea, and again in Italy. Nearly all the great French wars have been carried on on foreign soil, and as everybody knows who is familiar with their history, in nearly all of them the soldier has relied largely on marauding, and the intendant on forced contributions, for supplies. These resources are no doubt precarious, but the danger of relying on them only appears clearly in defect; and of this, French armies have heretofore had but little experience.

Many, we are sure, will sympathize with the writer's eloquent conclusion:

Nothing like the disaster of last week has befallen any nation in modern times. Indeed, we doubt if all history can show a parallel for it. It surpasses that of Leipzig or Waterloo, as we pointed out the other day, inasmuch as it has overtaken France while in the very flush of her strength, and fresh from long and almost uninterrupted repose. For the first time in her career, too, she has to bow the knee before a single enemy. The depth of the humiliation and anguish into which French hearts are plunged to-day, probably nobody but Frenchmen can picture, because no other nation has lived so largely on national glory. It has played in French life the part which, in the lives of all other peoples, is divided among half a dozen interests. It has furnished to at least three generations of Frenchmen that solace which other races find in religion, in liberty, in riches, in industry, in art, and in literature combined. Nothing touched them which did not nearly concern the greatness of France; nothing cheered them by which they were not made in some way a sharer, however humble, in her renown. And let us be just, and say that they offered their idol no mean or paltry worship. Millions of lives have been laid down at its altar with a cheerfulness which no other people has ever in any cause been able to equal; and we who, if we strive for some purer ideal, strive also, and strive hard, for many grosser ones, must walk softly now among the French dead, and look reverently on the desolation and foreboding

which reign to-day in a million French homes. We believe the best interests of humanity to be served by the Prussian triumph, but we owe it to humanity also to witness, with sorrowful sympathy, the despairing agony of a great nation—a nation whose achievements in war and peace must always form one of the noblest chapters in the history of our race.

WHAT CAN I DO?

What can you do? A great deal, although you know but little, and but little are known but little, and but little cared for by the world.

1. You can be a Christian. As the sun transfigures a drop of dew by the reflection of his own glorious image, so if you but hold still in faith, Jesus will shine in and through you making the weak, worthless, perishing man you now are, a medium of his own matchless grace. A steady life for Christ is a means of usefulness incalculably effective.

2. You can pray for others. There may be little apparent connection between fervent prayer for another and his spiritual improvement, but there is such a connection, and it is vital. Daily prayer for others is daily service which the Master will ultimately reward.

3. You can win the love of others. Love is a cable between souls through which mighty influences flow. We transfer to some extent the good that is in us to those who love us. All humility, gentleness, carefulness, prudence, helpfulness, beget love in those who witness these graces and qualities.

4. You can speak to others. A prudent word spoken in love has often proved a seed of life. A good woman once addressed a word of admonition to a man in her employ. Another man simply overheard her remarks and was led by them to Christ. Let the lips open once in awhile for the utterance of Jesus' name, and for a plea in his behalf.

5. You can visit others. Little attentions prepare people to receive our practical counsels. They reason: "If he cares enough to come, he must have some interest in me. If he has interest in me, I owe attention to his words." Visits to the poor, neglected, indifferent, worldly, afflicted, ignorant—may often be sanctified to their good, even though the subject of religion be not specifically mentioned.

6. You can put good reading in the hands of people who need it. The Sabbath school book, the religious book in your own library, a little tract, a newspaper, a selected article from a magazine, may be put in the way of somebody every day. The right book in your spare bed-room, or handed to a friend about starting on a journey, or forwarded by mail, may do wonders. A ticket-agent in a railroad depot used to give away fifty dollars' worth of tracts every year. A tract went with every ticket sold. More than twenty persons wrote to him, acknowledging that the tracts he had thus given them had been blessed to their conversion.

7. You can reach people with gospel influences, who from sickness or suffering are most susceptible to them. There is a gentleman in Paris who watches the obituary notices in the morning papers, and then sends to the bereaved little tracts adapted to their situation. A visit to the poor-house and the jail may often be blessed to the good of their inmates. O how many such opportunities for usefulness are neglected by us! There, too, are the sick, who lie for days at a time weary, discouraged, and often friendless. How full of cheer a daily call, with the reading of God's word, a prayer and a cordial, countless chat about life and its experiences, death and the realities to follow, duty and its imperious demands!

8. You can invite and persuade people to attend God's house—the preaching service, the Sabbath school and the social meetings.

9. You can enlist others in work for the Master. Here are church members who should be at work. Here are worldlings who should be awakened to God's claim upon all men for service. A word, a plea, often repeated, ever urgent, may be the means of awakening them to a sense of duty.

10. You can give. Five cents a week is something in ten years, expended in benevolence. Who cannot save five cents a week for this purpose? Who cannot give five cents a day?

But what we all want, most of all, is the "ready mind," that our services may be "not by constraint, but willingly." "Where there's a will there's a way." Good Lord, give us, thy servants, willing, loving hearts, and then shall we toil with fidelity and delight for thee.—*S. S. Journal.*

LOVE FOR GOD'S WORD.

Bibles are so common among us that we have a faint sense of the value put on them by individuals or families, who have never seen an entire Bible, but only single books of the Scripture. The following is a touching story of joy of some of the natives of Madagascar on receiving a copy of the New Testament with the Psalms:

Two men came one night to Mr. Ellis, the missionary of Madagascar. They had walked a hundred miles out of their way to visit him.

"Have you the Bible?" asked Mr. Ellis. "We have seen it and heard it read," one man said; "but we have only some of the words of David, and they do not belong to us—they belong to the whole family."

"Have you the words of David with you now?" asked Mr. Ellis. They looked at each other, and would not give answer. Perhaps they were afraid; but Mr. Ellis spoke kindly to them. Then one of the men put his hand into his bosom and took out what seemed to be a roll of cloth. He unrolled it, and after taking off some wrappers, behold, there were a few old, torn, dingy leaves of Psalms which had been read, passed around, lent, reread, until they were almost worn out. Tears came to Mr. Ellis's eyes when he saw them. "Have you seen the words of Jesus, or John, or Paul, or Peter?" asked the missionary.

"Yes," they said, "we have seen and heard them, but we never owned them."

Mr. Ellis then went and brought out a Testament with a book of Psalms bound up with it, and showed it to them.

"Now," said he, "if you will give me your few words of David, I will give you all his words, all the words of Jesus, and John, and Paul, and Peter besides."

The men were amazed and delighted; but they wanted to see if the words of David were the same in Mr. Ellis's book; and when they found they were, and thousands more of the same sort, their joy knew no bounds. They willingly gave up their poor, tattered leaves, seized the volume, and started off upon their long journey home, rejoicing like one who has found great spoil. Did not these poor men prize the Bible? And had not they found a treasure?

CHRIST AS A PRACTICAL PREACHER.

There are three kinds of preachers. First, the light, airy sort, or what we in modern days call the sensational. Men of this class fancy that gas and wind are the two great agencies for converting souls, and they employ them without stint. But God forgives the man who uses gas for gospel powder in loading heaven's artillery! The second style is the opposite extreme—the metaphysical, which dives so far below the surface that it often sticks in the mud and never comes up again. The third order is a kind between these two; it is the every-day, practical sort, moving neither above nor below the earth, but on the surface with common humanity.

Of this latter class was Christ's preaching. He went among the masses, where each one could reach him. In the common definition of the term, his sermons might not be called profound; yet none can say they were shallow, for they rested upon a foundation deep as the world of thought itself.

This Great Preacher interested himself in almost, if not all, prominent measures, whether political, social, or directly religious. Many think ministerial hands should never touch certain questions, especially political ones. Christ had no such scruples, as his remarks concerning the divorce laws and his criticisms upon the different sects and rulers of his time abundantly show. He had the art of talking upon a worldly topic without being worldly himself. He sifted out the spiritual so carefully from every subject, that not a single grain of other matter became mixed with it. As the people's spiritual defender, he never hesitated to strike their enemies upon whatever field they stood; and when the masses discovered in him a guardian who shielded them from evil of every kind, no wonder they "heard him gladly."

Christ was also practical in his manner as well as in his matter. He had none of those disagreeable peculiarities which so often repel the unconverted. There are Christians who contrive to make themselves religious scarecrows, and sinners shun them as they would a hornet's nest. Now, men naturally expect that whoever comes delivering the grandest of all messages will do it in a manly style, and not in a caunting one. What if a business man tried to draw customers into his store just as many invite sinners to Christ? He would be bankrupt in less than three years. Nothing ever made religion more repulsive to the world than this detestable quality. Common sense itself says an every-day familiar religion should appear in a home-like manner, and not with its vitality half exhausted by cant.

Formalism, the twin of cant, was also none of Christ's. He came, eating and drinking, mingling among all ages and professions, preaching in every variety of place, in temples, synagogues, private houses, at public feasts, and upon mountains. Phylloes, of course—as they would now—objected to this, but the common people rejoiced; they loved to get near to one who drew near to them.

We shall be glad when every minister is nearer the pattern of our Saviour. Theory does well—it is a necessity; but theory without practice becomes a lifeless body; and until our sermons are thoroughly impregnated with the latter, it is impossible either to win the attention or good-will of the masses. We must neither soar above nor dive below; we must let our sermons go with us into the matters of every-day life, and make them not only fit food for the closet, but for the farm, workshop, and legislature. Take the garments in which men clothe their common actions, dress up your sermons in them, and men will no longer look upon them as upon a citizen wearing the fashion of a previous century, but will rejoice to form their acquaintance. Christ will then be preached as acceptably as ever. Churches will no longer be empty, but thronged with the eager masses, cheering the preacher by their presence, and hearing him gladly.—*Methodist.*

A WORD FITLY SPOKEN.

The following incident shows the importance of speaking a word in season for Christ. "A word fitly spoken, how good it is!" How it fastens itself upon the conscience and heart, and brings forth fruit in due season!

More than fifteen years ago, when called to watch with an old gentleman, eighty-two years of age, who had been a devoted Christian more than fifty years, who was totally blind, and suffering constantly with intense pain, I found him patiently bearing all, leaning on Christ. I was about sixteen years old, and as I entered the room, the lady introducing me, he said: "I want to take your hand in mine. And so you have come to sit up with me. I should think by your hand that you must be a young man. I want to talk with you more by and by."

When the family had retired, he asked me to place my hand again in his, and said: "I want to ask you a few questions. Are you a Christian?" I thought I must answer honestly, and I said: "No." "Do you mean to be some time?" "Yes!" "Well, then, what are you waiting for?" I was speechless. But the questions were daily in my mind until I gave my heart to Christ.

Procrastination is fatal to all plans for reformation. Whoever intends to repent and seek the Lord to-morrow, or next week, is in the broad road that leads to perdition.