

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, AUGUST 25, 1870.

Whole No. 866.

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The Intelligencer.

THE DOCTRINE OF PRAYER.

The scientific spirit which seeks to explain the phenomena of nature by certain laws self-evolved and self-active, existing apart from an intelligent Creator and law-giver, has invaded also the domain of religion. Prayer, the essential manifestation of the religious life, is emptied of its preternatural element and is explained as a sort of moral gymnastics. It may be of some use to him who utters it in its reaction upon the spirit, but can have no influence whatever upon him to whom it is addressed; for there is not an immeasurable disparity between the creature and Creator, making it impossible to teach him anything of our wants and feelings, as if he did not understand these more perfectly than we ourselves; is he not infinitely kind, disposed to promote our welfare in every way, and will he not bestow his blessings all the same, whether we ask for them or not? Possessing omniscience, foreknowledge, and unchangeableness, and having determined from all eternity what he will do, can we flatter and limit in our understanding, tell him anything which will change his view or alter his purposes; and are not the laws of nature fixed, so that, for example, prayer for rain, which is the result of specific material causes independent of the present volition of the Creator, is an absurdity? These are some of the questions propounded, not alone by a skeptical philosophy, which regards the assembling of Christians for prayer as an idle puerility, but we have reason to believe they perplex not a few good men, awakening painful doubts, and causing them to restrain prayer. Let us attempt then, in the spirit of candor, to find, in the light of reason and of the word of God, an answer to these difficulties.

To the objection that so great is the disparity between the creature and the Creator that no information respecting our wants and feelings can come up to the knowledge which he already possesses of them, and therefore prayer is futile, we answer, that we can tell God nothing which he does not already know in very truth, but that prayer is therefore a vain exercise by no means follows. We are created in the image of God and for communion with him. Communion cannot exist between two beings except by an interchange of thoughts and feelings. God might have chosen to hold converse only with the highest arch-angels, their thoughts and emotions being so much loftier and purer than ours, but if he has chosen to commune with men, it must be by the impartation of their thoughts and feelings such as they are; and unless it can be shown that God has cut himself off from all sympathy, intellectual and social, with his creatures, whether angels or men, for the objection has as strong force against the former as the latter, the difficulty cannot be urged as a sufficient reason why we should not pray. On the contrary does not the very constitution of our being, requiring communion with God for its growth and perfectibility, prove not only the possibility but the necessity of prayer?

God in Christ is our teacher, and as an earthly teacher, is interested in the communication of his pupil, not because of the information which he imparts, but because this is necessary to his development, and he thus gives evidence of growth, so God is interested in our communications as a means of improvement in us. God is also our father, for thus has he taught us to address him; and as the prattle of the child touches the deepest sensibilities of the paternal heart, still more does the heart of the Heavenly father respond to the hopes and desires, prattle though they be, of his children. In opposition then to the objection which we have stated, from the threefold consideration, of the nature of the intercourse of natural beings, of the relations between teacher and pupil, and of that between parent and child, the reasonableness of prayer is certainly established.

The argument against prayer on the ground of benevolence, that as God is disposed to do good to his creatures, so will he not withhold any blessing because of our neglect to ask for it, or bestow it any the more because of our asking, is equally groundless. In the Divine economy, blessings are given upon the fulfillment of certain conditions. Constituted as we are, it is difficult to see how this could be otherwise. As in the kingdom of nature it is necessary to plow the soil and sow the seed in order to reap the harvest, so in the kingdom of grace must the principles and methods of spiritual husbandry be observed. What would be thought of a farmer who would say, "God is good, he knows the need of a crop of wheat for the sustenance of my family, and it is unreasonable to suppose that he will withhold it because of my failure to perform this or that agricultural operation, or bestow it any the more on account of my labor." And yet men do not blush to reason thus in regard to Divine things. There can be no reason drawn from the kingdom of God, why our daily bread and supplies of grace are not as dependent upon prayer as is the crop upon the labors of the husbandman. We can see how human welfare is promoted by the Divine arrangement which makes labor necessary, and that this arrangement is the fruit of Divine goodness as exhibited in all the arts of life, so may we see that God may have connected the bestowment of his blessings in answer to prayer, which would not otherwise have been conferred. No, the Divine goodness, so far from excluding, requires prayer.

But again it is objected, that since God has determined from all eternity what he will do, our telling him can have no effect upon him to change his view or alter his plan. The unsoundness of this reasoning, as in the last case, will appear if we apply it to anything else. On this ground we might as well refuse to plant as to pray. The result is certainly as clearly known to God in the one case as in the other. Preparing the soil and sowing the seed are as inconsistent with God's foreknowledge as praying for rain, success in business, or the salvation of a soul in the expectation of

such a result. Any view of God which reduces him to a mere machine, is as false as it is God-dishonoring. God must be conceived of as a rational being, thinking, deciding, and acting in view of fate. The character and conduct of men doubtless do influence the Divine purposes. It cannot be the same thing whether a man obeys or disobeys God. He is in the one case rewarded, in the other punished. The Creator has not abandoned the workmanship of his hands as some would fain have us believe, but is actively present, guiding the affairs of his government according to the principles of eternal wisdom, and among them prayer has a place.

Kindred to the objection which we have just considered is that derived from the immutability of law, so that it would be folly, for example, to ask for rain, this being the result of specific material causes acting with mechanical regularity. This objection assumes that only material forces can act upon matter, a position contradicted both by creation and miracles. It rests too upon a false conception of the sense in which physical laws are to be regarded as immutable. The correct view, we believe to be taken by the Duke of Argyll in his Reign of Law. He says, "There are no phenomena visible to man of which it is true to say that they are governed by any invariable force. That which does govern them is always some variable combination of invariable forces. But this makes all the difference in reasoning on the relation of will to law—this is the one essential distinction to be admitted and observed. In the only sense in which laws are immutable, this immutability is the very characteristic which makes them subject to guidance through endless cycles of design. It is the very certainty and invariableness of the laws of nature—that is of each individual law taken separately—which alone enables us to use them and yoke them to our Saviour." While it may be admitted then, that so far as we know, no law or elementary force of nature is liable to change, yet every law is liable to counteraction to the degree and in the manner which some definite purpose requires. Law in its last analysis is the authoritative expression of will enforced by power. God is not fettered by his laws, so that they cannot respond to the wants of his creatures. On the contrary, by their perfect adjustability and power of combination, he makes of them the instruments of his purposes in the ever varied conditions arising from human needs. The immutability of law rightly apprehended is not inconsistent with prayer.

Prayer implies that the Divine mind is accessible, and the Divine will is capable of being moved thereby. It is represented in the Scripture as connected with the doctrine of the Trinity. God the Father is on the mercy seat, the Holy Spirit begets in the heart the desire to pray, and the Son intercedes in Heaven for us. This is the Scripture account of prayer, and God regards it as a most important exercise on our part, inviting us to it as a privilege and enjoining it as a duty.

Life is a compound of prayer and work. They must be united as the inner and the outer man, as soul and body. Prayer requires work, and work requires prayer. Work must be the outer and visible form of prayer, while prayer must be the soul of work and of life in general. It is by prayer that life on earth is connected with eternity, and its greatness appears in the fact that it transposes this life of time into the sphere of eternity, filling it with eternal value and bringing it into direct communion with God himself. As the bracing mountain air quickens the pulse and imparts renewed energy, so in the atmosphere of prayer we are awakened into new life, even the life of God, coming forth from the inner sanctuary after communion with him to enter with alacrity into eternal life, taking up its duties, its burdens and its griefs, and amidst them all, our hearts dwelling in the Sabbath and sanctuary of prayer. Let no vain speculations then rob us of the privilege of prayer, that bond which, in closest sympathy, unites us to the Father of our spirits, and without which our souls would be cut off from the highest source of enjoyment.—*Christian Freeman.*

THE CHURCH and THE TEMPERANCE CAUSE

It is not true, as some believe, that the Church is not, in power in the Temperance cause. It is not the power that it should be. It is not the power it can be. Yet, it is a power; and when every preacher and Christian layman shall realize that Temperance is the legitimate work of the Church, and that to ignore it is to refuse to obey Divine orders, it will be ten times more of a power to drive rum-sellers, as Christ did the money-changers, out of God's temple. But many professed Christians discard Temperance. They drink wine, and oppose prohibitory laws. Some pulpits defend wine-drinking, and some ministers preach in its behalf. Some religious papers speak disparagingly of the Temperance work, while others withhold their influence from it. At parties, weddings, and on public occasions, influential Christian men and women sip wine, and thus support the drinking customs. Who can wonder that the Church is paralyzed, and made inefficient in the Temperance cause? It was so in the great fight with slavery. Some pulpits were silent as the grave over the giant evil. Some openly and wickedly defended it. Many, thank God, attacked it, as the "sum of all villainies;" and these pulpits shook the throne of the demon until it tottered and fell. If all the pulpits in the land had been equally true, it would have fallen fifty years before. A quarter of a century ago or more, Rev. Albert Barnes said that if the Church had been faithful, the system of American slavery would have perished before that time. His remark was true. The thunder of old Dr. Hopkins' pulpit, which was the first to attack slaveholding, rolled down through the generations to Lee's surrender. Pulpits have equal power to smite the demon Temperance. Without an exception, in every town in New England where the pulpits have been outspoken for Temperance since the reform began, the cause is flourishing and powerful now. For any pulpits to be silent, in the face of this fact, is compounding the guilt before God.—*Zion's Herald.*

VARIETY AND POWER IN PRAYER.

There are different kinds of prayer. There is the calm communion of the soul with God. There is the affectionate converse of the believer with Him, in which faith feeds on the promises, and recounts its mercies, and finds its meditations to be sweet. Then, too, there is the sharp, piercing cry of anguish, or the earnest appeal of importunity, which will not let God go without an immediate response. Christ described the beseeching eagerness of this style of prayer, when He told His disciples about a certain house-keeper who went to a friend's house at midnight, and clamored for the loan of three loaves of bread to feed unexpected guests, until, "because of his importunity," he got all the bread that he needed. There are many varieties of night-calls for relief, from the sudden cry of our little ones in their cribs, to the shout for "help!" in the street, or the eager call under the physician's window. These are all types of the prayer which you are to pour out into the ear of God in seasons of difficulty, or distress, or danger.

"If pains afflict, or wrongs depress,
If cares distract, or fears dismay,
If guilt deject, if sin distress,
The remedy's before thee,—pray."

"This is all a very pretty theory," some of you may say, "and it has a very pious sound. But please to tell me what actual and positive good it can do. Does it really move God? Does it really bring relief?" Such cavils are as common as breathing. The devil can suggest them in a hundred forms; and it is astonishing how much readier some people are to believe the father of lies, than to believe their Father in heaven.

Does the prayer of faith really move God? To this we can only reply that God himself tells us that it does actually produce that state of things in which it is right, and in accordance with his will to bestow the asked for blessing. God tells us that he loves to be asked, and is the rewarder of them who diligently seek him. He tells us that the fervent effectual prayer of the righteous availeth much. He bids us ask, and we shall receive. His Word abounds in narratives of the actual bestowment of things which his children have besought him to give them. When his needy or suffering ones have pulled the night-bell of prayer with strong faith, he has relieved them of their distress, or removed the evils they suffered from, or else given to them super-natural grace to bear their burthens. On his bed of anguish, Hezekiah rang this night-bell, and God heard it, and spared his life. In his dungeon at Jerusalem, Peter cried unto the Lord, and a whole prayer-meeting cried at the same time for his deliverance, and God sent his angel and brought the apostle out of the prison. Answered prayers cover the field of providential history, as flowers cover Western prairies. Answered prayers hover around the communion tables of our churches, in seasons of revival, as we have seen great flocks of birds descend into a meadow. Answered prayers have made the pulpits of Payson and Burns and Spurgeon powerful. Answered prayers have visited sick rooms like angels, to restore to life, or if infinite wisdom had appointed to the sick to die, the sting of death has been turned to the song of victory. "I cannot get on without three hours a day of prayer, now," said Martin Luther in the thick of his great fight with the man of sin. Are you wiser than Luther?—*Evangelist.*

THE BIRTHPLACE OF PAUL.

Our first view of this place, caught at a distance of several miles, was pleasing; but on entering it, we soon found that distance had lent enchantment to the view. Paul affirmed that he was "a citizen of no mean city;" but Tarsus is now one of the meanest collections of dirty huts to be found in all Turkey. It must have changed greatly since the days of the Apostle. And the evidence of this change is by no means wanting. Proof enough falls beneath your eye at almost every turn. You are soon convinced that what Paul said was no idle boast. He might well be proud of his birthplace. But could he visit Tarsus today, we may suppose that he would almost feel ashamed that he chanced to be born there. In the wet season its streets are mud-holes. They run with reeking filth. In attempting a foot passage it is necessary to give close attention to your equilibrium, especially when camels and donkeys, with their great loads and noisy drivers, are continually crowding past you. But you forget the mud and the filth at the sight of the ruins which in Tarsus are everywhere marvellously abundant. Among these are fragments of beautifully wrought columns of marble and porphyry. What cunning hands fashioned more than two thousand years ago, the proud ornaments of this proud city, you now see in the walls of the gardens and of the houses, side by side with the coarsest cobble-stones; they are used for rollers upon the flat-roofs; they lie half-buried at the corners of the streets; the plowshare turns them up, and they are stumbled over in almost every pathway. We saw a piece of large porphyry pillar, most exquisitely wrought in a kind of leaf-work, which, having suffered excavation at one end and being made to stand on the other, is now used for a mortar. Smaller pillars of the same material, nearly or quite entire, we observed thrown across the road, with other stones, to make a bridge.

But to the visitor to Tarsus the most interesting object is the collection of vast artificial rocks, called by some the tomb of Julian, and by others that of Sardanapalus. Yet these are only conjectures. No one now knows what these immense piles were in their glory. If Julian attempted in this manner to show to the world that the name of the wicked shall not rot, he most signally failed; for it is now a matter of dispute whether his name should be associated with what is found here.

We have said that the most interesting object in Tarsus is the so-called tomb of Julian; but there is now to be found there that which is of far greater moment than this uncertain pile of rocks. It is a Christian church. Though this is yet small, it has had a healthy growth, and its pastor is a most excellent man. What

a contrast it presents to everything else in the city of Tarsus! Besides this there is nothing, which has the least tendency to bring the people up from the slough of their depravity, far deeper and more to be dreaded than the mud in their streets. But here is that which can save them. Can any one look upon this little church and see what it is doing, and ever afterwards be tempted to say that the foreign mission work is a failure?—*Letter to the Congregationalist.*

SUCCESS OF MISSIONS IN THE SANDWICH ISLANDS.

Fifty years of faithful missionary labor in the Sandwich Islands has resulted in the conversion of the rude, barbarous natives to Christianity. No greater triumph of the gospel among the heathen has ever been recorded, and no more important Christian conquest has been made in the present century. The centennial anniversary of the establishment of Christian missions in the Islands occurred last month, and was celebrated by the natives with a whole week of festivities.

In the early part of present century, a poor, obscure Hawaiian boy, Henry Oboukiah, found his way to this country in an American vessel, procured an education, entered the ministry, and awakened such an interest among the people for his countrymen, that an American mission was at once sent out. Before he had perfected his arrangements for returning a missionary to his own people, he was stricken down by death.

Soon after the missionaries began their labors in the Sandwich Islands, a royal decree was published for the destruction of all the idols which the people had worshipped, and to which they had offered human sacrifice. At the time the missionaries were among them they were a horde of naked savages, burdened by superstitious, and without a conception of Christianity. Says a correspondent of a Boston journal, writing of the great events that have been brought about in the Island:—"Today the same people hold an acknowledged place among Christian nations. A Constitutional government (their constitution was framed by Chief Justice Lee) administers equitable laws. The symbols and appliances of an advanced civilization are seen. Churches dot the land. Education is so generally diffused that the proportion of the people here who can read is larger than in Boston, and from this point the light of Christianity is radiating to the remote islands of the Southern seas."

The natives could not afford to let so great an event as the conversion in one generation of the whole of the Hawaiian Kingdom to Christianity pass without making it the occasion of a grand jubilee and hearty thanksgiving. So the King proclaimed Wednesday, June 16th, a national holiday, as it was to be observed in commemoration of "the introduction of Christianity into this kingdom, under the auspices and direction of the American Board of Commissioners for foreign Missions." Around this central anniversary day were clustered the festivities of the week. The exercises opened on June the 12th with a semi-centennial sermon by the Rev. M. Kuaoa, a native pastor. In the evening, members of the Royal family, officials, and foreign ministers assembled to hear an interesting historical discourse by the Rev. Dr. Damon. The speaker noticed the occurrences which led to the coming of missionaries to the Islands, the remarkable results achieved, and expressed the opinion that the Chinese in time would take the place of the present people, who seem to be declining. The most interesting features of Monday and Tuesday, June 13 and 14, were the reading of memorial essays by Mrs. Thurston and Mrs. Whitney, the only survivors of the pioneer missionaries. They gave many interesting reminiscences of their lives among the natives.

On Wednesday the great day of the week, large numbers of the native men, women, and children, all neatly attired, formed in a grand procession. A detachment of native soldiers joined in the march, and the children of the various Sunday-schools marched together, with flags and banners, making an imposing appearance. The King and Queen, and various Government and foreign officials were present at the Church, where services were held, together with about 3000 people, and many more were unable to gain admission. The interior of the Church was finely decorated, and the following inscriptions were fastened to the walls: "1820—Jubilee—1870." Beneath this in Hawaiian was the national motto, "Ua mau ka ea o ka aia i ka pono," meaning: "The life of the land is preserved by righteousness." Dr. L. Smith opened the services with a prayer in Hawaiian, and Dr. Clark made an appropriate address in English, which was translated sentence by sentence into the native tongue. The Minister of Foreign Affairs followed in a few remarks, acknowledged for the Government the great and good accomplished by the missionaries, and extending a warm welcome to them. The American Minister and others made brief addresses. The intervals between the speeches were filled with choice selections of music, rendered by the choir.

The festivities of the day were concluded with a grand banquet, which the King had liberally contributed to. About 7000 persons sat down to the bountiful feast. Throughout the entire celebration, says the chronicler, the most admirable order was maintained. The exercises of the week were participated in by Hawaiians, English, American, and natives of Tahiti and the Marquesas. "All freely mingled together and enjoying the profuse hospitality of a genial host." Connected with the missionary work are two literary institutions, the Oahu College and the Kawaiaho Female Seminary. The former has alumni of Yale and Oberlin Colleges as its professors, and the latter is conducted by the Misses Bingham. The examinations were interesting events of the anniversary week.

From all this may be gathered some idea of the magnitude of the work accomplished by a few missionaries among a heathen and degraded people. Fifty years ago it looked like a gigantic task that would require perhaps two centuries to perform, but under the power of God it was effected in half a century. Let this

glorious triumph stimulate all evangelical churches to strengthen and enlarge their missionary operations in foreign lands.—*Method.*

EARTHLY RICHES.

There are young men here who are going to be rich; and let me tell you—and you will never forget this—that you must not be rich for yourselves alone, but that you must organize your riches so as to make other folks happy, if you want to be remembered. Do this, and as long as the world stands you will never be forgotten. And if you want to know what to do, let me tell you to commence doing something to-morrow. A man who is going to do good with his money when he shall have got a great deal of it, makes a bargain with the devil; and the devil outwits him. Where men are going to use their money so that it will do good when they get through with it, the Lord is apt to get through with them before they think of being through with their money. If you want to be benevolent by and by, be benevolent now. Form the habit of being benevolent by giving at least a little of your means for benevolent purposes as you go along. It is not a bad rule to lay down, for every man to say to himself: "I will spend for other people one-tenth of the clear income that I receive." It is not a mere professional saying. I tell you, if you give away a portion of the profits of your business for the benefit of others, it will sanctify the rest. It will bring a moral element into your life. Say to yourself: "I will give one-tenth part of my receipts, whether those receipts are large or small; and it shall go for the good of others, and not of myself." Wherever you are, and whatever circumstances you are in, do something that shall go on benefiting men after you are dead, if it is only to plant a tree or a bush to beautify a house or enhance the comfort of travellers. Do not be contented with simply helping your own self.—*Becher.*

DRESSING PLAINLY.

1. It would lessen the burdens of many who now find it hard to maintain their places in society.
2. It would lessen the force of the temptations which lead them to barter honor and honesty for display.
3. If there was less strife in dress at church, people in moderate circumstances would be more inclined to attend.
4. Universal moderation in dress at church would improve the worship by the removal of many wandering thoughts.
5. It would enable all classes of people to attend church better in unfavorable weather.
6. It would lessen, on the part of the rich, the temptation to vanity.
7. It would lessen, on the part of the poor, the temptation to be envious and malicious.
8. It would save valuable time on the Sabbath.
9. It would relieve our means from a serious pressure, and thus enable us to do more for good enterprises.

INDEPENDENCE OF CHARACTER.

The truly independent man is one who acts from a true conviction of the right, without reference to present popularity or to future consequences. He may have humble views of his own ability, and a keen appreciation of the favor of other men; but above this is his love of truth and his faith in the right, and thus he was upheld. *** We need this genuine independence to carry us safely through the battle of life. There are many who seek to influence us to evil. Their efforts are to be repelled by a manly Christian independence. This same trait of character will prevent us from discouragement when others fail. There are those who give up all faith in religion simply because others do wrong. We should seek for that profound inward experience, the truth of religion which shall be so deeply rooted as to be unmovable even when men in position go astray.

There must also be at times an independence of public opinion. Popular opinions and prejudices are not always on the side of right. The strength of Christian character will often, for example, nowadays, be tested by the vexed question of amusements. The views of some will be sneered at as Puritanical, and the growing tendency of the times to laxity on this subject makes a strong pressure. The old cry of "no danger" is uttered by the worldly here. The Christian, and especially the young Christian, needs the spirit of true independence to enable him to resist the pressure of worldly opinion in this matter.—*Methodist.*

THREE IMPORTANT THINGS.

Let the following be kept in mind all the year:

Three things to love: courage, gentleness and affection. Three things to admire: intellectual power, dignity and gracefulness. Three things to hate: cruelty, arrogance and ingratitude. Three things to delight in: beauty, frankness and freedom. Three things to wish for: health, friends and a cheerful spirit. Three things to pray for: faith, peace and purity of heart. Three things to like: cordiality, good humor and mirthfulness. Three things to avoid: idleness, loquacity and flippancy. Three things to cultivate: good books, good friends and good humor. Three things to contend for: honor, country and friends. Three things to govern: temper, tongue and conduct. Three things to think about: life, death and eternity.

PARENTS TEACHING.—Lord Erskine, distinguished for independence and truth, once said, "It was a first command and counsel of my earliest youth to do what my conscience told me to be my duty, and leave the consequence to God. I shall carry with me the memory, and trust the practice, of this paternal lesson to the grave. I have hitherto followed it, and have no reason to complain that my obedience to it has been a temporal sacrifice. I have found it on the contrary, the road to prosperity and wealth, and I shall point out the same way to my children for their pursuit."