

# 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.

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## ALBION HOUSE.

## The Intelligencer.

### SUMMER WORK.

The season in which special religious interest is generally anticipated is past. We are now at an especially critical period as it regards interest and work.

If great harvests of souls have been gathered during the winter, there is a tendency to expect less, and act as though we expected less, during the months to come. The faithful, earnest toiler feels that he may, perhaps, have rest. Those who have borne the chief burdens and let in the work during a protracted revival effort are often compelled to cease from some or all the special work they have so cheerfully done. Often the pastor and some of the standard-bearers of the church must go away "into a desert place and rest awhile." This seems inevitable. But meanwhile what is to become of the lambs of the flock, the babes in Christ, whose piety is only the tender blade which has just sprung up? Who is to lead these lambs into green pastures and beside still waters? who feed these children with milk of the Word? who watch these growing plants? How these questions have worried the wearied worker as he has reluctantly turned from the blessed work of winning souls! Being careful and troubled about these or other things, when one yields to a stern necessity in ceasing to labor, is neither necessary nor wise. The more excellent way is to turn the whole over to the Great Shepherd—to Him who "giveth the increase." The experience of the writer in this direction is too recent and too painful for him to forget the difficulty of learning this lesson; yet he is permitted to testify that it is one of the most precious of the believer's privileges to remember, when one must give up work, that it is not our own cause in which we labor; that it is not by our own might any success was achieved; and that the owner of the field, the great Sower, has more interest in the springing blade and more power to cause it to go on from stage to stage till "the full corn in the ear" is seen, than the most devoted spiritual husbandman. This is the privilege of the worn-out worker as he takes his place on the shelf of inactivity.

But there is another aspect from which this subject may be viewed, which we shall not do to overlook. God can care for his cause without the aid of any single individual, but it is his plan to do it by human agency. In the exercise of a wise and beneficent sovereignty He has chosen to make man the instrument of man's salvation. If the pastor and one or more of the active members fail, there will still be others who have been content to take but small part in work, who have shrunk from prominent positions, who have been under training for them, and who need just the work others have been compelled to resign. You who read this may be one whom God has been training for new work and greater responsibilities. Your minister must have a vacation to save him from a premature grave. A pillar in the church has fallen or business engagements have called some strong brother from the field. Do not stand staring at the vacant seat, wondering how we can get along with the great need of continued work to save the fruit already gathered and to continue the soul-harvest. Extremities bring opportunities. God wants the work to go on. He wants new instruments, new leaders, it may be. Those who fight in the ranks must be ready to take command when the officers fall. By just such providences God is leading one and another of his timid, faltering children to richer experiences and larger usefulness. The right improvement of dark providences is of infinite importance. To exclaim, "How sad! how strange! is very natural, but not the wisest thing at such a time. God is not dead, is not asleep, has not forgotten his cause. Faith in the divine promises would lead us to the conclusion that God has other plans than we had supposed, possibly other work for us than we had suspected.

If no revival has been enjoyed in your church or community during the past winter, you are now tempted to say, "We will try and hold our own during the summer; we need not expect to do more. If the season of leisure yielded no special results, nothing can be hoped for during the season of business activity."

Such a conclusion limits the Holy One of Israel, and does not accord with the experience of those who have toiled in summer's heat as well as winter's cold for the salvation of souls. A perpetual protracted meeting may be impracticable, but a perpetual revival is not inconsistent with the nature of a genuine work of grace. Here, as everywhere, it is according to our faith and works corresponding thereto. "We aim," said Mr. Spurgeon, "to work with uniformity and regularity during all seasons of the year, and expect results accordingly."

I apprehend this is the secret of the remarkably regular monthly accessions to his church. On the first Sabbath in July last year he gave the right hand of fellowship to between forty and fifty converts, which, I was told, was about the average of their monthly accession. I saw at least a thousand persons at the regular Monday night prayer-meeting on a very rainy evening in July. This prince of preachers, who prevails so mightily with God and man, is leading his people in a work which in ardor and earnestness puts many of our special revival efforts to the blush, in which there has been no cessation for more than half a score of years; and yet he said to the writer, "We fight shy of excitement; we are afraid of them." I left the great Metropolitan Tabernacle after having attended its services and conversed with the pastor, elders and deacons for they have a full board of church officers according to the New Testament model, and some other members of the church, with the impression that we needed to depend more upon and expect more from regular and constant church work, and less upon special efforts, for the advancement of the cause of Christ in the world.

Now, dear Christian reader, let us who have

any work in us work and pray for conversions right through the summer. Let no seed fail of growing for the lack of our watering.

### MAKING THE VALLEY OF BACA A WELL.

There are times when many, even most of Christians in any community, seem to be in the dry valley of Baca. The sermons are dry; the prayers are dry; the singing is dry. The congregations, the prayer-meetings, the class-meetings, are almost dried up, and the hearts of the people seem to be suffering from the drought as badly as anything else. It seems much as if the heavens were shut up, as in the days of Elijah. Everything of spiritual growth seems withered. The heavens seem as brass to the church, and alas! it is almost like scorching brass to their distressed vision. Professors of religion are almost disposed to think that there is no sympathy for them with God. They are almost persuaded in their hearts that God is perpetually estranged from them, and that his tender mercies shall not cut short the dominion of desolation. They are, perhaps, astonished at their own indifference to the moral drought prevailing in them and around them. But there are those who, passing through this valley, know how to make it a well; and so successful are they that it may be observed that the rain also filleth the hitherto empty and dry pools. If we ask for the secret of their success, we shall find it is in their waiting before the Lord. If the strength of that follower of Christ is fully in God, and especially if he appears in Zion before God, seeking continually that strength, he shall hear the shaking of the mulberry-leaves, and the gathering clouds of mercy shall propitiously pour into his soul, and it shall become as a fountain, conveying its refreshing influence all around. As with Elijah, so with all God's servants; it is in answer to fervent, effectual prayer that the rain cometh. There is no need of a continual drought in that soul for years, or even for months or weeks. There is a plentiful supply of living water, and Christ, if asked, will be as liberal to us as to the woman of Samaria, in giving us of this fountain.

It is said that vegetation is not only produced by moisture, but it is also calculated to attract the columns of vapor which float in the air. It has even been fancied that the metallic rails used in constructing our railways have been persuasive of a better supply of rain to those desert regions where heretofore almost perpetual drought has prevailed. So it is; one live disciple flourishing like the palm-tree may be instrumental in drawing clouds of mercy over the camp of perishing Israel. Too many Christians are like those aboard a vessel who, being ready to die of thirst, hailed another vessel, and were informed that they were in the mouth of the great Amazon river, and had nothing to do but let down their vessels and draw water from the flood on which their ship was floating. In the midst of abundance too many are sighing for supplies for their spiritual wants—instead of putting forth their hands and taking hold upon what their heavenly Father is offering them. They are journeying as through a parching desert, while clouds fraught with refreshing waters are floating over their heads, and only need intercepting with prayers of faith that their thirsty souls may be refreshed. If that soul, lamenting its untoward condition, would only apply to the Giver of all good with importunate prayer, waiting patiently on the Lord until he incline his ear and hear its cry, it would not wither, barren and unfruitful, in dreary desolation. To that soul, the valley of Baca may easily be made a well. And as one soul may obtain supplies from the heavens, others may, unless they are stubbornly resistant, be made to share in this bounty, and themselves be made to contribute to making the dry valley a well.

If a few faithful servants of God find the land in which they live a parching desert compared with what God is willing to bestow, they need not allow their spirits to droop in despair. Let each one seek personal connection with God—a closer walk—and they will ere long find the rain filling the pools. But let them, in addition to this great communion with God, add their united effort—let them together continually appear before God—and they will find the valley flowing with waters. No doubt many a one has inquired, "How shall we again secure seasons of refreshing?" All this is simple, if we wait before the Lord, remembering the example of those who meditated on his word day and night. God does not leave the inquiring soul forever in darkness. He takes no delight in its anguish. He teaches the great lessons of salvation in mercy. Though he may try us to prove our steadfastness, he will soon reveal himself in the power of his great strength. Instead of fainting, that soul which longs for seasons of refreshing should take courage; and though the hot breath of a parching desert may for a time sweep over them, they shall yet rejoice in a plentiful supply of the waters of salvation. Those who in Zion continually appear before God shall presently make the valley of Baca a well, and soon find even the pools filled to overflowing.

### UNCONSCIOUS INFLUENCE.

How few are aware of the influence which they are exerting upon the world around them! We allude not to influence of power, talents, wealth and position; for these will be more or less known and felt; but we have reference to that secret, latent control which one has over another without their knowledge. Members of families, neighbors and associates have a hand in moulding each other's characters and in determining each other's destiny, however unconscious of it they may be. On this subject Henry Ward Beecher observes: "We may be sure of one thing; that a man thoroughly and wisely in earnest for good or for evil will carry power in his shadow—for I choose to call unconscious influence by that name. It is the shadow of a great nature; and there is good or evil in it, just as there is in that which casts it."

direct and voluntary activity. The life of thought and feeling is utterly untranslatable into the language of action. That person must be meagre and slender indeed who is not conscious that there is more of him than he has even expressed, and that the expression which comes nearest to being perfect is, after all, but a lame, as a true rendering of that which is within him. There is no outward expression of conscience that equals the magnitude of that feeling in a man's soul. And, surely, there is no form which you can give to taste that will equal the sense of the beautiful that flashes and glitters within us. And no man ever loved who did not know that that part which lacked expression transcended, immeasurably, that part which had some symbol to represent it. After all, the plenitude of the man is that which lacks, and waits for some mode of disclosure. The features cannot give it; the eye cannot; posture cannot; gesture cannot. Neither word spoken nor deed performed can at all fill up the measure of the reality of that inward life which every man has within him. So that there is a vast disparity between what a man does and what a man is. And he is not to be measured merely by what he performs. There is more of him than that. Where a man is competent to do a great and good work, there is more of him than that mere good work would indicate. The measure of the man is greater than his outward performance. It is only the coarser part of our feelings that can be the most easily expressed. Bodily wants, physical traits, that which is of the earth earthly, we can express without difficulty; but as we rise toward the supernatural—toward the finer sentiments, the nobler imaginations, the diviner aspirations—expression becomes more difficult. It is difficult in proportion as they recede from the material. It seems impossible for us to give these things any form of incarnation. The subtler influences of power—those which spring from disposition, and taste, and enthusiasm, and sympathy—cannot be marshaled, and drilled, and marched. And yet they have an existence. There is a great deal more of man than that part of him which he shows in making a plan, in forming a volition and in pushing them into execution. That which he manifests is not the whole of him. Over and above that there is a great deal. There is a great deal that lies behind it, throbbing, and longing for expression, but getting it not.

It is from this radical fact that we say that a man has more influence than that which springs from the direct executive efficiency of his nature. His unconscious influence is that which comes from the richness and power of his nature, that is not represented in any conscious and voluntary course of action. His unconscious influence is great; but there is more than that. Every one is satisfied of this in other persons. We call some persons shallow; we pronounce them to be superficial; we say that all there is of them is on the surface. But we often find that the hollowest persons have some deep pools—some spots where they are more than we thought; and we are conscious of a certain subtle invisible influence that they exert from which springs our respect for them. Some persons in times of prosperity seem shallow and characterless, who in times of trouble exhibit a patience and a courage that we are not prepared to expect. There is a hidden part of their life, and there springs from it an influence which you did not suspect belonged to them, and which you cannot measure. There are natures whose peculiarity we know is not so much to carry substantial visible influence as to carry a sort of atmospheric visible one. Some call it "magnetic," "electric," and so on. If it pleases them to call it by either of these, or by any other name, let them; but I hold that the abundance of a man's life cannot express itself; that he carries a certain influence which is not apparent, and that persons often are conscious that he is more influential over them than his words would lead them to suppose he could be. A person says but little; and yet he has great power. A man has the appearance of not having much in him; and yet he stands over against you a sphinx in magnitude and mystery. We are constantly running upon evidences that a man's unconscious influence is vast, over and above the direct influence of his life and actions.

### SAINTS AND SAVIOUR.

Many and tender are the phrases and figures which express the union of saints with the Saviour. They are his "bride," his "body," his "habitation," his temple; and as individuals they are members of his body; "branches" in him, the "true vine." He gives them his name, calls them "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ;" he is "unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;" and hence "all things are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's." These are strong expressions, and yet their form and spirit and connection, convey the impression that they utter only part of the truth; that they are but a few of the richer, deeper mercies than are uttered in mortal language. They seem like bursts through the clouds, suggesting that there is a great flood of it shining beyond the veil; they appear like symptoms of more precious realities unseen—like sweet melodies floating in the air repeating an angelic concert not far away.

What does all of this mean? What are the privileges of the saints? How are they connected with their Saviour? "We now know in part;" it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Thank God we do know in part; Christ that we share his life, honors, glories, and bliss; "we shall be like him;" "joint heirs with him;" the vine and its branches meet the same destiny, the head and the body have the same experience here and the same glory in the future; the bridegroom and the bride share the same fortune, they are one. Well did Paul say, "This is a great mystery." And it is as precious as mysterious. Sinners, heirs of death, condemned rebels, are pardoned and welcomed into this dear relation and held

by Christ to be more precious than the angels themselves. Christians fail to realize these high privileges, of course they do. But we mean that they come short of appreciating them as they might; they ought to see and feel and magnify this grace far more than they do. Their eyes are too dim, they have need to pray "open mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." There are many wondrous things to be discovered and experienced in this union of saint and Saviour.

Believers are not mere boarders nor servants in the Lord's family; not mere friends and guests, but near relatives, children, brothers, bride; and not exactly these; but they are so perfectly and wonderfully united to Christ that whatever is precious in any and all of these relations is more than contained in the relation of saints to their Saviour. There is beauty, security, joy, hope, eternal life, all things in this. What security it guarantees to every one, to the least as well as the greatest! How certain is their salvation! How the cords of love bind them all to the great centre of life! How the currents of immortality flow from the "true Vine" to the least and most remote branches! The figure of the vine and its branches touches the case exactly. The union is complete, the life currents flow to every twig and tendril, and give them buds, bloom, foliage, and fruit. Not one is forgotten; the least and the greatest are refreshed, and they all climb up the trellis together; as the vine grows they grow; as the vine is exalted they are exalted; the fruit of the vine is made up to grow and ripen on the twigs and branches; to them is given the honor of bearing fruit.

The Vine is in heaven now, and many of the branches are here; it is best that they should be for the present; they need pruning, training, discipline for a season; the world needs the fruit as well; but all will ere long, be gathered to Paradise, to the true garden in the skies. Will he forget to draw them to himself? Never. As he ascended, so shall they ascend; as he flung off the mortal form, so shall they; the things which are seen are temporal; but the unseen, the spiritual, that which is born of God and really joined to Christ, is eternal. We may be sure of this. The vine and branches shall share the glories of Paradise and illustrate the blessedness of the union established here. What a scene that will be when the full grown vine and its branches are all in heaven! How angels will wonder and admire! The wild, foxy, bitter grapes, grafted into the true vine are so changed, changed contrary to nature, changed by grace, that they bear the fruits of heaven. Christ and his grace, love, purity, peace, bliss, enrich and beautify every cluster of fruit and fill all the courts of glory with their aroma. Happy they who are grafted into the true vine; blessed and precious is the union of saints and their Saviour.

### TYPES IN RELIGION.

While the religion of Christ is one and the same everywhere, in itself considered, yet there are as many different developments of it as there are men and women. It is easy to mark the general types of religious thought and feeling, because these are embodied in confessions of faith. But the lesser types of faith are as numerous as believers. Scarcely are two to be found of the same faith in all things. In general, we have Calvinism and Arminianism; after this Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, etc.; then follow the smaller classes of church government which may not be embodied in any written systems of faith; but lastly, every single mind forms to itself a silent, it may be, religious system, and into each of these systems men put a reflection of their inner self. No two see the same rainbow in the clouds after the storm has rocked itself to sleep, nor do they see the same sun in the heavens. Each has his own standpoint, giving complexion to the object. So too in religion, there are scarcely any two persons having the same view of the facts and teachings of the Scriptures. Articles of faith and forms of church government may draw to themselves classes of minds in general, but even in the same denomination, same church even, there are confessions never written. See the Presbyterians—Old School and New—when talking of their union; the only difference was in the interpretation of the same articles of faith. This is it the world over. Confessions of belief can only be general, and these must be upon the vital points in religion, leaving a large scope for private interpretation; otherwise there is small hope of the success of Christian union. Some things are of faith, but the largest part must be personal property.

Here is a man of large benevolence. Whatever may be his religious relations, he will feel like helping the cause with his means and that others shall assist in such support also; his efforts will be for the extension of the gospel and the relief of human suffering. In the same church is a man of large selfishness. He lives for self. A mere pittance only will he give to support the enterprises of the church, unless honor shall come to himself for his larger contributions. He thinks every person like himself; even his views of God are narrow and mean. To such a man there is little nobleness in Deity. In the heathen world men painted idols themselves for their worship. The Romans made gods of sternness and bravery; the Greeks had gods of art, music, poetry, sculpture, and song. So the selfish man worships a selfish God, to some extent, even under the gospel light. The benevolent man a God of benevolence. The men of love find such a Deity, and the sentimental a Deity of sentiment. In short, whatever be the natural moral development, in every case there is such a view of the Author of Religion as corresponds to the person looking thereat. True, our ideas are purged of the gross and animal in large measure belonging to the heathen ideas of religion; yet is there not an entire destruction of self under the schooling of Christianity? While it does in great degree uproot sin from the heart, still there linger elements to mar and give color to the objects seen. While it leaves our earthly personality intact, it gives

us leave to see in things without us that which is like ourselves in some measure. The idol—ideal—of the heathen was but a reflection of their common character. Hence their descent morally. But we have the ideal presented from without ourselves in Revelation—infinite in all excellence. Moreover, there is gospel power, and spiritual aid coming to the help of the worshipper to uplift the struggling soul—to restrain its downward tendencies, thus giving us great superiority over the heathen. Yet the principle of variety is inherent, and not until all minds are exactly alike in thought, will, taste, etc., will—all differences cease. This is no fault in Christianity itself as a moulder of minds.

How often have we not felt the same passages of Scripture to express to us different degrees of strength. A blind man can tell little of colors or a deaf man of tones. Two men stand before a picture; one looks at it as an artist or with a fine sense of symmetry, beauty, etc.; the other has no sentiment of taste in his make up. To these men there are essentially two pictures and very unlike. Two thieves hang beside the crucified one. But only the praying one sees the Saviour. These but illustrate what exist to a great or less degree in our views of the teachings of Revelation. We hold the same Bible, yet each finds his way unlike the others—each reading his own. Different minds or different states of the same mind find in the same articles of faith, things quite unlike.

We close this paper with the following remarks:

1. All minds cannot be made alike in religious faith and feeling. Hence the need of large liberty for individuals in all church building.
2. The millennium is not to be reached by making all subscribe to the same articles of belief.
3. Character and state of mind give complexion to religious creeds and interpretations.
4. The way to effect Christian union soonest, is to mould the hearts first, bringing men near to Christ that they may be near each other.
5. An orthodox heart often leads to an orthodox creed.

### VARIETIES.

The more we sleep, the less we live. When words are scarce they are seldom spent in vain.

Slander is the revenge of a coward, and dissimulation his defence.

The most dangerous of all flattery is the inferiority of those about us.

It is best to live as friends with those in time, with whom we would be to all eternity.

Reason cannot show itself more reasonable than to cease reasoning on things above reason.

We ought not to judge of men's merits by their qualifications, but by the use they make of them.

Whately alludes to the folly of men who unmask their battery hastily, and then think of loading their guns.

Perhaps it would be dangerous for us to possess the abilities we covet; it is always safe to consecrate those we have.

Idleness is the devil's home for temptation, and for unprofitable, distracting musings; while labor profiteth others and ourselves.

Many have been ruined by their fortunes; many have escaped ruin by the want of fortune. To obtain it the great have become little, and the little great.

Foundations are hidden. It is not the apparent virtues which give stability to character. It is not what a man appears to be, but what he is in the foundations.

There is only one stimulant that never fails, and yet never intoxicates.—Duty. Duty puts a blue sky over every man,—up in his heart, maybe,—into which the skylark, happiness, always goes singing.

There are three things which can in no wise be used for good—malice, envy, and folly; and there are three things that can by no means be employed for evil—humility, contentment, and liberality.

Narrow-minded men, who have not a thought beyond the sphere of their own outlook, remind one of the Hindoo maxim: "The snail sees nothing but its own shell, and thinks it the grandest palace in the universe."

He that will do no good offices after a disappointment, must stand still, and do just nothing at all. The plow goes on after a barren year; and while the ashes are yet warm, we raise a new house upon the ruins of a former.

He who will pass to the promised land must neither stand upon length of way nor difficulty. Every way has its own inconveniences; the nearest has more danger, the farthest has more pain; either, or both, must be overcome, if ever we will enter the rest of God.

"Whosoever will may come." "I thank God," said Richard Baxter, "for the word Whosoever. If God had said there was mercy for Richard Baxter, I am so vile a sinner that I would have thought he meant some other Richard Baxter; but when he says Whosoever, I know that includes me, the worst of all Richard Baxters."

We can do but little, at most; but we can do that little constantly. Little by little does God elevate us to himself. He calls daily, weekly, yearly. Neglect one call after another and we become reprobates. A mason builds the wall, stone by stone. And just so are saints built. God accommodates himself to our condition by affording us opportunity and material as we need them.

Praises are valuable only when they fall from lips that have the courage to condemn. An old farmer's description of a pointless preacher was, "A good man, likely, but he rakes with the teeth up."

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