

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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The Intelligencer.

WASTED GIFTS.

The following is from an article by Rev. T. Edwin Brown, in the *Watchman and Reflector*:

In our prayer-meeting, the other night, a young man said that God never wasted anything; that He never conferred gifts upon His disciples unless He knew that they would use them. The young man was mistaken. God does bestow gifts that are abused. He does endow men with faculties that are perverted and dwarfed, and finally extirpated by disease. The gift of religious speech, the gift of Christian zeal, the power of spiritual discernment, the gift of moral sensitiveness; how many Christians have abused these gifts, kept them on short rations, allowed opportunities for exercising them to pass unimproved, built up about them such a wall of resistant habit that, though they lay in the shallows of the soul, with open mouths, the currents of circumstance and occasion could not bear to their proper food, and the divinely bestowed faculties were starved.

Upon every soul God has conferred a gift which is the crowning adornment of humanity. It is the capacity for knowing God, for believing in Him, for loving Him, for being in fellowship with Him. It is this capacity to which all appeals of the gospel and all warnings of Providence come. God and truths about God are its proper nourishment. It is this capacity by which alone the Holy Spirit can gain any access to a man. It is this capacity that stands to a man's moral nature in the same relation that the eye sustains to the body or reason to the mind. Now when, by a persistent disregard of divine truth—whether it come from nature, or Providence, or books, or conscience, or Providence—man forms the habit of receiving impressions of this truth only passively; when there is no arousal of the soul to respond to these impressions, so that they no more affect us than the commonest sounds of daily life which are heard and yet not heard, what is the result? Ask the plant, pale, sickly and dying for want of air, and water, and sunlight. Ask the Hindu devotee whose arm is withered. Ask the imbecile, who has driven away great mental powers into nothingness. The result? The result is starvation. Only nutritious food. Only exercise feeds. Only the attentiveness of earnest thought feeds. Inactivity starves. Passiveness starves. The result? The result is decay, dwarfage, destruction of capacity altogether.

Are there none who read these words who are illustrations of the sure working of this fatal law? You who hear the gospel every Sabbath and are none the better, but who worse rather for all your hearing, did you ever think of this when you receive God's truth so listlessly as not to receive it at all? And when capacity is gone, when there is nothing in you that can take hold of God, believe on Him, love Him, what is left for a man? What is left for you, oh lost soul? Oh, hopeless soul! oh, soul with the Divine starved out, murdered by inches! What is left, when the light from without growing more and more dim, the sounds of mercy and grace from without growing more and more faint, this law of the decay of spiritual faculty, through the starving process of habitual inactivity against all good, is inevitably executed, because a holy God must, by His nature, show in the certain workings of such a law the infinite antagonism between His holiness and human sin?

This law of decay, so evident to any one who will carefully observe the facts of human nature, helps us to understand some of the sayings of Christ. What did Christ mean by the figure of the seed falling by the wayside?—that place of travel!—that road beaten hard, trodden down, pressed into compactness! Could the seed gain an entrance there? Could it find warmth, and moisture, and soil there? Was there any response made by the consolidated track of the dropping of the seed? Did the seed even leave its imprint? No receptivity, no capacity for good. Starved, dwarfed, shrivelled, power lost to take hold of good and of God. May not this be Christ's meaning? Go into a geological cabinet and you will see slabs of stone with figures on them. The stone was soft and yielding once. A finger print would have marked it. The birds walked over it and left their tracks. The rain-drops trickled on it and wrote the history of the intensity and direction of the storm. As the days went on the stone hardened. A heavy blow would make no impression now. Is there no such process going on in souls? Hardening! hardening! Showers of blessing fall upon them and run off as upon the rock, leaving not a single drop of water to soften them into life.

What does Christ mean by blasphemy against the Holy Ghost? What is meant in other passages of Scripture by the "sin unto death," and a condition of soul wherein men are "past feeling"? Whatever may be the meaning of these passages exegetically considered, is not their practical meaning determined by this law of decay? Truth rejected! Mercy unresponded to! Light unheeded! Food for the Godward capacity coming in ten thousand appeals, and voices, and impressions, every day, yet unheeded. The divine side of the nature all shut close and starved! The sinward side open, and well fed and growing! Intellect left; conscience left; will left; but capacity for repentance gone, capacity for faith gone, capacity for love gone; gone through starvation; gone through disuse; gone because the spiritual eye, which was adapted to divine light, shut itself against the light, and became, through disuse, a blind eye; gone because the spiritual ear, which was adapted to detect the music of God's voice, refused to hear the voice, and became, through disuse, a deaf ear. Nothing in the man for God to work upon. No spiritual material to be reconstructed. This is the sin that hath never forgiveness; this murder of capacity by starvation. This sin which is not an act, but a process, and a process going on in multitudes of souls all about us to-day.

The light is the same, whether the rays strike upon eyes that answer to its impulse or upon blind eyes. The shrieks of the locomotive engine are as loud whether you are near them or not, only your ears are trained to disregard them, while mine instantly respond to their painful discord. The truth of God is as powerful as it ever was, and as well fitted to make impressions. But men have formed the habit of not heeding the truth, and are losing capacity to comprehend the truth. Surely, every man who feels that thoughts about God do not affect him as they used to, has reason to tremble. Every such one ought to cry out with alarm. The stupor of death is creeping over him. He ought to throw himself upon the help of Christ. He ought to seek the aid of the Holy Spirit, that the law of decay may be arrested in its workings and transformed into a law of life. He ought to do this instantly, lest another moment's resistance of impression and further starvation of his spiritual faculty may make him past feeling.

HE TOOK HIS RELIGION WITH HIM.

There are many persons who cultivate a kind of piety which bears a striking resemblance to an intermittent fever. They are, at times, full of love for God, and of the spirit of devotion; are earnest and active in the discharge of all the duties of the Christian life; and seem ready to condemn every departure, on the part either of themselves or of others, from the path of religious rectitude; while, at other times, their conduct, their conversation, and their associations would leave the impression upon the mind of a beholder, that they had never so much as borne the name of Christians.

There is a class of persons who are at a fever heat of piety at home, but who, when they go among strangers, have no higher pulsations of the spirit than people of a purely worldly character. Their fervent emotions, under the new influences which surround them, are rapidly cooled down to a low degree of spiritual temperature; their zeal becomes intensely prudent; and their religious acumen wonderfully deadened. In a word, they act as if their religion were a thing designed to be prized and cultivated only at home, and not to be taken abroad, or as if the only eyes they feared were those of their immediate neighbors. They virtually say to vanity and worldly-mindedness, when at home, "We understand each other; but it is prudent to keep under restraint here; these people are looking at us; wait till we go yonder, where we shall be out of their sight; then we shall find gratification for all our desires." The result is, that such persons, when among strangers, cease to be exemplars of the pure principles of the Gospel of Christ, and witnesses for the truth; and become, consciously or unconsciously, coadjutors of those who have put themselves in opposition to God and His cause. If the multitudes of those who are in constant nightly attendance in all our large cities, upon places of public worldly amusement and of private pleasure; of the year, in-duced in all the excesses of fashion and folly, at our large watering places; of those who travel in railroad cars and steamboats; and those who are drifting with the currents of emigration to help build up new States, could be thoroughly sifted, at regular stated intervals, many persons would be made to appear in new characters to their old acquaintances; and the judgment in regard to them would be that they were wretchedly ignorant, pitifully weak, or hatefully hypocritical.

The followers of Christ are called the children of faithful Abraham, who is nominated "the father of all them that believe." But what a contrast there is between the life of this faithful man and the lives of many of those who profess to be endeavoring to "walk in the steps of that faith" which he cultivated and illustrated. The piety of Abraham was not an accident of his life, nor the result of his associations, or of other circumstances, but a part of his nature, a second nature though it was. It was deep, sublime. And it showed itself in nothing more conspicuously than in his conduct in connection with the frequent changes of residence which occurred during his eventful life. He always kept in view his relations and obligations to God. He always carried his religion with him. We find him, first, in Ur of the Chaldees, a believer in the existence of the one true God. Going thence to Haran, he resided there for a time, unaffected by any of the idolatrous influences which surrounded him, commencing with God, and holding himself ever ready for God, and questioning obedience to His commands. When God directed him to leave his own country and his kindred, and go into another land, he arose and went. Coming into the land of Canaan, where he found not the lightest aid or encouragement to the worship of God—for we are told that "the Canaanites were then in the land"—he concealed not his belief, and failed not in the slightest degree, to show himself a servant of that God whom he had chosen in the land of his nativity. It is said of him, in the very connection in which it is declared that the Canaanite was then in the land, that "he built him an altar unto the Lord." How long he continued to reside at the place where he first stopped is not stated. In the course of time, however, "he removed from thence unto a mountain on the west of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west and Hai on the east." And then it is added, as if to leave us in no doubt of his position, and as if to teach us our own duty in similar circumstances, "and there he built unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord." In consequence of the famine, which soon thereafter came upon the land, he went down into Egypt. On his return he passed through the extreme southern part of the land, and journeyed on to the place where his tent had been pitched. "To the place of the altar, which he had made there at first, and there Abraham called on the name of the Lord." After the act of dividing the land between himself and Lot, it is said, "Then Abraham removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord." In the course of time he changed his

residence again, and dwelt in Beersheba. It is said, "And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God."

Wherever he resided, and for however short a time, and under whatever circumstances, he never lost sight of him that he built an altar, as frequently said of him that he built an altar, with whom he was compelled to mingle. On the contrary, he compelled them to recognize the superior power, and wisdom, and goodness of the God whom he worshipped and served. And, what is of consequence, as he honored God, God honored him. There was no man so great in all the land in which he resided, as Abraham the faithful.—*Wes. Ch. Advocate.*

GIVING UP FOR CHRIST.

BY REV. T. L. CUYLER.

A friend requested me to name a few simple and practical rules for Christian self-denial. "It is not what a man takes up, but what he gives up, that makes him rich towards God." Now what ought a follower of Jesus to give up for his master's sake?

1. Of course every man who would become a Christian's man, must renounce everything that God's Word and a healthy conscience set down as wrong. All sins are "contraband" at the gateway of entrance to the Christian life. The sentinel at the gate challenges us with the command—"Lay down that sin!" "Cease to do evil," comes before "Learn to do well."

2. We must give up whatever, by its direct influence, tends to injure ourselves or others. Here comes in the law of brotherly love—the law of avoiding the appearance of evil, and of renouncing whatever causes our brother to stumble. This is the generally accepted basis for the duty of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks. We have a very poor opinion of the piety of any man who will not give up his bottle of wine or any other self-indulgence for the sake of taking a stumbling-block out of a fellow-creature's path. This second principle of abandoning every practice which may mislead others, is the one to be applied by a Christian whenever he is solicited to play whist, or to attend the opera, the circus, or the dancing-party. You may not become a gambler, but cards make gamblers of others. You may not be corrupted by the over-stage, or by the promiscuous dance; but their influence has damaged thousands of your fellow-Christians. The safe side of all questionable amusements is the outside.

3. Give up whatever tends to pamper the passions, or to kindle unholy desires. Paul's noble determination to "keep his body under," implies that there was something or other in his fleshly nature which ought to be kept under. It is also true of almost every Christian, that somewhere in his nature lies a weak point, a besetting tendency to sin; and right there must be applied the check-rein of self-denial. Even eminent Christians have had to wage constant battle with sexual passions. Others have had sore conflict with irritable, violent tempers. When a servant of Christ is willing to take a back-seat, or to yield the pre-eminence to others, he is making a surrender which is well-pleasing to his meek and lowly Master. One of the hardest things to many a Christian is to serve his Saviour as a "private," when his pride tells him that he ought to wear a "shoulder-strap" in Christ's army.

4. Another very hard thing for most persons to give up, is to give up *having their own way*. But the very essence of true spiritual obedience lies just here. It is right here that self-sufficiency, and vanity, and waywardness, and obstinacy are to be met. Here they must be sacrificed to that demand of the Master, that he shall rule, and not we.

5. The last rule of giving up which we have room in this brief article to list, that time, ease and money must all be held tributary to Christ. In these days of stylish equipage and social extravagance, how few Christians are willing to give up to Jesus the key to their purses and bank-books! Too many go through the solemn farce of writing "Holiness to the Lord" on their property, and then using it for their own gratification. Every servant of Christ should systematically bestow at least one-tenth of his annual income in Christian charities, and as much more as he or she can afford without rubbing others. What child of God who has been baptized by benevolence? It is harder to give up ease than money. Personal exertion to save sinners, to do disagreeable duties, and to "keep at it," is a hill work, is one of the severest tests of self-denying godliness. Blessed is that disciple who can say, "It is my meat to do my Master's will, and to finish the work which he gave me to do." He goes on giving up—and giving up for Christ until his dying hour; and then when he gets to heaven he will find that what he "lost for Christ's sake," has been saving up for him to be his everlasting treasure in glory.—*American Messenger.*

DYING OF THIRST.

It is said that there is no physical suffering so great as that of dying from thirst. Soldiers on an exposed road or battlefield will risk their lives often in crossing an exposed road or stream to get a drink of water. There is no substitute they can give relief, no luxury but what would be glad to exchange for a cup of cold water by one who is thus perishing. A poor soldier, wounded in the battle of the Wilderness, was lying upon the battlefield suffering from thirst. A comrade brought him his canteen filled with refreshing water. How eagerly the dying man gazed upon it! How he blessed the hand that brought it! But how great was his agony and disappointment when he found that he could not swallow. In vain were all his efforts, and with a look of despair it was set aside.

There are many poor souls around us dying of thirst who do not feel their want. By their will one day. No one ever died happily who did not love the Lord Jesus while in life and health. His salvation is called the water of life. If our souls drink of it they shall

never thirst. If we do not take of it we shall miserably perish. It is offered us "without money and without price," so we alone are to blame if we do not obtain it. The very best time to seek Jesus is in childhood and youth.

If we neglect it then, the time may come when we may seek but cannot find him. We may be in great agony because we are not Christians, and one may tell us of the Saviour's love; but like the poor soldier, we may not be able to drink of this cup of life. Once we could easily have repented and turned to him; now it is too late.

An old man urged a little child on his knee to repent and turn to God then.

"But why don't you repent, grandfather?"

"Ah, child, my heart is hard, my heart is hard!" said the old man, with a sorrowful shake of his head.

Don't wait until your heart is hardened by years of sin, but come to Christ early while he may be found.—*Presbyterian.*

BE REASONABLE WITH CHILDREN.

Some men, no doubt, wonder if such advice can be needed. But others, who, like the writer, have observed the exercise of parental government, both in homes and public places, will acknowledge the need, and hope the advice will prove "good seed that will bring forth fruit." While waiting at depots, and sojourning in hotels, there have been displayed acts of injustice and severity by parents and others towards children under their care that have excited my deepest sympathy. A short time since a little one less than four years old caught his beautiful dress on an iron band projecting from a trunk that encumbered the hall where he was at play. The mother's passion would not allow her to enquire how the rent was made—enough for her that a fine dress was spoiled, and she must be taxed to repair or replace it. Her vexation was in language so coarse and harsh that I was not surprised to hear the enquiry from one in the adjoining room—"Who was speaking to that child? Was it a lady?" O that a substantial and less costly style of dress may be adopted for children, so that they and their parents may be spared much annoyance and unhappiness.

A little later in the season, at one of our most fashionable watering places, a child was severely punished for soiling her dress. The angry mother loudly and repeatedly demanding of the child how it was done, could only elicit between her sobs the reply "I do not know." Probably in this case, as in others, the child was blameless, the act being wholly accidental. But mothers are not alone guilty in this matter. Do we not know that fathers and teachers are often cruel and have punished even to death?

The habit of threatening children (usually with no intention of executing the threat) may arise from thoughtlessness, but unreasonable and harsh dealing results from a want of self-government in those who have control of them. Do parents consider the effect such a course has on their children? How it either irritates or saddens them? How it alienates the affection that is claimed and should be rendered. Do they reflect that their example endures the nurse (with whom their children pass so much time) to exercise the like severity? Or do they think how such a course tarnishes their own reputation?

There are often a greater number of witnesses and listeners to such outbursts than the actors imagine. But there is always present a merciful Father, who looks with abhorrence on such abuse of the authority He has committed to them. Let all who have the care of children, but especially mothers, be persuaded to be reasonable, patient, and forgiving, training them "in the fear of the Lord," so may you be indeed "joyful mothers of children."—*Evangelist.*

THE INFIDEL AND THE CHRISTIAN.

It may be that some of you neglect the public worship of Almighty God and the reading of His Word, by reason of your having listened to the voice of the scoffer. If so, singular as the advice may appear, I counsel you to listen to the voice of the scoffer, and to hear that scoffer describing his own view of life:

"In man," said Voltaire, "there is more wretchedness than in all animals put together. He loves life, and yet he knows that he must die. If he enjoys a transient good, he suffers various evils, and is at last devoured by worms. This knowledge is his fatal prerogative; other animals have it not. The bulk of mankind are nothing more than a crowd of wretches equally criminal and unfortunate; and the globe contains carcasses rather than men. I tremble at the review of this dreadful picture to find that it contains a complaint against Providence itself, and I wish I had never been born."

In contrast with this I would ask you now to listen to the voice of a sincere believer:

"I shall shortly," exclaimed Halyburton, on his death-bed, "get a very different sight of God from what I have ever had, and shall be able to praise Him for ever and ever. What a wonder that I enjoy such composure under all my bodily pains, and in view of death itself! What a mercy that, having the use of my reason, I can declare His goodness to my soul! I bless His name; I have found Him, and die rejoicing in Him. Blessed be God that ever I was born."

SIN OF EXAGGERATION.

There is a fault which does not get itself called by the name of "lie," but which is a dangerously close relation to it, and that is the habit of exaggeration. A man hears a thing true enough in its original shape, but he passes it on with a little addition of his own. The man to whom he passes, adds his touch of exaggeration, until at last the statement is so swollen and distorted as to convey everything but the facts of the case; like many statements that have gone forth and obtained credence in the world; and yet, though they are in their final state grossly false, and do serious injustice, it is difficult to charge any one with a full grown lie, for the share he has had

in propagating the deceit. The result is a sort of accumulative lie, made by persons successively contributing a little touch of exaggeration to the story as it came to their hands. The worst of it is that this mischief is caused by the exercise of a power that is sometimes useful—I mean that creative, imaginative power which lends life to a description. A man hears a thing, and then gives it the color of his own thoughts almost unconsciously; yet, I fear, this may produce very mischievous, perhaps disastrous results. And who is to blame? Why, every one who has a share in the accretions which the story or statement has received. See how responsible we may be for the effects of a lie, even when we do not wish to deceive. How careful we should be not to add to what we hear. If we must needs repeat it, or help to circulate it, let us leave it as it came. Let us pass it on scrupulously unchanged, with no twist or increase of our own.

HEAVEN IN THE KITCHEN.

The Christian woman's household is her nearest field of work. Often enough she has the poor and the lame and the blind of soul under her own roof; and all too often she is ignorant of their needs and neglectful of her privilege of help and guidance. How many "half-grown" and full grown girls toil in the kitchens of our land, year after year, without enough of sympathy and encouragement to keep their spirits from fainting.

This gift, which separates servant and employer, should be bridged by a gospel of kindly painstaking, of cordial interest in trials, of helpful readiness on the part of each.

But if the mistress of the house be wanting in practical Christianity, how much more is to be expected of her who is treated as a hireling merely? When incompetence, and sloth, and wilful neglect, and impudence have demoralized the domestics, how much need, then, of forbearance and wisdom, and of that charity which is not easily provoked! If the spirit which the "help" finds in depraved pots and kettles, and in disobedient fires and washing machines, be allowed to infect the human agents concerned therewith, what hope will there be of a kingdom of heaven begun in the parlor and at church? Only that other spirit which says: "I am among you as one that serveth," can triumph over the vexations which beset the head of an earthly household.—*Christian at Work.*

THOUGHTS TO THE BIBLE.

Who composed the following description of the bible was never known. It was found in Westminster Abbey, nameless and dateless:—

A nation would be truly happy if it were governed by no other law than those of this blessed book.

It is so complete a system that nothing can be added to it.

It contains everything needful to be known or done.

It affords copy for a king and a rule for a subject.

It gives instructions to a senate, authority and direction to a magistrate.

It cautions a witness, requires an impartial verdict of a jury, and furnishes the judge with his sentence.

It sets the husband as the lord of a household, the wife as a mistress of the table—tells him how to rule and how to manage.

It entitles parents to honor, and enjoins obedience on children.

It prescribes and limits the sway of the sovereign, the ruler, and authority of the master—commands the subject to honor, and servants to obey, and promises the blessing and protection of the Almighty to all that walk by its rules.

It points out a faithful and eternal guardian to the departing husband and father—tells him how to rule and how to manage.

It teaches a man to set his house in order, and know his will; it appoints a duty for his wife, and entails the right of the first born, and shows how the young branches shall be left.

It defends the right of all, and reveals vengeance to every defaulter, overreacher, and trespasser.

It is the first book and the oldest book in the world. It contains the choicest matter—gives the best instruction—affords the greatest pleasure and satisfaction that were ever enjoyed.

It contains the best laws and most profound mysteries that were ever penned; it brings the best comforts to the inquiring and disconsolate.

It exhibits life and immortality from everlasting, and shows the way to glory.

It is a brief recital of all that is to come.

It settles all matters in debate, resolves all doubts, and causes the mind and conscience of all their scruples.

It reveals the only true and living God, and shows the way to him, and sets aside all other gods, that describes the vanity of them and of those that trust in such; in short, it is a book of laws, to show right and wrong; a book of wisdom, that condemns all folly, and makes the foolish wise; a book of truth, that detects all lies and confronts all errors; and a book of life, that shows the way from everlasting death.

It contains the most ancient antiquities, strange events, wonderful occurrences, heroic deeds, and unparalleled wars.

It describes the celestial, terrestrial, and infernal worlds, and the origin of the angelic myriads, human tribes, and devilish legions.

Search the Scriptures.

WILL SICKNESS MAKE US RELIGIOUS?—

"One should think," said a friend to the celebrated Dr. Samuel Johnson, "that sickness and the view of death would make men more religious." "Sir," replied Johnson, "they do not know how to go about it. A man who has never had religion before, no more grows religious when he is sick, than a man who has never learned figures can count when he has need of calculation."