

The Religious Intelligencer.

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER FOR NEW BRUNSWICK

Rev. J. McLEOD,]

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

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The Intelligencer.

"QUITE WELL."

BY THOMAS M'CREE, D. D.

"How are you?" "Quite well, I thank you." How often is this question put me in the course of a day, without thought; and yet, when one thinks about it how much is implied in the answer to such a question! How many things must be in their right places, in right order, and doing their work in the right time in this body of ours before we can really be or feel ourselves to be "quite well." To begin with the heart, which a vast number of springs and valves, vein and arteries, must be emptying and replenishing; how many secretions must be oozing out and flowing in to keep the blood in healthy action; how many tubes and fibres must be doing active service ere we can truly return such a response! Should the pulse quicker or slacken its pace by one-half more than it should do, you are in for fever or syncope should one of these canals spring a leak, or should a small plug stop the vital stream, it is all over with you. Or, turn to that cunning alchemist, the liver, distilling and concocting all day regularly its juices and compounds; it is well for you that it is so punctual, for were it to neglect its duty a single moment, the yellow flag, instantly hoisted, would proclaim that you are very far indeed from being quite well. Our most vital organs, indeed, may, in a fit of derangement, be converted into our most fatal enemies. The kidneys may administer deadly poison, and the spinal cord may, with the aid of a minute clot of blood, despatch us as quickly as the cord of the executioner. All this while the stomach must be busy in the culinary line, and the lungs in practising the art of ventilation; and we need no science or doctor to tell us when matters go wrong in these departments. But besides these larger organs, the system is pervaded by a net work of nerves so infinitely ramified that we cannot probe the skin with the point of a needle without drawing blood, and sending an electric shock from head to foot. Then we have an assemblage of joints, each so nicely adjusted with its pivot, socket, motion and humor, that all goes on in health as easily and silently as a well-oiled machine. Time would fail us to tell of the muscles, tissues, and filaments with which these are connected, and all of which must go on harmoniously if we are to be quite well. But let us only think of the brain; that sacred citadel to which we approach with feelings of awe. Nature, as if to proclaim the superior value of this organ, while it has left all the rest with no better probe than a coating of skin and cartilage, has built around the brain a strong wall of protection; but it is in itself of all the organs the most delicate, the most intricate, the most fragile, and the most susceptible of injury. If people knew all about it, how careful they would be to preserve it; how much amazed to think that, depending as they do on such a tender piece of workmanship for physical and mental health, they should be "quite well." And yet, alas! how many will toss it about as a football in mere sport, or goad it into madness by intoxication, or spur it to death by over-exertion, without allowing it a quiet night to sleep, or a Sabbath day to rest! Such considerations, while they impress us with the infinite wisdom of the Creator, while they teach us how "fearfully and wonderfully we are made," are surely fraught with many practical lessons. How slight and precarious is the tenure by which we hold our present existence! Talk of the perils of the deep, talk of the bloody chances of the battle-field; to every man, woman and child whom we meet in the bloom of health and in the peaceful bosom of home, it may be truly said, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between thee and death." The consciousness of this fact ought certainly to make us think seriously on the vanity of the world, the value of time, and the momentous magnitude of eternity. Not, indeed, that we should be perpetually thinking about our bodily organs. Kindly and wisely has our Maker kept the inward mechanism out of our sight; for had it been laid bare like that of an opened watch, it is doubtful if we could have thought about anything else. There are some folks who are never "quite well." Visit them at any hour, morning, noon, or night, they are "very poorly;" something or other is wrong, they cannot tell what; or perhaps they know too well; they have plain symptoms of nearly all the diseases in "Buchan's Domestic Medicine." This is a sad perversion of the mechanism which forms part of ourselves. As science spreads abroad, it may be expected that people will pay more respect to the laws and lessons of nature; that the art of war, which multiplies so fearfully the chances of death, as if this poor body had not enough to face already from the inroads of disease, and as if men, formed in God's image, were "like brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed," will gradually fall into disrepute; and that the rules of temperance, chastity, and sobriety will be more listened to than they have been in ruder times. We are quite aware that something better and stronger than mere natural science is needed to give her teachings fair play. We are not blind to the fact that medical students are too often to be found living in the practical disregard of all their knowledge and experience, and that modern science has been as fruitful in murderous devices as in the art of health and healing. But this arises from the unnatural divorce that has hitherto been maintained

between science and religion. With the mere physiologist, the phenomena of nature, dissociated from faith in the supernatural, lose all their moral significance and effect; life and death are the counters with which he plays his game, and, like the confirmed gambler, he will venture fortune and life on the fall of a die. And the same thing will be seen in the game of political passion. Christianity alone can enable a man to use his own body and treat the bodies of his fellow-men with tenderness and respect. While the welfare of the immortal soul stands paramount in its eye, the influence of the Gospel extends to its earthly companion; and in its moral precepts, "Thou shalt do no murder," "Do thyself no harm," "Take heed lest your hearts be over-charged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life," "Let everyone keep his own vessel in sanctification and honor," we may discern the sacred regard which it pays to bodily health and human life, as well as to spiritual purity.

There is a serious sense in which many now enjoying good health are far from being "quite well." It cannot be all well with the heart that does not beat in unison with the love of God, that is inflamed with earthly lusts. In describing the sanitary condition of such a man, Scripture draws its imagery from the leprosy-house. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint; from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores." But to the Christian, even in the bitterest hour of sickness and sorrow, it may be said, "It is well with him." Like the light of heaven, in which all the colors of the rainbow are neutralized into one pure and simple ray, Christian faith and hope can transmute all events into the same blissful hue. "Is it well with thee?" the prophet asked the Shunammite woman; and, though with a throbbing head and a sore heart, she replied, "It is well." "Is it well with the child?" And, though with a thrill of anguish as she thought of the dear boy stretched pale and cold in death in his little crib at home, still she replied, "It is well." And even when the mortal frame is breaking up, when life has become a long disease and every breath is a pang, the child of God may return the same answer; for can it be otherwise than well with one who can say with the Psalmist, "My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever?" "All's well!" is the echo of the Christian sentinel in the darkest hour of the night. When the good Richard Baxter drew near his end, some one asked him "how he felt himself?" The author of "The Saint's Everlasting Rest" replied, "Almost well!" and expired.

OBJECTIONS TO THE MINISTRY.

Rev. A. A. Livermore, writing in the *Liberal Christian*, anticipates and forcibly and wisely replies to some of the objections which young men urge when the question of devoting themselves to the Christian ministry comes before them. We copy the following words as worthy of a wide reading:

1. But you say you do not feel you are good enough for such a work. I would not weaken one iota your sense of imperfection, for it is a great spur to improvement. Yet it ought not to stand in the way of our usefulness. Perhaps no man ever felt that he was good enough to preach the gospel of Christ. Paul said he was not worthy to be an Apostle. Who is? But we have this treasure in earthen vessels. If Christianity is to be preached, it must be by men, imperfect, erring men. If you are not good enough now, you can and ought to grow in the Christian spirit and life. If you are not good enough to preach, are you good enough to live, or good enough to be an immortal being? The ministry certainly needs good and devout men, whose souls are consecrated to God. If you are not such a man to-day, you can be in due time, and you ought to have this high-toned character to fill any sphere well, whether you are a minister, or farmer, or merchant.

2. But you say that you have not had a call from God to be a preacher. Perhaps not. But God does not call us to any work in life, even the holiest, by a miraculous voice or an audible word of the Spirit. He calls us by our sense of duty. He calls us by our feeling of what we can best do. He calls us by the qualities of mind and heart, which he has given us for a special work. He calls the soldier by the danger of his country. He calls the reformer by the wickedness of the times. He calls the minister by their seeing the need of Christianity to save men from error, sin and woe. The counsel of a parent, the suggestion of a friend, are often God's call, and may be as real and as powerful as if spoken in thunder from the skies. Have you never felt those stirrings of the Holy Spirit, and those leadings of Providence, which showed you the ministry of Christ as the best and most useful calling on earth? Then you may already have received what is the virtual call of God and baptism of the Spirit to this life-work of serving him and saving his children.

3. But again, you say you are undecided what profession to choose. "This is the case with young men. Sometimes they remain too long in this state of indecision, and drift meanly with the tide. Yet while it is unwise to solve such important questions hastily or rashly, it is not well to continue long in a state of suspense. It saps the energies of a noble manhood. Time flies, life wastes away, duties are pressing, and whatsoever our hand findeth to do, we should do with our might. Decision, action and energy are the great qualities which are needed to make good and useful men, who will leave this world a little better than they found it. Seek guidance from your friends, and especially from that best friend, God; then decide and abide by that decision with the firmness of adamant. He never yet failed to be useful who threw his whole soul into his work."

4. Still you may say, that you fear you may not succeed in the ministry if you undertake it. No one can know with certainty. There is the element of doubt in all things earthly, and it is wise and well that it is so. But it

would be the part of folly to sink down in inactivity, because we can not have pledges beforehand of our success. If we see a good work to be done, a path of usefulness opened before us, we should not be deterred from going forward, because we must take many steps in the dark. He who fails in a good work, has at least done what he could, and he is infinitely better than he who buries his talent in a napkin and hides it in the earth, because he is afraid he shall not succeed. It is the slothful servant that sits down and suppleth his arms, lest he should fail. Church and pursue noble aims in life, and they will bear you as on angels' wings far above your present hopes. If you choose the ministry as your sphere of labor, and throw yourself into it with all the concentrated enthusiasm of your nature, be assured, dear friend, you will never regret it. You may be and must be disappointed in many things, for your anticipations are probably very crude, but fail you can not, as there is God in heaven. Though you sow in tears, you will reap in joy.

HINTS TO MEMBERS.

1. First of all be sure that your heart is at peace with God, and that the Holy Spirit bears witness of the same. A living membership makes a living Church.

2. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you live in peace with all men." A quarrelsome Christian (?) is a tool of Satan.

3. Show to the world by conduct and conversation that you are interested in the church and religion.

4. Keep in your place. Get neither above it nor below it; and remember, too, that the judgment of your brethren is usually better than your own as to where your place is.

5. Be a worker whenever you are. Church organizations are neither guest-chambers nor lounging places; they are workshops.

6. Attend the house of God upon all occasions, whether it be the class-meeting, prayer-meeting, Sabbath-school, or preaching service. There is always good there for your soul which will not come to you at home.

7. Do not visit on Sabbath unless it is to talk on religious subjects and to pray. If you are visited, entertain your visitors in this way, and they will not be likely to trouble you again.

8. Pray much!—in your families every day; in your closet often, in your hearts "without ceasing."

9. Receive your new minister, and make him feel that he is welcome, even though you would have chosen another man. Pay him well; pray for him much; invite people to your church to hear him; always speak well of him if you can, never ill of him if you can avoid it; and as faithful co-laborers with him, do all you can to hold up his hands.

10. Love your minister, but do not worship him; and when he is gone, do not think that God or religion is gone. Pin your faith to no man's sleeve, but anchor it on God's throne, and you are safe.

11. Pay liberally, at least one-tenth of your income to benevolent purposes. There are those in the church whom the weight of God's gold and silver will sink into hell.

12. If you are a tobacco user, each time you buy it put its equivalent cost into a small box, and give the contents of this box to your minister as a donation—to buy his tobacco.

13. Keep your church-house cleanly and in good order outside and inside. (My ruminate brother, chew this awhile.) It is a shame how some church members sometimes defile the house of God.

14. Talk little of troubles in the church to people outside.

15. Take your church paper if you can. Know what your church is doing in the world.

16. Know what it is. Inform yourself of its doctrines and principles, and if you like them be ready to defend them; if you don't, go where you are better suited.

17. Be social, friendly, brotherly, with all Christians. Forbid none that cast out devils in the name of your Master.

18. Deal honestly, conscientiously, with all men in the affairs of this world; then you can hope to do them good. Do not take undue advantage of your worldly neighbor, and then go to church and pray God to have mercy on his soul.

PRAISE AND RIDICULE.

Yesterday I chanced to be with one of my neighbors, as his little son returned from doing some laborious errand, and as I watched the child's countenance, so full of pleasure, and bearing such a satisfied expression, as his father quietly complimented him for his promptness. I could not but compare the scene with one I had witnessed only a few hours before at another place, where a father in a cold, derisive tone, was ridiculing his boy for dullness of comprehension, and for failures which, although small, seemed like mountains to the young mind. The despondent expression almost made me shudder, as I saw how much was needed the kind, gentle words of praise, to cheer his naturally gloomy nature.

Would it not be well for us all to compare, in a wider sense, these two great agents, praise and ridicule? And first, we must examine into the character of the praise which they are to act, viz., the nature, feelings, and consequences, the actions of men. Our bodies, from their birth, need tenderness and loving care.

To meet this want, the Creator has implanted in the mother's heart that love which will prompt the necessary care. It is not by harshness or sharp thrusts that its highest development is promoted. In this respect our minds bear a perfect analogy to our physical organization.

They are subject to growth. They develop from a seed (as it were) to maturity, from feebleness to strength, and this is not effected by a cold, immobility of soil, by a severe ungenial air, by sharp, unkindly pruning. But rather by fostering care, by congenial atmosphere, by gentle helps in times of weakness.

Of ridicule we will say, at the outset, it is mischievous and despicable. The law of right forbids us to say anything, without imperative reasons, against, or that shall detract from the good name and reputation of another;

who has not a base name, and who is not some good trait which may afford us an avenue to his heart; and by seeking, and approving, and praising, we make the man our friend. We evince to him our friendly feeling, and to retain this good opinion of ours he will seek to cultivate the quality which won our commendation.

We would say, then, that to exert the most beneficial influence, we would pity those who have been less favored by Providence than ourselves, endeavor to apprehend something of the infinite love which flows out, unmeasured, from the Father's heart, be very careful of our ridicule, and make ourselves fit instruments, and powerful ones, for the Master's service, by diligently seeking and faithfully awarding to every merit in our erring friend its full measure of praise, thus encouraging him, and promoting his ultimate purity, elevation and final salvation.

WHAT A PAIR OF SLIPPERS DID FOR INDIA.

A TRUE STORY.

It is a sultry afternoon in India. The wife of a Missionary sits quietly plying her needle with busy fingers, gradually bringing to completion a pair of slippers she is working for her husband. Although the pattern is so intricate, and the execution so skilful that they would seem to demand all her attention, her mind is rather occupied with thoughts about the multitude of high-born women in that land of roses, whose condition is worse than that of convicts in our state prisons. Many and many a time has she endeavored to do something for them, but as often has she been rebuffed. She had hoped that when the young men who had been educated in the Mission schools grew up, she might have influence with them, and through them gain her end. She had laboured with them faithfully, but all in vain. The force of what she urged upon them they acknowledged. They felt that it was desirable for their wives to be educated, but were powerless to help them. The iron chains of ancient custom, the grinding tyranny of religious superstition, the machinery of a domestic *caste*, thwarted their efforts and destroyed their hopes. And now almost despairing of ever accomplishing her noble desire, she had committed their interests to the God she loved and served, praying to Him to open a door for the relief of these domestic captives. And so she sits busily working, fast completing the gift she designs for him she loves; rejoicing and thanking God that her lot has been so blessed, that she is enabled to aid her husband in his work—that she is permitted to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free, untrammelled by false religion and social propriety.

The last stitch is taken, and she is resting with a quiet contentment in regard to her own condition and in fancy dwelling on the comfort her little gift will afford her husband when the door opens, and in walks a Babu, a native gentleman, one of her former pupils. He picks up the slippers, and is lost in admiration. Their bright colors attract him, their skill manifested in their execution is something surprising. He had never seen the like before. And a woman made them, worked them out, stitch by stitch, and did it with that marvellous, magical instrument, the needle!

"Babu, would you not like your wife to learn how to make you a pair of slippers? The thought flashes through her mind like a inspiration from on high. "If you will let me, I will come and teach her."

The idea takes him. She lends him the slippers, and he hurries away to his home. The slippers are shown from one to another. The story is told of their being made by woman, and by means of a little instrument they have never seen, and of whose virtue they were utterly ignorant. Curiosity gets the better of superstition, ambition of curiosity. "Could they learn? Was it possible for them to make anything so beautiful? Why not the despised Christian woman come to them? The pollution they could efface by the appropriate ceremonies, and how pleasant it would be for them to have something to occupy their time, something beautiful in itself!"

So they talk it over, this one's mother-in-law with that one's mother-in-law, and so on until the consent of all has been gained, even of the wife of the old patriarch of the family whose will is the ultimate law respecting everything that transpires in the zenana, woman's apartment. The missionary lady is invited to come and teach the ladies in the house, and soon they have solved the mystery and become familiar with the powers of the inscrutable needle. Quick to learn, the soon have achieved results which do credit to their teaching and their skill.

Babu So-and-So takes the pair of slippers his wife has embroidered, and shows them with justifiable pride to Babu Thun-and-S. He in turn shows them to the ladies in the house, and they know they can learn just as well as the ladies in Babu So-and-So's zenana, so why not let the missionary lady come and

teach them? She is invited; she comes; they learn quickly; and so the work spreads. A pair of slippers has been the instrument of letting in a ray of light upon thousands who for ages had been sitting in the darkness of the shadow of death.

Considered merely in the light of a social reform it commends itself to our sympathy and interests. To give some little occupation, higher than the menial duties which have hitherto engrossed all their time, to those who naturally "peer in mental power and physical strength" of the most favored ladies in the world, is itself enough to enlist the zeal and aid of all. But that is the least that is accomplished. Along with the fancy work, the Missionary teaches these poor women how to read, and tells them the attractive stories and the cheering promises of the Bible. The truth of God has made its power felt in the midst of these old superstitions, and the desire to know how to work a pair of slippers has in some cases not been fully satisfied till the feet of the scholar have been taught to walk in the way of holiness.

PAPAL FRANCE.

Papists are remarkably expert in overlooking "beams" in their own eyes, and seeing "motes" in Protestant eyes. In fact, this trait will usually be found to be proportioned to the amount of bigotry a man carries, so we naturally look to the subjects of His Holiness for superior keenness in this kind of vision. Our own land of heretics, where Protestantism has planted its ideas and founded its institutions, is, of course, accursed, and were it not for the goodly seed which Catholicism has brought to these shores, we had long ago been as Sodom and Gomorrah. But for the elect's sake, God has had mercy on us. Evil fruits appear, however, in this Protestant country, in the various sects of disciples which here publish their tenets, fruits which the holy Inquisition, with its thumb-screws and racks, has, in the name of Christ, kept out of Catholic countries. Worse than this, also, are the floods of liberalism, the frosts of radicalism, the pestilence of spiritualism, and kindred evils innumerable, overwhelming these United States, for which, at the bar of Papal opinion, the priests and bishops of the Roman church hold Protestantism responsible. This form of Christianity is declared to be unable to preserve the virtues of nations, unable to prevent the gospel of Christ from falling into contempt; and tedious arguments,—based on the irreligious tendencies and doctrines of this country, are constantly uttered in favor of the Holy Catholic church.

But what is in "thine own eye" beloved? Afflicted France is a Catholic country. Was not Louis Napoleon "Defender of the Faith," Eugenie a famously devout Romanist, and the religion of the empire Papal? France has never been Protestant. The massacre of St. Bartholomew, for which the Pope in a special service praised God, prevented. France has always been Catholic. Under the institutions and doctrines of the Romish church, the character of the French people has been formed, and whatever that church is able to bestow on a nation, receiving unblinded its instructions, it has had unlimited opportunity in France to give. The schools, the press, the nobility, the court and the churches, have been swayed by the teachings and influences of the Papal church. If then, here, in free America, Protestantism is responsible for all the opinions afflating in society, as Catholic tongues say it is, how much more is the Catholic church responsible for the dark, deadly infidelity and shameful