

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.]

Vol. XIX.—No. 40.

SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1872.

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Fredericton, May 2, 1872.

The Intelligencer.

THE POWER OF PRAISE.

BY THE REV. A. J. YEATER, ANDERSON, TEXAS.

The Infidel question, "What profit shall we have if we pray unto Him?" asked nearly four thousand years ago, "in the land of Uz," has repeated itself in all ages since, in one form or another. It is in vain that the believer points to the mighty acts that have been achieved in answer to prayer; the judgments averted; the armies conquered; the course of nature changed; even the sun arrested in mid-heaven. Still does the unbelieving heart demand "a sign" before yielding its assent to the efficacy of prayer.

There is another part of divine worship equally important in its character, which we fear is often depreciated, even by good people. We refer to that of praise. It is just as much a religious duty to "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually," as that of prayer. God, too, has given us equally signal tokens that he delights in this part of our service. Nay, he has not unfrequently withheld his answer to prayer until he heard the voice of praise.

Perhaps the grandest triumph of sacred music that the world has ever witnessed was on the occasion of the dedication of the temple built by Solomon. The regular choir of the temple service, as organized by David, consisted of "four thousand, who praised the Lord with the instruments which David made to praise therewith." These all participated on the occasion, assisted by one hundred and twenty priests with silver trumpets. The glory that attended this scene, inspiration can alone describe. "It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard, in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals, and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth forever; then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God. And when all the children of Israel saw it, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth forever."

Notice here that it was not during the sacrifice of animals, in the dedicatory service, nor yet during the praise of Solomon, but that Israel poured forth the gratitude of their hearts in praise, aided by trumpets and harps and cymbals, that Jehovah bowed the heavens and came down, and his glory filled the temple with such radiance that the priests were not able to stand and minister at the altar by reason of its brightness.

On another occasion, when Judah was threatened by the children of Ammon, Jehoshaphat not only prayed, but he appointed singers unto the Lord, who should praise the beauty of holiness as they went before the army. And it was when they began to sing and to praise that the Lord interfered for their deliverance, and smote their enemies."

So it was when Paul and Silas sang praises in the dungeon of the prison-walls, that an angel descended from heaven, and knocked off their chains, and threw open the prison-doors.

In view of such facts—and others could be given—who can doubt but there is power with God in song as well as in prayer? Nay, those who have had any experience in modern revivals cannot but have noticed the special manifestation of the divine presence, in His quickening and converting power, during the exercise of praise. God is jealous of his honor, and no doubt often withholds his answer to our petitions until we render unto him the praise due his holy name.

There are only two avenues through which we approach God in worship—namely: prayer and praise. Both are important—nay, essential to evangelical piety. If either service is most pleasing to God, it surely is praise. Through this channel, the deepest emotions of the soul find expression. Religion has chiefly to do with the emotional part of our nature. Everything connected with it is calculated to stir up the heart to praise and thanksgiving. So felt the pious David; and realizing how inadequate were his own feeble efforts to give expression to what his heart felt, he called upon "everything that hath breath," yes, upon the whole creation, to join him in the praise: "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; let the field be joyful, and all that is therein." A heart thus attuned to God's praise would naturally desire to call to its aid every instrument suitable to assist in this praise. Hence the magnificent choir of the temple. In this, too, David not only had the sanction, but acted under the immediate direction of God.

Now, the nature of prayer and praise has been the same in all ages. That which was pleasing to God when David reigned in Israel is equally pleasing to Him to-day. The brazen altar has done its work and passed away. Not so the golden altar of prayer and praise. This still remains, and will so continue until earth is filled with its perfume. Nay, when time shall end, the glorious song of redeeming love will barely have commenced; for, says the beloved John: "I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." This praise is the very atmosphere of heaven; and just in proportion as it becomes an element of our worship is heaven brought down to earth, and its joys are realized in our worshipping assemblies.

The practical question arises, Does praise form as prominent a part of our worship, at the present day, as its importance demands? Have we not, in a measure, lost sight of the true idea of worship in having given so much prominence to the sermon? People go to church, not so much to worship God as to

"hear the preacher;" and we are too ready to slur over the real worship of the sanctuary in accommodation to this demand of a vitiated public. True worship is active, not passive. It is making expressions to God, and not receiving impressions from some eloquent divine. The sermon is proper in its place, but it should not stand between the people and God in the praise of the sanctuary.

The question arises, Should instruments be allowed in the services of the house of God, at the present day, as they were in the Jewish worship? There is certainly no law forbidding them. Instruments, like choirs, may be a blessing or a curse in a church, just according to the use made of them. That both are sometimes abused, no one can question. The same may be said of the pulpit itself. When either organs or choirs are used as an aid in public worship, they answer a good purpose; they serve to guide, sustain, and harmonize the voices of the congregation, and thus assist them in the praise of God; but when a fine organ and a professional quartette choir are simply used to give Sunday concerts in the house of God, it becomes solemn mockery. It is an attempt to palm off a fraud upon God in lieu of worship.

Let us, then, while contemplating the power of prayer, not lose sight of the power of praise. This not only has power with God, but its reflex influence upon our own souls is essential to Christian development. Music is the very atmosphere of heaven; and here the soul must be attuned to those higher anthems of the upper sanctuary. Oh! if we would join those anthems above, here we must begin the song. Here must be unsealed those fountains of love and joy whose living streams gush forth from every heart above. Had the church on earth more of the spirit of heaven, every time we meet to worship, God would fill the temple with his glory, and we would realize a foretaste of those joys which await the people of God in the great temple not made with hands.

INSTRUCTION OF CHURCH MEMBERS.

A Christian church is a church of Christians. Converted persons only are lawful members. It was a great calamity when this gospel rule was set aside. Infant baptism did the mischief. It led to infant membership, and the result was an unregenerate church. The error has cost centuries of delay in the world's conversion. This point must be guarded with care. True converts only should be members. We have no reason to expect perfection in young church members. In the kingdom of grace, as in the kingdom of nature, we are all born infants, and must grow and learn. The scriptures everywhere imply the existence of ignorance, imperfection, and diversity of views among the saints. "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour," is the divine exhortation.

Instruction is a leading duty of Christian life. The ignorant must be educated, the weak strengthened, wrong notions corrected, and right ones imparted. It is a serious mistake to assume that persons once received to the church need no farther instruction in doctrine and duty. It is as reasonable to regard a student who is admitted to college, already prepared to graduate. Too little is made of his matter of instruction. Becoming a member of the church should be regarded as just the beginning of growth and progress in knowledge. It is too frequently treated as the completion. As a consequence, we have a great many ignorant Christians. The provisions for gaining knowledge are inadequate and feeble. A church member who makes no progress should be charged with sin, and sharply rebuked, just as we would rebuke a pupil who made no progress in his studies.

Church members should feel themselves in school to learn the Scriptures. Ten years or more of study should make them masters of sacred oracles, and able to teach others also. Yet many who have been in the church since ten years are babes in knowledge. Ministers are often obliged to shame for the prevailing ignorance, and to preach and expound the Word as they should. The older members are also a fault. They set a miserable example. No one would suspect that they were eager to increase in wisdom. They are not at all studious, and have need to be taught themselves the first principles of the Gospel, when they ought to be able to teach others. The atmosphere of the churches is not conducive to study and improvement. A feeling of content with attainments already made is far too general. Ignorance, and great hungerings for grace and knowledge. A church ought to be a Bible school, and the older the member the more should he know, and the stronger and better should he be.

Family reading is a valuable means of instruction. The pastor should see that all the members read the Bible at home, and have suitable religious books, and especially a religious paper. The weekly Christian journal, as become a tremendous power for good. Its silent visits to a family bring thought, instruction, enterprise, zeal to each member, infuse a healthy spirit into their

everyday life, and elevate them in purpose, plan, aspiration, hope, and enjoyment. Next to the pulpit is the religious press as an educator. That church which puts a good Christian paper into every family within its bounds, will be sure to prosper, because it will develop both intelligence and faith, and these will secure personal and financial support to the church. It would be an excellent investment for any church to devote a good paper to all who are unwilling or unable to pay for one. The ignorant would be elevated and made prosperous and the irreligious would be converted by a few years of such treatment. Light will cure both poverty and unbelief. People become stupefied with error because no one gives them the truth. A quiet, unobtrusive, and entertaining visitor every week will do the work in time, and change the prayerless to friends of Christ. The church must do more to instruct its members and the whole community than heretofore, by a vigorous use of every available means—the pulpit, the Sunday-school, the weekly paper, good books, and social intercourse. By this means the influence of Christianity will increase and the church prosper.

PASTORAL CHANGES.

Much has been wisely said, within the past few years, in reference to permanency in the pastoral relation. But changes seem no less frequent than in years past. Pastors, deploring such frequent changes, go on changing; and churches unfeeling, and often torn by factions, still continue to do those same things which make such changes certain if not necessary.

Let the whole ministry fall under condemnation and the church come to be considered reprobate in this matter, it might be well to consider the question, Under what circumstances may a pastor wisely change his pastoral relation? In answer to this question we submit the following, not by any means exhausting the subject:—

1. It is a matter of fact, that quite a large per cent. of our ministers entered upon the discharge of their official duties with little or no special training for their work. They are consequently under the necessity of studying the rudiments of their profession while engaged in active duties; their knowledge is limited, their resources restricted, they must often repeat themselves. It is certainly much more pleasant to themselves, and edifying to their hearers to do this repeating in a new

should be used to this class is another that the monotony of life by exchange of sermons, such as have recently completed a thorough course of study. These men may have well drilled minds, well stored with useful knowledge, but they have high ideas of sermons; they have formed plans for extensive courses of systematic study, and they are quite destitute of that practical wisdom which experience alone can give. At the end of the second or third year of their pastorate, many of them find they have pretty nearly exhausted their resources, have fallen considerably below their ideals in many of their sermons, and their plans for systematic study have all miscarried. One of two paths may be trodden in the future, they may go on preparing, after a mechanical manner, the required number of sermons of the required length, and bid farewell to every hope of higher attainments in any department of study; or they may change their place of labor, avail themselves of previous preparations, and devote the time thereby gained, to systematic study. Should they be censured if they choose the latter? Ought they not to be, if they do not?

2. It not infrequently happens that a man who has been successful in one place fails in another. He learns, perhaps, for the first time, that he has certain peculiarities which fit him for one class of churches, but which unfit him for all others. The sooner he finds this the better for all concerned. Nothing could be more foolish than to throw a man away for a few failures.

3. Again, we have some modest men, who have chosen places quite below their abilities. Many pretty things have been said about usefulness in a corner, and every one making his mark no matter where he may be. Practical wisdom says, this man belongs up stairs, where there is abundance of room; he has no business down where there is so much crowding; let him go up and give room for others.

4. The rights of ministers should be considered. American society is such a conglomerate that it is almost impossible to find a church which can by any possibility fully unite on any one man as pastor. (The case was different formerly.) A pastor has given satisfaction to a majority, and dissatisfaction to a minority for a term of years,—shall the minority never be consulted? Shall their wishes, tastes and necessities never be respected? Out of such circumstances as these frequent changes arise, and must arise.

5. But perhaps the most fruitful source of change is found in the inadequate support given to our pastors. Young men are everywhere called for, not because they are young, but because it is supposed they can be supported upon a less salary than men of large families. I have in mind two churches which advertised quite a number applied for the situation, old men were taken instead; they were so old that their sons and daughters, instead of being dependent upon them for support, added in the young pastor was dismissed, and an old one put in his place, simply because the young one required the same salary as the old one. Salary and ability being the same, the man of experience will win every time. But pastors' families must be supported, however large; the legitimate successors in the pastoral office, are pastoral sons, and they must be educated, and if one church will not support and educate the families of ministers, and another will, who shall blame the pastors for the change? Many pastors are now changing their places of labor; speak charitably of them; do not ask too many questions; give them all needed help in securing new fields of labor; they have prayed much over the matter; shed

many tears; suffered as but few know how to suffer. Let them for them, bid them God speed; let them go as noiselessly as possible, find a place to toil on for a few years, and then they will find a permanent home with the Master who had not where to lay his head.

NOROMBEA.

USEFULNESS OF TRACTS.

BY L. E. JACKSON.

The tract, "Dolph, the Drunkard," was given to an intemperate man, who was also a Romanist. It was blessed to the man, and he is not only reformed, but, we trust, regenerated. A year ago, as a man was leaving the city, the tract, "Destroy Him Not," was given to him. On another visit to the city, he called on the missionary to thank him for the tract and to say that it had saved him from destruction, and that he was now a member of the Church of Christ.

For two weeks a man was distressed in mind by the tract, "Who Died for me?" At length, faith in that blessed Jesus, brought peace to his soul. "A Through Ticket," led a colored man to seek his soul's salvation. "The Debt is Paid," led a bankrupt sinner to find relief in Jesus and to become his disciple.

A young woman spent a sleepless night, after reading the "New Year's" tract. In the morning her father prayed for her. Soon she commenced to pray for herself. And having given up all for Jesus, she was united with God's people. A lady visited a friend, received the tract, "My spirit shall not Always Strive." She now says to that friend, "Tell the tract man I am safe in Jesus, and have cast in my lot with his people." Two young men, by reading the tract, "Are you prepared?" were led to seek the Lord, and are now numbered with his followers. A young Irishman, deeply impressed by conversation with the missionary, has given himself to Christ. "What is it to Believe in Christ?" led a profane young man to believe in Jesus and to identify himself with His people. "Don't Put it Off," was given to a young man who was going to the theatre. On reaching the entrance of the place, his eye caught the sign, "To the Pit," when conscience troubled him, and he retraced his steps and returned home. He gave himself up to reading and prayer. He has found the pearl of great price.

Early on a summer morning, a man and his wife were found on the Battery where they had spent the night. For thirty hours they had been without food. Their intention was to bite their tongues, and place them in the sea. While there, they had had time for reflection, which was duly improved, and soon they sought and found an interest in the Saviour. Then they obtained a situation with a pious farmer on Long Island, who introduced them to his pastor. Not long after, giving credible evidence of a saving change, they were received into church fellowship. Being in the city to purchase furniture, they called at the Mission Station to express their gratitude for the timely kindness shown them. As the missionary entered a saloon to distribute tracts, he saw a group of men fourteen in number, seated around a table. One of them said as he saw the missionary,—"This is the fellow that took N—away; give it to him." N— was one of whose mind had been sobered by the truth, previously circulated there, and who was likely to be lost in their company. They insisted that the missionary should preach them a sermon. The missionary said he was only a layman, that he did not preach, but he would pray with them. They did not want his prayer; they would have a sermon. They made him mount a chair. Then in a simple, earnest, and solemn manner, the humble brother told the story of his own fall and recovery, and how great things the Lord had done for him. As the missionary proceeded with his narrative, many tears were shed by the revellers, and all were moved. At length the leader spoke up and said, "The man is right, and we are wrong; let him go." The result has been that all of the party have signed the temperance pledge. Two at least, give evidence of conversion, and others are hopeful.

So the tract, like the arrow from the bow, driven at a venture, penetrates the coat of mail encasing the infidel's and the worldly man's heart. A single sentence of truth throws light upon the darkened soul. A word in season reaches the wandering youth. The simple story of the Cross melts the most obdurate. The offer of the Gospel, pressed home to the careless prodigal, by a plain, earnest man, is attended by the divine Spirit unto salvation. There are bands of missionary men and women, and hundreds of private Christians, at the time scattering these leaves of the tree of life among the tenement houses of the city, in saloons and boarding houses, in prisons and asylums and everywhere, and among all sorts and conditions of men. Of the results of this silent, unostentatious work, we can, of course, know only in part. But enough is known to encourage every laborer, and pay every supporter.—N. Y. Observer.

A CHRISTIAN COUNSELOR.

Sir Roundell Palmer, the counsel for England before the Geneva Board of Arbitration, is as remarkable for his piety as for his eminent legal attainments. Notwithstanding his immense professional business, he found time to compile and publish a book of psalms, which from the beauty and fitness of its selections has become favorably known and appreciated by every household of the faith of the Church of England. Besides this he conducts a Bible class in his parish church, and in its school-room he is to be found morning after morning before he goes down to Westminster Hall to take part in the trial of the most important causes that are heard in the English courts.

The calm and consistent piety of Sir Robert Roundell Palmer has imparted sincerity and earnestness to his character. There is said to be something in his manner as he makes his argument, that impresses the hearer with the conviction that he is performing a high moral

duty, and enforcing right and justice in the advocacy of his cause. This is all the more effective because his whole life seems to be controlled by his deep and earnest piety, to which he subordinates professional ambition and success. He is to-day the most eminent lawyer of Great Britain; and great as are his intellectual attainments, he is highly esteemed by the Christian people of England for his excellent heart and fervent piety.

His life, which has been eminently laborious and successful, well illustrates the power which a truly religious man has to engage in Christian labor even amid the most pressing business engagements. Probably no other man in England is more occupied than Sir Roundell Palmer. At the head of the English bar, with retainers yielding him an income of many thousand pounds a year, and engaged in the most difficult and important causes, he yet finds time to teach a Bible class, and to compile and publish books to increase the religious devotion of his countrymen. Such a life is an example worthy of all emulation, and the youth of all lands should see in the light of the dignity, piety and success of this eminent English lawyer, that the path to honor and fame is not through the wild and sterile ways of skepticism or indifference to the profound truths that affect humanity, but through religion and worldly honor go hand in hand, even in this materialistic age. And those who affect to believe that amid the pressing cares of business they have no time to devote to great moral reforms, political progress, or the claims of personal religion, may also see in the light of this illustrious example, how easy it is to blend all these together in one harmonious and consistent life.—Providence Press.

GREEK MEETING GREEK.

The exclusiveness which shuts unnumbered Christians from the Baptist communion table, and the assumption which puts authorized ministers into none but Episcopal pulpits, are equally at war with the Christian charity that most readers of the New Testament find exalted and insisted on in the teachings and spirit of the Master. Each of these dogmas is astonished at the other, while those disciples who are committed to neither are gripped and amused at both. They sometimes come face to face in peculiar ways. A correspondent of the Boston Journal, writing from Saratoga, is authority for the following perplexing and ludicrous example of bringing ecclesiastical theories into conflict with the claims of friendship and the impulses of Christian sympathy:—"Among our visitors is a young clergyman, a child smart and has his eyes open. He is a settled in the Baptist ministry. Our church friend made a call on his church. It was Saturday, and he proposed to spend Sunday with his old associate. He was made welcome, but with the least bit of embarrassment that he did not fail to observe. At length the Baptist brother spoke: 'I should be delighted to have you preach for me to-morrow. But the fact is, it is our communion. We have it directly after our morning service. It would be very awkward, you know, for you to preach for me and then go out of the house with the unregenerate; for by the rules of our church you, not being baptized, can not commune with us.' The Churchman laughed, and said: 'Oh, don't be uneasy. I will preach for you. But were I forty times baptized, I could not sit down to your table—for by the rules of our church, you, you know, are not ordained, and can not administer the ordinances at all.' And so he preached, and at the close went out to his dinner, while the saints sat at their table."

The occurrence of cases of this sort opens many eyes and sets careless minds to thinking. The heart fortunately triumphs at times over the dogma. The heart masters the head. Love ignores the syllogism. The soul's fellowship overthrows the ecclesiastical rule, or if not protests against it. The recognition of true discipleship which took place in the pulpit was just as decided as it could have been at the table. The strange thing is that one would refuse to commune with a man whom he has just welcomed as a Christian minister. Having done the greater thing, why should he stickle at the less? It is only a way of getting around an offensive ecclesiastical rule which, for certain reasons, there is hesitation in setting aside. The inconsistency is a merit and a prophecy. It tells us that men choose to be logical rather than be widely narrow, and that when a canon is fractured its explosion is only a question of time. It is pleasant to see Baptist exclusiveness and Episcopal assumption clashing hands in the pulpit. The good day which beholds them sitting together at the supper is not far off.—Exchange.

CALM IN A STORM.—In a gale off the coast, a vessel was driven ashore. Her anchors were gone, and she refused to obey the helm. A few moments more, and she would strike. In the midst of the general consternation that prevailed, one man remained calm. He had done all that man could do to prepare for the worst when the wreck was inevitable, and now that death was apparently near, he was quietly awaiting the event. A friend of his demanded the reason of his calmness in the midst of danger so imminent: "Do you not know that the anchor is gone, and we are drifting upon the rocks?"

His reply was, "Certainly I do, but I have an anchor to the soul."

Blessed are those who are thus anchored within the veil, and who find in the hope set before them, upon which they have laid hold, through storm or calm, a stay, a trust, a refuge ever sure.

The blossom cannot tell what becomes of its odor, nor man can tell what becomes of his influence and example, that runs away from him and go beyond his ken on their mission.

A book-binder said to his wife at the wedding: "It seems that now we are bound together, two volumes in one, with clasps." "Yes," observed one of the guests, "one side highly ornamented turkey morocco, and the other plain calf."