

The Religious Intelligencer.

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

Rev. J. McLEOD,

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

[Editor and Proprietor,

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SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY, JULY 5, 1872.

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The Intelligencer.

PEEPS AT THE WORLD FROM A CHURCH TOWER.

BY THE REV. A. DELPERY, M. A.

A Difficulty of Men of Business in Being Religious.

Seated in my tower, shut away from the toiling million, I cannot forget that a primary object of the spire above me is to point men heavenward, and that a main proof that the faith which it symbolizes is divine, is that it is human—come from God, because it is suited to man. I am here in this retreat, and not yonder in the crowd; not that I am more religious than other men, or my profession intrinsically more sacred than other men's heaven is nearest where the heart is best and the work is truest—but that I may be a watcher for my brethren. All gregarious fowls and animals must have some to watch while the great body feed, or work, or play, and why should not men? My contemplative life may better fit me for perceiving moral and spiritual truth, and translating it into the language of week-day people; from my eminence I may the sooner see the first blush of light which cheers, or the first cloud of danger which threatens, and so by times either animate or warn those whose faces are turned to hard and honest labour. From the observations of the lone midnight explorer of the physical heavens, come the calculations which regulate the times of the busy multitudes, and map out the paths of the sea for the adventurous mariner. "Watchman, what of the night?" "The morning cometh, and also the night." Mine is "the old tale which time has told from Adam till this day," light and darkness, morning and night, progress through vicissitudes; humanity too often between the two crests of the wave, but borne onward and upward by each successive undulation of the sea of life.

"What is worth doing at all is worth doing well," is a maxim which the most independent and the most leisurely worker should follow. Careless or indifferent labour seldom accomplishes results which are solid and beneficial. It seems to be a law of nature that vital force shall be spent for the creation of a force that will live and be operative; hence the work which is accounted worthy by men, which sinks into their souls, fingers and flows on, controlling the currents of their histories, is the work which has been the best and highest expression of the workers. But in addition to this consideration, in the matter of secular concerns there is the imperative claim of livelihood. Most men must work for a subsistence. Necessity obliges them to labour, or starve, or beg, so that to do something to supply the bare necessities of life becomes an unavoidable early thought with a majority of people. The employment which is to sustain daily life, which is to enlarge that daily life by multiplying its demands and its resources, very naturally becomes at once the absorbing interest of the heart. The mind must be given to business, or there can be no great success. Competition is so rife that the idler is soon thrust aside and left behind. The utmost diligence, skill, and push are required to maintain even a fair competence, and to keep the "head above water" is all which the busiest efforts of some can accomplish.

"We have no time for religion," is not an uncommon excuse of those who neglect it. The young are so full of getting ahead in life that they shelve religion as a matter to be attended to when competency may allow of leisurely and carefully considering so weighty a subject. The more advanced find that with success and the increase of riches come additional cares; that instead of becoming by competency masters of the situation, the situation masters them, and that they are borne along by the force of old associations, or by the sudden turns of new and unexpected combinations; or with years come disappointments; the cherished plans of thoughtful study, the accumulations of unremitting toil are suddenly scattered, an unforeseen evil arises to perplex the mind and to harrow the peace; so that there is no more time and not so much quiet, to seek and to serve God as there was in youth. Said a wealthy planter to me, as I rode with him over his broad acres: "When I was a very young man, I felt the need of religion, but thought I was young enough. I was poor, and had everything to make; so I promised God that just so soon as I got married and settled I would seek him. This gained, I said, so soon as I own a snug little farm of my own, my mind will be free—I will give God my heart; and thus it has gone on with me, until I find, with growing years and expanding acres, I have less time and less disposition to be religious than formerly. Is not this the experience of thousands? It is a serious mistake to reverse God's order. Those who, under the plea of necessity, seek the world first, instead of the divine kingdom, sooner or later discover their fatal blunder. The freedom of youth from the cares of life makes it the natural period for the submission of the heart to that holy religion, the very genius of which is to gather about it, as a centre of inspiration and of harmonious control, all the facts and forces of the subsequent periods of life.

Undoubtedly much sympathy should be felt for both irreligious and religious men, because of the pressure of secular affairs. I mean now simply in the light of the absorption of time and energy. And yet such must be reminded that God holds us responsible not only for "want of heart," but also for "want of thought." There is time in everybody's life for religion, or else religion and business are incompatible. If they are both alike necessary to man, they must be reconcilable, and somewhere their spheres must meet in which they revolve without conflict of the destruction of each other. That secular vocation which does not admit of time for the work of personal religion is immoderately and sinfully followed, and must in the end work out the legitimate fruit of all transgression—remorse of conscience. The wages of sin is death. That person who finds himself in the midst of the most earnest and brilliant worldly career had better pause and turn aside, if necessary, even at the loss of some money and some reputation, until the

great factor of a true life is supplied, and the divine element enters into it. A ship which goes to sea without adequate ballast, or without some other one thing deemed essential to a thorough outfit, may sail well until the storm sweeps down upon her, or the emergency occurs in which the particular thing left behind is wanted. "That anchor! that anchor! Oh! that I had brought that anchor!" cried the captain of one of our ill-fated Atlantic steamers, as she was drifting on the rocks. The anchor had been left carelessly on the dock. Many otherwise good men suffer themselves to become so overtaken as that they have not relief for religious devotions. They return to their homes at the close of the day so late and so exhausted, as to have neither time nor disposition for family worship, for the instruction of the children, or for any other rational and spiritual exercise. Why should a man fix his eye upon a half million, or any other sum, more or less, as the mark of his ambition, and make himself a slave for its attainment, to the dulling of his nobler nature and the jeopardy of his soul? People must be content to use less and to be more. Character must be esteemed more precious than rubies, or stocks, or lands, or houses. It is to be preferred before fame or power.

DISTRIBUTE THE GOSPEL.

BY REV. C. R. CRANE.

When toward evening the vast multitude were hanging on the lips of Jesus in the solitary place not far from the Sea of Galilee, the disciples exhorted him to send them away, that in near Bethsaida, or more distant Capernaum, or in some other village, they might get bread. There were places where bread was; let the people go to them and procure it. The answer of Jesus was: "Give them bread." In point of fact, he sent the disciples among the people, and had them put bread in every man's hand. It was not his plan that bread should be centralized in designated localities, and be made accessible to the people, but that it should be distributed to the people.

The early church adopted the plan. The apostles and other preachers and lay Christians went from house to house with the gospel; they went to river sides, to synagogues, to market-places; they ran after the men who ran away from them. This fact, more than any other, explains the marvellous advance which Christianity made in that early period.

It should be understood that men will not come to the gospel, and that the gospel must go to men. Not men first, but the gospel first, must do the seeking. For this is the commission; light is to come into the world's darkness, and men flee from the light and plunge into deeper darkness; the carnal mind is enmity against God's law, as most fully revealed in the gospel, and refuses to be subject to it. Men will not flock to the thing which they hate; therefore the hated thing must pursue the fugitives.

But the church has been wiser than its Master; it has instituted a better plan than his, even that plan of the disciples which he rejected on the shores of Galilee. It has built its meeting houses, and set its preachers in its pulpits, thus centralized the gospel; and then it has hidden the people come and receive it. And the bald fact is that the people do not come. Some come; but the majority remain away. For who does not know that the serious question which the church is to-day asking itself—how shall the masses be reached?

It has attempted to answer this question after the old and bad way. It has stuck to its policy of centralization. Now it clamors for a smarter and more popular preacher. Then it provides attractive music. Again it transmits its Sunday-school into secular and theatrical entertainments. No matter, how, by some means, the masses must be attracted to the place where the gospel is dispensed.

Sometimes the church seems almost to have apprehended Christ's plan of distribution, as when it establishes mission Sunday-schools in neglected communities. But it turns out soon that the old policy is in reality administered. A new gospel depot is established, and the people are exhorted to resort to it—that is all.

When at last it dawns upon the mind of the church that the gospel must be carried from house to house, what is the requisition of the church? That the pastor do the work. He must not fail in his preaching, he must not refuse to do his part on public occasions; yet he must alone this work of distribution which might fully occupy twenty men.

Sunday-school teachers rarely find time to visit their scholars. Church members rarely visit even their brethren, and the unchristian new-holders in their own sanctuaries, live in the same street with them. And as to going out after the utterly godless, they never think of it. So it turns out that, not only the world is not evangelized, but the church itself grows lax and lean.

The great secret of the marvellous success of Spurgeon is that his church has adopted the Master's plan of gospel distribution. The deacons of it, the lay brethren, the women, are as familiar with the streets and lanes and houses and folk in the vicinity of the Elephant and Castle, (near which the great tabernacle is placed), as a manufacturer is with the machinery and operatives of his shop. A less powerful preacher than Spurgeon would have an overflowing congregation if the members of his church went after the people and compelled them to come in.

Oh! but church members do not have time to do this work. Exactly so. Time enough for their own work; no time for God's work. Not even three half days in a year. For my own part I would be content with three half days. Six hundred members I have. Eighteen half days of Christian work in my parish in a single year. We would revolutionize Hartford before the year 1873 closed.

Let the church be sure that this problem of how to reach the masses, with which it is vexing itself, can only be successfully solved by ceasing to centralize the gospel and beginning to distribute it. How can I reach the Post office? By going to it. How can the church reach the masses? By going to them.—The Christian at work.

THE LIFE BY FAITH.

The highest type of life is that which is lived by faith in God. It is the soul drawing strength and nourishment from the only source which can give it its proper support. The possibilities of such a life are as much greater than the highest attainments of mere human existence, as the interests of the soul are above more bodily welfare. The soul that draws from such a source is never confounded. It rests upon what it can not feel, and follows what it can not see; but it rests securely and follows safely. The object of its trust is not seen with the natural eye, and can therefore never be hidden from view; it is immortal, and can therefore never perish. It is the All-powerful in whom it trusts—the All-wise, the loving Father, and it has no fear of changing passions or of waning strength.

It is safe to venture when one feels the assurance of aid from such a source as that. No change can affect its security, and no present condition, whether of affliction or prosperity, can disturb its repose. It has hold of the hand that never falters, and follows the counsel that never leads astray. In the sunshine it remembers that work must be done while the day lasts, and in the storm it hears the voice of the Master saying, "Peace, be still."

Such a faith makes life full of service. However confined may be the sphere of effort, it remembers the reprofit in the case of the hidden talent, and the approval of the simple offering at the treasury, and like the woman at the Pharisee's house it humbly tries to do what it can. It hears the command, "Preach the gospel to every creature," and it goes about its work wherever opportunity offers. It appreciates the fact that missionary work is needed in New England as well as in New Zealand, and that it can be done as acceptably among the hills of New Hampshire as among the huts and palm groves of India. It believes in work more than in words; in deeds more than in display; it is not so particular about the place as it is anxious for the opportunity; and relying upon him who has given the commission, it can labour cheerfully by its own hearthstone, even, trustfully leaving the results to him who claims the service.

But the sublimity of such a life appears in those dark hours, which are sure to come to all sooner or later, when the faster would be sin, and to advance seems rash and hopeless. One of the grand passages in the New Testament is the record that Abraham went out towards the promised land, "not knowing whither he went." There was an element of true heroism in his leaving the land that had always yielded him its fruits, and where he was surrounded by his family and his goods, to seek a home in a country that he knew nothing about. If the message had come to him in the ordinary way, and he had been told that there was an estate for him and his descendants lying between lat. 30 degrees 40 minutes and 33 degrees 32 minutes N., and long. 83 degrees 45 minutes and 35 degrees 48 minutes E., to which he would readily come by pursuing a given course, and the deed had been given him at the time, there would have been a sort of business-like probability connected with the venture, which, according to our every-day principle of doing things, would have given us some surprise if he had not accepted it. But to take Abraham's condition into the account, and also the conditions of the promise, and then to believe that he would ever find the land that was promised him, or still more, that he would ever people it with his descendants, would be altogether unlike the securities we are apt to require when making a venture. Indeed, our nineteenth century habit would have called the Patriarch a very sagacious man if he had paid no attention to it.

It is on occasions like this that our faith is apt to fail us. However much we wish to do a great work or reap a rich reward, we allow the improbabilities to deter us; we suffer imagined obstacles to hinder us; we forget the promises, and fail to accomplish the work. So long as we can see the way, we believe that it lies open before us; if we can understand all the means that are adapted to an end, we believe that the end is attainable; while, in short, we can make our work a matter of calculation or mathematical demonstration, we are quite diligent in performing it. This is walking by sight, and not by faith. It is relying on human skill and foresight, and not upon divine promise. It is placing more trust in ourselves than we do in the Creator, and estimating the results of our own labour above what God has promised to do for us.

If we believe the promises in the Bible, why is not our daily work in accordance with that belief? If it is a fact that whatsoever we properly ask, God will give us, why do we ask so hesitatingly and attempt so lightly? Let our faith a matter of visible causes and effects, rather than an unhesitating venture upon the word of our God? There is now and then a man, like Dr. Collins of Boston and Mr. Muller of England, who seems to believe that the promises are literal, and that an intelligent, trustful petition can not fail of an answer. Their works show the reality of their trust. Their method may have its impracticable features, which would prevent its universal adoption; but the principle is a safe one, and if the promises mean at all what they assert, it is the only logical one that can be adopted. There is the assertion: "Whoever ye ask in faith ye shall receive." If we hesitate, we contradict God; if we attempt the work alone, we exalt our own ability. Either individuals and the church must believe that God answers every reasonable petition, and so accomplish more both in charitable and missionary efforts than they have yet done, or still be content to see their best attempts but half realized, and be continually pressed back by the hosts of ignorance and sin. The Patriarch went out in implicit trust and obedience. If we do not do the same we might receive as rich a reward.

Let amusements fill up the chinks of your existence, not the great space thereof. Let your pleasures be taken as Daniel took his prayers—with his windows open; pleasures which need not cause a single blush on an ingenuous cheek.

THEY BROUGHT YOUNG CHILDREN.

It is not many years since a grave divine gave it as his opinion, and it is recorded for our benefit, that conversions of children are doubtful and often not genuine, and that we can hardly trust, as a rule, to examples of early piety.

"According to his faith" it was unto him. His sons ran wild for a time, and later in life turned about and became Christians, and for some reason did not have very long lives.

Now in most things this would be considered bad philosophy, to go wrong for a certain distance, in order the better to turn about and go right. Moreover, when we want to train a man or woman to any trade or business, we know that those succeed best who begin early.

Is it not so with the Christian life? If we would train our children to the work of the Lord, they cannot begin too young; it will not do to let them wait and form evil habits, only to be put aside or corrected. Begin right. We shall see better times and better Christians when the Church is regarded as the school of Christ, when our children are early brought into the Church, to be trained for His service, of course. How many of us now speak as if we were doubtful, and we are "anxious" for our children. We wait too long before we begin to prepare our defences. The promises of God are very sure, very sure. Many persons speak and pray as if they needed, like the priests of Baal, to cry and cut themselves with stones, and shout, "O, Baal, hear us! O, Baal, hear us!"

The Bible is full of assurances of God's willingness to hear and answer prayer, and of his special love to the young. "Waiting to be gracious," that is the tone of all the promises. But if we do not believe and will not ask with any expectation of being heard, how can God help us? The Church is the school of Christ. A wise man in England, and one of great experience in worldly things, has said that if children are ruined, it is done early; that one who escapes till he is sixteen years old may be almost regarded as safe. And yet many parents hardly begin to be anxious or careful for their children until they come to that age. We do begin early enough, not with faith enough. We have given them to God, we must confirm the gift, nor dare to take them back.

The Lord will keep his covenant forever. And shall the fault be on our side that our children are not all consecrated in the school of Christ?—*Cor. N. Y. Observer.*

TOO POOR.

Moore, of the *Rural New Yorker*, was sitting in his office, one afternoon some years ago, when a former friend came in and said: "Mr. Moore, I like your paper, but times are so hard I can not pay for it."

"Is that so, friend Jones?" I'm very sorry to hear that you are so poor; if you are so hard run I will give you my paper."

"Oh, no! I can't take it as a gift."

"You are chickens, I believe."

"Yes, a few, but they don't bring anything, hardly."

"Don't they? Neither does my paper cost anything, hardly. Now I have a proposition to make to you. I will continue your paper, and when you go home you may select from your lot one chicken and call her mine. Take good care of her and bring me the proceeds, whether in eggs or chickens, and we will call it square."

"All right, Brother Moore," and the old fellow chuckled at what he thought a capital bargain. He kept the chicken strictly, and at the end of the year found that he had sold about four prices for his paper. He often tells the joke on himself, and says he never had the face to say he was too poor to take a paper since that day.—*Model Farmer.*

MURMURING.

I was tired of washing dishes; I was tired of drudgery. It had always been so, and I was dissatisfied. I never sat down a moment to read, that Jamie didn't want a cake, or a piece of paper to scribble on, or a bit of soap to make bubbles. "I'd rather be in prison," I said one day, "than to have my life tossed out so," as Jamie knocked my elbow, when I was writing to a friend.

But a morning came when I had one plate less to wash, one chair less to set away by the wall in the dining-room; when Jamie's little was put away into the garret, and it has never come down since. I had been unusually fretful and discontented with him that damp May morning that he took the crop. Gloomy weather gave birth to the headache, and I had less patience then than at any other time. By and by he was singing in another room, "I want to be an angel," and presently rang out that metallic cough. I never hear that hymn, since that it does not cut me to the heart; for the cough-crop rings out with it. He grew worse towards night, and when my husband came home he went for the doctor. At first he seemed to help him, but it merged into inflammatory cough, and all was soon over.

"I ought to have been called in sooner," said the doctor.

I have a servant to wash the dishes now; and when a visitor comes, I can sit down and entertain her without having to work all the time. There is no little boy worrying me to open his jack-knife, and there are no shavings over the floor. The magazines are not soiled with looking at the pictures, but stand firm and neat on the reading-table, just as I leave them.

"Your carpet never looks dirty," say weary-worn mothers to me.

"Oh, no," I mutter to myself, "there are no little boots to dirty it now."

But my face is as weary as theirs—wary with sitting in my lone parlour at twilight, weary with watching for the little arms that used to twine around my neck, for the curls that brushed against my cheek, for the young laugh which rang out with mine, as we watched the blazing fire, or made rabbits with the

shadow on the wall, waiting merrily together for papa's coming home. I have the wealth and ease I longed for, but at what price? And when I see other mothers with grown-up sons, driving to town or church, and my hair silvered over with grey, I wish I had murmured less.—*The Appeal.*

SUNDAY SCHOOLS IN WALES.

Not long since, Dr. Price, of Ohio, who visited Wales in 1870, gave the following as reasons for the superb condition of Sunday schools in Wales:—

1. He stated that the Sunday schools of Wales had no libraries whatever. Their success did not depend upon libraries.

2. The Bible is made the only text-book in the Church and in the Sunday school. Nothing is allowed to usurp its place.

3. In the study of the Bible, commentaries and histories of the Bible land are freely used. Every source of information is carefully sought out by the inhabitants of this mountainous land.

4. The Sunday school is made a subject of prayer. The Welshman works, but he also prays for his loved school. These prayers are not rambling, incoherent, pointless prayers, but directly for the object sought.

5. The Sunday school is made an object of congregational interest. Every member of the church feels that he has something to do in it. There is no shirking, or shrinking from the work. Praying, working, praying for its interest, are features common to every member of the Welsh churches.

6. One third of every Lord's day is devoted to the study of the Bible. This blessed book is not only read, but carefully studied. And woe to the preacher who shall go into the pulpit with a lack of preparation. The Welsh are very careful to memorize the exact language of the Bible. Dr. Price stated that often in the course of an hour's sermon the preacher would be stopped by the attentive members of his congregation, and made to repeat correctly the passage of Scripture he had incorrectly quoted. This had been done as high as twenty times in a single sermon. No preacher is allowed to mutilate the Scriptures by his blundering quotations. He must know it, then repeat it.

7. Every ecclesiastical organization in the country fosters them. The missionary organizations take them under their care. They are not left off by any of these bodies under the plea that they do not belong to them.

8. Every quarter the whole day is given to the school. The best man to question the school is obtained. And woe to him unless he comes with his quiver full of arrows. Questions are proposed and briefly argued, and oftentimes the children of the schools are victors. In this way do those people make their schools valuable, and also full of interest and great in numbers. The people who honour God's word will be honoured. This the Welsh do, and their position is most exalted.

RANDOM READINGS.

Beware the fury of a patient man. He mourns the dead who lives as they desire. Choose an author as you choose a friend. Do you know that you can slay the Lord's Supper.

Do you know that Christ enjoins secret prayer?

Do you know that all your property belongs to God?

Do you know that the vows of God are upon you?

Do you know that the worth of life is the good we do?

Do you know that some one is following your example?

Do you know that your piety may unconsciously decline?

Do you know that the prayer meeting needs you?

Some shines with a double lustre when it is set in humility. An able and yet humble man is a jewel worth a kingdom.—*Penn.*

Good, kind, true, holy words dropped in conversation may be little thought of, but they are like seeds of flower or fruitful tree falling by the wayside, borne by some bird afar, happy thereafter to fringe with beauty some mountain-side, or to make glad some lonely wilderness.

They who are the fullest of faith and richest in good works make the least sound; when their hearts and lives, like the face of Moses, shine brightly with grace and holiness, they do not, they will not know it. They consider their greatest light and lustre is but a reflection from the Father of lights, and therefore they have no reason to boast at all of borrowed goods.—*Seemock.*

Remember that God is no envious or critical observer of the plain expressions that fall from His poor children when they are shut in their closets. It is not a flow of words, or studied notions, scrappish expressions, or elegant phrases in prayer which take the ear or delight the heart of God, or open the gate of glory, or bring down the best of blessings upon the soul; but faith, uprightness, holiness, heavenliness, spirituality, and brokenness of heart—these are the things in the saved man's experience that make a conquest upon God and turn most to the soul's account.

I never knew a good horse which had not some odd habit or other, and I never yet saw a minister worth his salt who had not some crotchety or oddity. Now, these are the bits of cheese that cavillers smell out and nibble at: this man is too slow, and another too fast; the first is too flowery, and the second is too dull. Dear me, if all God's creatures were judged in this way, we should wring the dove's neck for being too tame, shoot the robins for eating spiders, kill the crows for swinging their tails, and the hens for not giving us milk. When a man wants to, heat a dog he can soon find a stick, and at this rate any fool may have something to say against the best minister in England.—*John Ploughman.*