

# 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, AUGUST 29, 1873.

Whole No. 1023.

## NEW GOODS.

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Frederickton, August 29, 1873.

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## The Intelligencer.

A NIGHT AT BETHEL.

BY REV. S. GRAVES, D. D.

It was certainly one of the most intensely interesting moments of all my pilgrimage in Palestine, when I lay down to sleep at Bethel. There was of course but one thing that I could think of—Jacob and the wonderful vision which was given to him in the silent watches of that memorable night, when with a stone for his pillow, and those deep, far-off Syrian heavens as his canopy, he lay down upon this very spot and slept, and saw in his dream a vision whose fame reached over from the Old to the New Testament, has come down to us, and will go down the ages, leaving its lessons of a divine and kindly providence, of a personal guardianship, the intercommunion of heaven and earth, to the end of time. Before retiring, I read the twenty-eighth chapter of Genesis, which I seemed never to have read before, and then went out of my tent and stood for half an hour looking up to the same stars which had looked down upon the Patriarch-pilgrim, with the same darkened valleys and shadowy mountains around me, and it seemed when I had laid down that the same vision would surely come to me. But it did not. I saw nothing, nor can I remember that I dreamed anything. The next morning was delightfully cool and gloriously bright. We were up with the sun, which in the clear pure air of the "heights of Benjamin," gives to every mountain, and rock, and gorge the sharpest delineation. Our camp had been upon a little plain, or depression to the southwest of the town, and about a gun-shot from it. The path to it leads by a large fountain, at which the women were filling their jars and skin-bottles, and shepherds at the same time watering their flocks of sheep and goats. There are the remains of a large reservoir; the blocks of hewn stone which formed its sides lie scattered about and half-buried in rubbish. The present fountain, which no doubt is identical with the most ancient one, at which Abraham and Jacob drank, and their flocks and herds, is very copious, but covers a space of only a few yards square. The site of Bethel is a slight elevation which slopes toward the south-east, and the ruins which mark it cover four or five acres. It contains at present fifteen or twenty huts built from the remains of ancient edifices, with, I should think, less than one hundred inhabitants. There are a half-dozen foundations of ancient edifices, with pillars, and capitals, and friezes which formed the super-structure, half buried within and around them. The two most marked ruins are a large square tower, and the walls of a church in Greek architecture, standing in the midst of what had been a much larger as well as older church or fortification, from the materials of which it seems to have been built. And this is about all that remains to the eye of the traveller of Bethel! There are structures here earlier than the Roman period, if indeed so early as that, though I fancied that some of the battered and crumbling stones over which my horse here and there stumbled, may have been squared by the workmen of Jeroboam.

Standing amidst the ruins the view on every hand is wild and waste; broken and verdant hills, narrow and angular ravines here, and there opening into a broader valley, with scarcely a trace of human life to be seen except the smoke on the road to Jerusalem, where the little town of *El Birah*, marks the site of the ancient *Beeroth*. To the east, perhaps a mile and a half distant, and across a valley, is a large hill, the highest in this region, crowned by the ruins of a church, from which the eye must take in the still unidentified site of Ai, and the top of the gorge that leads down to the plain of Jericho, and up which the Israelites came in the first adventurous and disastrous attempt upon the "hill country" of Palestine. North of this gorge is the bold face of the "Rock Rimmon," where the old hermit men that remained to Bethel after the sad war, with that tribe, concealed themselves for four months. As I stood upon that spot, that mountain top, with what anciently must have been the only pasture-ground in the vicinity, with "Ai on the east and Bethel on the west," I asked myself: Is not this the very place in which Abram pitched his tent when he came up from the plain of Moreh? It answers exactly. To this description given in Genesis xii. 8. To this place, after his sojourn in Egypt, the patriarch returned, and from this very hill-top, it would seem, surveyed the land as he stood with Lot, his brother's son, by his side, and with the mountains on the west and the north, and the fertile vale of Jordan on the east, seen through the deep gorge that opened before him, in the magnanimity of his great heart, gave to Lot the choice of the land, when their combined and growing flocks and herds, and the contentions of their herdsmen, made a separation inevitable.

What histories belong to Bethel, what memories crowd upon the mind as the eye takes in the old historic places! To Bethel Jacob repaired on his return from Haran, and built an Altar to the Lord, where he had anointed the stone which had served as his pillow, so many years before, and here he made a new consecration of himself and his now numerous family to the God of his Fathers, and called the place *El-Beth-el*, "God of the House of God." Here Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died and was buried beneath Bethel under a rock. Here, too, Samuel came once in the year in his circuit to judge Israel.

After the division of the kingdom Bethel was usurped by the powerful tribe of Ephraim, on whose borders it was situated, and made by Jeroboam both a fortress and a sanctuary. Here he built a magnificent temple, and dedicated it to the worship of the Golden Calf, "which thing became a sin to Israel." In the midst of these pompous ceremonies it was, and while the king himself was ministering at the altar, that a prophet from Judah appeared, and uttered these solemn words: "O altar, altar! thus saith the Lord, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by

name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee." After the lapse of some 400 years, the prophetic word was literally fulfilled. This sacred place having been thus defiled, was afterwards called in derision *Beth-Aven*, "the house of emptiness." There seems to have been a school of the prophets in later times at this place, which Elijah visited in passing up and down from Jericho to Jezreel and Mount Carmel. But the character of the place may still be seen by the children who here came out to mock the Prophet Elijah, and whose impiety was so awfully punished by the savage ferocity of the two she-bears which tore them to pieces.

From the time of Josiah, Bethel seems to have been lost entirely to history. It is not mentioned at all in the New Testament, and it is only within a few years that the identity of the place has been satisfactorily established.

After traversing its narrow and filthy lanes, surveying its few ruins, drinking from its ancient fountain, reviving its sacred memories, and fixing in the mind its present and imperishable features, we hastened onward with our faces set toward Jerusalem, from which we were only a little more than three hours distant; but through a region so full of interest, so historic in the annals of early Jewish times, that I must devote to it another letter.

No one, I think, can visit Bethel and not be impressed, as he must be at so many other places, with the truth of Scripture and the literal fulfilment of prophecy. "As I observed," says Porter, "to the top of the shattered tower that crowns the hill of Bethel, and looked long and in sadness over the dreary field of ruin, only inhabited by a few shepherds, I saw how terribly time had fulfilled the city's prophetic doom: 'Bethel shall come to naught.'—Amos v. 1, 2."

We left Bethel while our heart still lingered there, beneath the light of that glorious vision, which in the hallowed memories of the long, long past, glides to-day its desolations, humming as it faded away in the distance that beautiful hymn which brought so fresh to my thoughts the tender scenes of home and church:

"Thou like a wanderer,  
The sun gone down;  
Darkness be over me,  
My rest a stone;  
Yet in my dreams I'd be  
Nearer, my God, to thee—  
Nearer to thee."  
"There let my way appear,  
Steps unto heaven;  
All that thou sendest me  
In mercy's given;  
Angels to beckon me  
Nearer, my God, to thee—  
Nearer to thee."  
"Then with my waking thoughts  
Bright with thy praise;  
Out of my stony griefs  
Bethel I'll raise;  
By the way to thy house  
Nearer, my God, to thee—  
Nearer to thee."

SLOW TO SPEAK.

Hasty words are often wrong words, harsh words, inaccurate words, false words. Right speaking requires deliberation. Questions constantly arise which demand careful answers, and words spoken in haste may need to be recalled at leisure. An off-hand answer is far from being the truest or the safest one to give; a more considerate way of speech leaves less to correct and less to regret.

Moses' complaint when called by the Lord to deliver Israel, was that he was "slow of speech," but he found before he got through the wilderness, that he talked plenty fast enough—yes, altogether too fast for his own good. And it is curious that this very man who declined to act as the Lord's messenger because he was so slow of speech; by his rashness and haste in speaking "unadvisedly" with his lips, lost his portion of the inheritance in Canaan, and died outside the borders of the promised land.

Probably no Christian lives who is conscious of the inward guiding of the Holy Ghost, but has often felt the reproverings of the Spirit in the midst of hasty conversation, and has thought, "There, I have said too much." Happy those who learn to heed this gentle monitor, and only utter sound speech that cannot be condemned.

Babblers have shallow minds—little dishes soon boil over. Wise men can wait and consider, and weigh matters, and when they do speak, their words have power and win regard. Many a person fails to command respect because "he talks too much with his mouth." In a position of trust or responsibility he fails, because all there is in him drizzles out in empty words, and becomes the property of both friend or foe. Persons who let themselves down and empty their minds to every hearer, need not be surprised if persons see their weakness and ignore their worth.

When Napoleon was asked in his earlier years, how he secured the respect and confidence of so many older officers who were under him, he answered, "By reserve." A little more reserve in leaders, in heads of families, in persons who have care and responsibility, would save them many of their troubles. It need not be moroseness, nor gruffness; it need not be a lack of kindness and frankness; it need be rather the quiet of self-control; the silence of a man who uses his tongue rather than the babble of a man whose tongue uses him, and uses him up—the reserve of a man who knows there is a time to speak and also a time to be silent, and who hides his time, and cannot be vexed nor coaxed to speak till the time has come. Many a battle has been lost by raw soldiers firing wildly before the foe was in range. "Wait till you can see the whites of their eyes," was the command to a patriot host, and the assailants found that it was no idle talk to attack such a band of waiting, determined men.

Reserve your words. Many a preacher of the Gospel has ruined his influence by gabbling, and story-telling, and vain and hasty talk. Silence prepares one to speak with power. Some of the mightiest preachers of the Word of God, have been so silent and re-

## RULES TO PROMOTE HARMONY AMONG CHURCH MEMBERS.

1. To remember that we are all subject to failings and infirmities of one kind or another.
2. To bear with, and not magnify each other's infirmities.—Gal. vi. 12.
3. To pray for one another in our social meetings, and particularly in private. James v. 16.
4. Always to turn a deaf ear to any slanderous report, and to believe no charge brought against any person till well founded.
5. If a member be in fault, to tell him of it in private before it is mentioned to others.
6. To put against a slowness of each other, and watch the best construction on any action that has the appearance of opposition or resentment.
7. To observe the just rule of Solomon, that is, to leave off contention before it is meddled with. Prov. xvii. 14.
8. If a member has offended, to consider how glorious, how God-like it is to forgive, and how unlike a Christian it is to revenge. Eph. iv. 2.
9. Remember that it is always a grand article of the devil to promote distance and animosity among members of churches, and we should therefore watch against everything that furthers this end.
10. To consider how much more good we can do in the world at large, and in the Church in particular, when we are all united in love, than we should do when acting alone, and indulging a contrary spirit.
11. Lastly, to consider the express injunction of Scripture and the beautiful example of Christ as to these important things.
12. Above all, remember to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and thy neighbor as thyself.

## OPPORTUNITIES.

How many there are in the church of Christ who sigh for opportunities of usefulness, while they never take hold of those close at hand. They want something to do—some great thing like Naaman of old, and the simple waters of Jordan are despised by them; but if we remember that life is made up of little things, and the daily consecration of these little things may bring about great results—like the small seeds, which scattered, bring great harvests—we would not look further than our every-day walk and path for means of usefulness. It is said, a room may be swept to the glory of God. I am sure it is so; good living is good preaching, and the heart tuned to the praise of redeeming grace will give no discordant music. If these words: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," be our life motto, we shall not need to sigh for opportunities of usefulness.

A pious couple in England after morning prayers with their children and servants, meet for a few minutes in their own room to ask the Lord for work. "Lord, what wilt Thou have us to do to-day? Let us work for Thee, O Lord!" and expecting in faith the answer, their senses are quickened to perceive and seize the opportunities, and they are wonderfully and remarkably blessed. "Ye have not, because ye ask not."

A lady once writing a letter to a young naval officer who was almost a stranger, thought, "I shall close this as anybody would, or shall I say a word for my Master?" and lifting up her heart for a moment she wrote, telling him that his constant change of scene and place was an apt illustration of the word: "Here we have no continuing city," and asked if he could say: "I seek one to come." In trembling she folded, and sent it off. Back came the answer: "Thank you so much for those kind words. My parents are dead. I am an orphan, and no one has spoken to me like that since my mother died long years ago." The arrow shot at a venture, hit home, and the young man shortly after rejoiced in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace. Christians, how often do we close a letter "as anybody would," when we might say a word for Jesus?—*Daily Witness*.

## A WORD ABOUT DEBT.

Debts incurred for family expenses always amount to a much larger sum than if cash were paid down for every article, and the burden of its expense fell at the time.

Every family who keep a pass-book at the grocery's and butcher's, or dry goods store, ought to know this fact, for it is very tempting to order this, that and the other when the purse does not have to be taken out of the pocket to pay for the articles, and clothing is easily bought when the charges are only to be written down.

Merchants understand this fact most fully, and will delight to give your family credit if they hold a respectable station in society, and they are certain that the time of payment will eventually come.

Then they can also charge a higher price than if you paid down for your goods. Quarter of a dollar a yard is to be taken into consideration if you are to pay for the article out of your purse, but if it is to stand upon the merchant's books for six months, it is a mere trifle not to be thought of.

All of us who firmly believe and practice cash payments for everything connected with our households and farms, are forced to pay more for an article on account of the debts incurred by others, which may never be paid. The merchant charges a profit upon his goods that he would not be warranted in doing did he expect to receive payment for all his sales, and so in the end we honest persons pay the debts of the dishonest ones.

The little debts that the boy is allowed to contract at the village store are often the commencement of his ruin, and the small debts which the young couple just starting in life owe are the beginning of countless miseries, for persons who live always in debt doubtless suffer miserably, until their sensibilities become blunted, and they will perhaps declare that the world owes them a living, and they mean to get it out of it.

Women are made to feel the burdens of

husbands' debts most sorely. Many have lived always in debt, but a time for reckoning must come, and when the husband dies he leaves his wife and children penniless. The house, farm and stock are all heavily mortgaged; scarcely enough is left to pay his funeral expenses, for all his belongings must go to pay his store debts.

Now, had there been no possibility of his running into debt, obtaining this, that or the other thing upon credit, he might have supported his family decently, even comfortably, and have died possessed of a house, farm and stock, and left his family a home.

Debts are like stinging mosquitoes to honest men, and they poke their bills into their faces so often that they learn to give them a quietus, and never let them approach again; but to dishonest men they are the means of obtaining what is not lawfully their own, and thereby defrauding their neighbors and the community at large.

"You have outrun your fortune;  
I blame you not that you would be a beggar;  
Each to his taste! But I do charge you, sir,  
That being beggar'd you shall win false money  
Out of that cruel called debt!"  
—Cultivator.

## RANDOM READINGS.

PREACHING is often like a boomerang; it bounds back and hits the preacher.

IN MAKING ARRANGEMENTS to live, we should never forget that we have also to die.

RESPECT TO AGE, and kindness to children are among the tests of an amiable disposition.

O, THAT YOU MIGHT become reduced to the simplicity of a little child! It is the child who approaches nearest to Jesus Christ. It is a child whom he takes in his arms and carries in his bosom. O, how lovely, how attractive is child-like simplicity!—*Guyon*.

A DROWNING MAN, plucked out of the jaws of death is happier with three feet of rock, than others with thousands of broad acres; so the humble Christian happier with the hope of Heaven than the men of the world are when their corn and wine do most abound, and all things go well with them.

WHEN WE PRAY for any virtue, we should cultivate the prayer as well as pray for it; the form of our prayers should be the rule of our life; every petition to God is a precept to man. Look not, therefore, upon your prayers as a short method of duty and salvation only, but as a perpetual monitor of duty; by what we require of God we see what he requires of us.—*Jeremy Taylor*.

WHAT A PITIFUL THING it would be to see a man live all his life a pauper, and to find out just after he was buried that he was heir to an immense estate, that, held in trust, was waiting for him! How sad it would be for a man to be the unknown heir of a vast property, and yet live his whole life in poverty, and die without knowing anything about it, or having a penny of it! And yet there are thousands who are doing this in regard to spiritual things. They are living all their life long with an immense estate close by them, and not knowing anything about it, they do not break through and take possession of it.—*W. W. Beecher*.

QUEEN VICTORIA'S HABITS.—When free from the cares of State, nothing can be simpler than the daily routine of life Queen Victoria leads at Balmoral Castle. She manages her household on very strict principles, servants according to merit—promotion always being held out. For a stupid act, one member of the royal household had to wait ten years for promotion. Her Majesty rises at seven, takes breakfast at nine, and then attends to despatches and private correspondence; luncheon at two, then drives out in her carriage. During meals a piper plays in front of the window. She has dinner at half-past eight in the library not having used the large dining-hall since the death of her husband. There is no display in her library—the arrangements are of the simplest character. She spends much of her time in Prince Albert's room. She comes quietly into her dinner with her knitting in her hand, and retires early. She is a woman of great method. In all weather she is seen abroad. A rainy day does not keep her in with a water-proof and umbrella, she defies the elements. It is quite a common thing to see her walking in the grounds under a drizzling rain. She is a hearty woman, having no "fine lady" fancies. Dresses consistently with the climate and the weather, and a fresh, comely, sensible-looking lady she is, in her comfortable, plain jacket and broad-brimmed hat.

"I SCRUBS."—"What have my class done for Jesus since last we met?" asked the teacher of a large infant class one Sabbath morning.

One said, "I have earned some money for the heathen by doing errands;" another "I tend your sick baby;" another, "I fetch hunch-back Billy to school, with the boys a laughing at me." One after another told, in a half-bashful, half-exultant way, of the little activities and self-denials of the week, so pleasing to the teacher, and still more pleasing to Him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me."

At last a little four-year-old hand was stretched up, and moved hastily to and fro to attract the teacher's attention.

"Well, my dear, what are you doing to please Jesus?"

The little face flushed with excitement as the unexpected reply came, "I scrubs, ma'am!"

Some of the older scholars tittered, but the teacher sobered them at once by saying:

"Yes, little Molly's share in the work my class is doing for Jesus is as important as any. If she tries to help her mother by scrubbing a bench or table, even if it has to be done over after her, she earns the same smile of love as the older ones who can do errands and earn money for the missionary box."

"She hath done what she could," is the highest praise that can be spoken of any one, and little Molly has done that.—*American Messenger*.