

# Religious Intelligencer.

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

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## NOTES OF THE CAMPAIGN.

**THE PRICE OF THE "INTELLIGENCER" (TO SUBSCRIBERS WHO PAY IN ADVANCE) HAS BEEN REDUCED TO \$1.50.**

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**THE AIM.**—Our aim is to put the "Intelligencer" into every Free Baptist family in the Province, and into as many others as possible. Will not every minister and other member of the denomination help in so good a work? Help now!

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**ARRANGERS.**—Some of those in arrears have responded to our call. Thank you. We are expecting to hear from all the others right away. Please do not delay. Try to get some new subscribers, and in that way pay part or all of your own subscription. Read the Special Offer below and take advantage of it.

### THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

BY MRS. M. E. SANGSTER.

Upon Judea's starlit plain,  
These broke a sudden glory,  
And distant mountains sought the strain,  
Of an exulting glory.  
Above the sad and weary earth,  
Were angel voices ringing,  
The blessing of a Saviour's birth,  
The burden of their singing.

It trembled to their harps of gold,  
That strain divinely tender;  
Along the shining skies it rolled  
In grand and choral splendor.  
It floated o'er the sleeping world,  
A balm for all its sorrow,  
Its flag of heavenly peace unfurled,  
To greet a brighter morning.

The shepherds keeping vigil there,  
Had heard the advent angel,  
Whose word of grace had calmed their fear,  
And told the new evangel.  
And when the music ceased they went  
To Bethlehem's lowly manger,  
Where Mary, mother, held content,  
The wondrous infant stranger.

Still, when the music dies away,  
And hearts with grief are breaking,  
We take our path from day to day,  
And earthy fields forsaking,  
We go to Bethlehem and kneel,  
Where mystic incensation,  
In human form, doth God reveal,  
Himself, our consolation.  
And still we lift the glory song,  
To meet the raptured chorus,  
That evermore are hymning o'er us,  
In heaven are hymning o'er us.  
Through mingled years of shade and light  
We trust the love that frees us  
From fear of death, from evil's blight,  
The blessed love of Jesus.

### THE GIFT OF GOD.

Is what? ETERNAL LIFE. A gift! Wonderful love! A God-gift, free, full, abundant. A present from the God of heaven; Himself "in Christ." Such a royal gift is surely "unspeakable;" it passeth "knowledge," because it is of the eternal. "The man in the child," but the man belongs further along. This gift is "evermore" in the little we know, ever greater further along.

The greatness, the value of this gift we cannot compute. Gifts of love we estimate by the love that prompts them, they are but echoes of voices. The power of love to bestow is great in man, but "neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." The greatness, the value of this gift may be expressed, but not exhausted, in one word—Christ. In Him we see both the greatness and value of our lives, and by Him know eternal life. He possessed "the gift of God, eternal life," and He came that we might "have life, and have it more abundantly." "He that believeth hath eternal life." "Precious faith," precious gift.

This gift is the "one thing needful," the one thing. Without which we can neither know nor see God.

This gift, like all God's gifts, must be appropriated. Mark, it is a gift, a gift of love, "For God so loved the world." And it is for service, in love "follow thou me," as "one that serveth." Following, serving, loving, "because He first loved us." Love is only satisfied with love. "God is love,—and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

It is a reasonable gift, always appropriate and suitable. It is both satisfactory and satisfying. Many gifts at the Christmas time are neither reasonable, suitable, satisfactory nor satisfying. This is a king's gift, the best, and that is always fit.

"It satisfies my longings, As nothing else can do."

"Hidden treasure" must be sought. "Seek ye the Lord," "ask and ye shall receive." The giver of this "pearl of great price," says, "Behold I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Surely "if thou knowest the gift of God," may it not be said, thou wouldst "let the heavenly stranger in." We are this Christmas again reminded of Him, for whom the world could not find room, the "despised and rejected of men." Yet He came "to seek and save the lost," and after a life of love and sacrifice "for us" the world gave Him a cross and chose a thief instead of a Saviour. Chose sin—the robber—instead of Emmanuel—God with us.

How shall we receive Him as He speaks to us in the cherished associations of this Christmas? By the outer ear we know Him, but do we know Him as a guest? Have we found room for Him? If not, why not? Why not? We want the best! We desire, surely, to be loved truly by "the one altogether lovely!" Then why not receive the gift of God? "and the crown above the cross?" "come unto me," what a gracious invitation! Yes! weary one come, and "ye shall find rest unto your soul." If you do, Christmas will have a new meaning, and a "Happy Christmas" it will be.

"In all things sweet and tender, In all things great and good."

S.

### THE PASTORATE SYSTEM.

NO. III.

Permit me to say a few words more about the practical results of our ideas of church independence. A number of churches is so situated that it appears reasonable that one minister should take charge of them, but some of the churches say "no, we are independent bodies, and we will not have this man for our pastor." This action breaks in upon the system, and all the churches are left to take care of themselves as best they can, or have no pastoral care at all. Now, every thoughtful person will condemn such a course as fraught with evil to all concerned. But wherein is the evil if absolute church independence is correct? Have they not a right to do as they please? Yes, if they wish they can be like the dog in the manger, neither eat themselves nor let any one else eat. The truth is simply here, we are together for mutual benefit, and the refusal to co-operate and so to hinder that benefit is a great wrong to all concerned. If men or churches will be obstructionists and hinder good from coming to others, they had better withdraw from the society altogether. Sometimes, also, it happens that church members do not like the minister elect, and they show this independence by refusing to do any thing for his support; they will neither pray for nor pay him, nor do any thing but obstruct his work and bring confusion into the church. Now such independence is not in the Bible, and never ought to be named among Christian people. From such independence we say, in the language of the prayer-book, "Good Lord deliver us." It is easy to see that this wrong idea of church independence is a great hindrance to the proper establishment of a real and helpful pastorate system. Nor less destructive to the best interests of the pastorate system is the objection that arises in relation to the independence of the ministry. Indeed, I believe that this notion of the independence of the ministry is fraught

with greater evil to our churches than the dogma of absolute church independence itself. Certainly it is a good thing for a minister to be independent, but this may and often is carried too far, and in place of a manly independence it degenerates into sheer wilfulness, which, to say the best of it, is anything but good. I think it is Whitaker who says, "Ministers are ticklish behind," or words of that import. And the remark is very true, for ministers are apt to stand upon their dignity, and to suppose that every one in the churches should submit to order and system but themselves. The minister should be an example to the church of patience, submission and humility. He is to be a servant of Jesus Christ, and as such he is a servant to His church. He is not a lord over God's heritage. But many ministers do not wish to be in that lowly capacity, as they regard it, and so talk of a manly independence. It is asked how can a minister of Christ be compelled to take charge of an interest in which he has no concern, and to which he does not wish to commit himself? I answer, he should not, indeed, cannot be forced into any such place. The pastorate system does not contemplate putting the ministers into places in disregard of their individual rights. There can be no compulsion of this kind. Compulsion in religious life is out of the question. But still, a little gentle pushing might, perhaps, be a benefit to some of us in respect to the pastorate system. To be forced into relations when we have no desire for those relations must be always wrong. But it may happen that the minister's feelings assert themselves overmuch and he says to himself, or to others, I will not be put into any such relations as to take charge of this or that church. A little wise pressure would be a good thing here, for just as like as not this is the very place that the Lord wants him for his own good as well as for the benefit of the churches. Often our brethren know what we ought to do and where we ought to labor better than we do ourselves. Again, has the Holy Spirit no voice in this matter of our labor? and have the best interests of the churches and the advancement of God's cause nothing to do with the ministry of the Word? When these voices speak they are the voice of God and should be obeyed. There can be no doubt that the Holy Spirit calls us sometimes to places and to work where our feelings are in opposition to the outset. And it frequently happens that when the minister humbles himself and attends to the work before him rich blessing is experienced, and a good result from the labour. The Lord works in many ways to take pride from man, and get all the glory to his own name. Sometimes the apparently brightest prospect before the minister becomes disappointment and disaster, and sometimes when he thinks he can do nothing for God he accomplishes the greatest good. Let us not be too independent.

In reference to the benefits of a pastorate system, I have only space to say a little. What I have been writing shows to some extent the benefits of such a system. A good system of religious work must of necessity produce good results. The results will be in some respects proportionate to the good that is inherent in the system itself. That a regular system of ministerial labour in our churches would be productive of good results, I have no doubt whatever, and our work would soon be in a much improved condition. It is true that no system, however good, can carry itself forward, or accomplish the end contemplated. There needs to be a hearty interest in it and careful management. It is easy to condemn the system and say it is no good, that it is not adapted to our people, etc., etc.; but no one has a right to talk thus until the system has been given a fair trial. If, then, it has been found wanting, condemn it, but not in advance. The trial has not yet been fairly made by us as a people. We should be glad to see the day when it shall be fairly tried; and if we live to see that day, we predict for it results that are not at present comprehended, results that will glorify God, and lift up and establish the life of our people. May God hasten that day is our daily prayer.

A. TAYLOR.

### ABOUT MEXICO.

Joaquin Miller, writing from the city of Mexico, states that the Mexican left to himself builds nothing but mud huts. The city of Mexico is as the Spanish left it. Not a single public building has been erected in sixty years! The Hall of Justice is a splendid building, but it is a convent with the monks turned out. Fighting and plundering, rebelling and revolutionizing have been the work of the Mexicans for many years. But Joaquin Miller assures us, a change is coming—it has actually begun. The electric light flashes in the central squares of the city; and other improvements also are in progress.

It will be remembered that the Spanish invaders utterly destroyed the great and wonderful city of Mexico. Everything that could be taken away was seized the conquerors. What could not be removed was burnt or buried. Recently three immense images, each weighing more than a ton, were discovered and dug out in a public square near the Cathedral. They had lain there since the destruction of the city by Cortez. They are placed in the museum with other idols and curiosities. In the same place are two wonderful stones—the calendar stone and the sacrificial stone. The calendar stone, with the crab and the fish, and other signs familiar to all who ever saw an almanac, is the most massive stone that has come down to us out of the past. There is nothing nearly approaching it in weight or magnitude in the British Museum, or anywhere else in this world. The surface and the circles are perfect in workmanship, although the quality of the stone is very coarse, far below the Egyptian granite, yet, no doubt, quite as durable. The figures are very deep and distinct; although you can see that many a sledge hammer blow was aimed at the images and figures by the fierce and frenzied Spaniards before the great stone was buried, as they hoped, forever out of sight. This stone has only within the past few months been permanently placed in the museum, although it has been discovered a century—another example of Mexican sloth and indolence. The sacrificial stone is also waiting, along with a whole lot of idols and curious creations with Egyptian faces, to take its place against the wall and up out of the dirt where it is now lying. The whole will be in place in about six months. The calendar stone, Miller says, weighs about twenty-five tons. It was the Aztec almanac. The sacrificial is about the same size and weight. It is on this stone that human victims were wont to bleed. The faces, head dress, contour, &c., of the Mexican idols closely resembles Egyptian figures.

Here is Miller's picture of the Cathedral and its frequenters:

Look forward at the far, deep nave! Fifty feet high and forty feet wide! You see nothing but gold and gold and gold! The image of God and his angels. Old, bald-headed Saint Peter patiently holding his keys and ready to unlock Heaven to the kneeling world.

And now look down on the dirty floor before you. A thousand poor creatures crawling about, some blind, some lame, some dying of loathsome diseases, and all very, very miserable; all naked, and hungry, and helpless; yet a sea of glittering gold before them.

The music is sublime! Mass is being said for some dead Mexican robber of princely fortune and so the singers, the priests, the little boys, and the big boys, too, are all doing their best. A good many of the cripples that crawl about over the dirty floor have lottery tickets to sell. Many an old woman with a baby on her back offers you a lottery ticket by way of breaking the ice and getting well enough acquainted to ask you for a cent. Every day, every hour, in church and out of church, you are importuned by the poor to buy lottery tickets. A priest called on me the day I came to this curious town, imploring me to buy some lottery tickets of him, for the benefit of his church and for his poor. These lotteries are conducted by the Government, as in Italy. The Government gets a large per cent.

Yes, indeed, it is simply awful. Every one expects to draw a grand prize to-morrow; and so why go to work to-day!

Deeper and deeper the organ sounds, and louder and louder the prayers for the dead. The people—the poor, naked and lazy, and dirty people—all raked and luzzed, join in the prayer for the departed soul. They fall on their faces, they spread their naked, dirty arms wide out on the naked, dirty floor, and lie there praying and mourning in the dust on their faces, their

splendour of hair sweeping up the dust.

Here comes in a priest to pray. He is leading a little boy. Perhaps this good priest is a sort of schoolmaster also. He has a book or two in his right hand, also a very large sheet of lottery tickets. He brushes the floor a little with his long greasy gown. He puts down the books, and then and there he places the lottery tickets, so that no one may steal them while he prays, and so he kneels on books and tickets, his head sideways, his eyes closed; his fat and greasy hands are full of greasy beads. The little boy kneels on his robe behind. And the little boy, with beautiful eyes and cheeks like a rose, keeps looking roguishly about at some pretty little Mexicans with the mother praying at another altar. Let us go hence. I think God is outside.

This is the sort of Christianity Spain and Rome have given to Mexico. Happily others are now evangelizing this beautiful and sunny land.—*Pres. Witness.*

### THE "LOST SOULS" OF SIBERIA.

A graphic picture of the condition of those unfortunates who are fitly described as "lost souls" is drawn in the work on Siberia by the Russian writer Jadrinzeff, a German edition of which has just been published by Professor E. Petri, of Bern, says the *London Post*: But few of the exiles ever attain to the possession of a "house," by which is meant a miserable hut. Most of them are in reality the bondsmen of the Siberian peasants, by whom they are hired; that is to say, they remain in their debt as long as they live, and are satisfied when they can get money for drinking on holidays from their masters. But as the majority of the exiles are rogues and vagabonds by profession, who are afraid of work, the number of fugitives is constantly increasing who steal, rob and plunder whenever a chance offers, and thus intensify the natural antipathy of the settlers against the class of the deported. The peasants have every cause to be incensed against them, for, besides suffering from the malpractices of the convict class, they have to bear the cost of the erection and preservation of prisons for the exiles, organize hunts for the capture of runaway, provide guards for them, and find the taxes which cannot be raised among the deported class. But the greatest gaps in the ranks of the exiles are caused by the almost systematic escape of the latter from forced labor and from the convict settlements. No less than fifteen per cent. of the deported escape during transport. Many of them are shot down like wild beasts by the peasants and natives, and an observer of Siberian life made a very true remark when he said that Siberia would scarcely have been able to overpower the runaway exiles if the peasants had not annihilated them.

The most extreme measures to check the system of escape are the hunts by the natives, organized by the Russian Government. The native receives three roubles if he delivers the prisoner, "dead or alive," to the authorities. The people are provided with good arms and ammunition, so as to make hunting the escaped prisoner a perfect success. One of those few who managed to escape was seized in his native village, and when brought before the court he said: "For two years I have wandered about, have swam through rivers and seas, have crossed Siberian forests, passed through steppes and mountains, and no one has touched me, neither man nor beast; but here, in my native village, I have been seized and cast into chains." The escape from forced labor had become so common that the administrators of convict establishments were in the habit of calling out, when receiving prisoners: "Whoever wishes to stay, let him take clothes; he who wants to run away will not need them." It should be observed that the clothes left behind by escaped convicts, so as to guard against capture, are the perquisites of the authorities.

### THE WEEK OF PRAYER.

The topics suggested by the Evangelical Alliance for exhortation and prayer, are:

SUNDAY, JAN. 2. *Sermons.*—"O, Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come."—Psalm lxxv. 2.

MONDAY, JAN. 3. *Praise.*—For rich spiritual blessings; for the long suffering grace of God; for manifold temporal blessings, private and public; for many tokens of the mighty working of the Holy Ghost, both at home and abroad; for the increase of Missionary zeal among Jews and Gentiles; for new

openings for the spread of the Gospel in many lands; for the preservation of peace among the nations.—Psalm cxi; Luke i. 67-79; Deut. xxxii. 1-14; Psa. cxvii; I Chron. xvi. 1-34; Psa. cvii; I Chron. xxix. 9-20.

TUESDAY, JAN. 4. *Humiliation.*—For personal sins, family sins, and national sins; for the spread of unbelief and atheism in various quarters; for the fearful extent to which the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, still prevail; for the large amount of intemperance, licentiousness, and other forms of immorality; for the formalism of many and the cold indifference of others; for unseemly divisions and lack of love among those who are brethren in Christ.—Psa. li; Jer. xiii. 15-27; Philippians ii. 5-16; Eccl. ix. 1-15; I Cor. v; Jude 1-16; I Cor. iii. 1-10.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 5. *Prayer for the Church.*—That the people of God may know their high calling and responsibility; that they may be filled with the Spirit, and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit, and labor agreeably for the conversion of souls; that grace may be given to all pastors, teachers, and preachers to proclaim the Word in its simplicity and fullness, and that the Lord may open the hearts of men to receive it; that believers may walk in fellowship and holy love, remembering that they are one body in Christ, and members one of another.—John v. 14-36; Ephes. i; I Thess. i; I Kings vii. 22-36; John xv. 12-21; I Cor. v. 17-36; Ephes. iv. 1-16; Matt. vi. 5-34.

THURSDAY, JAN. 6. *Prayer for families and schools.*—That family love may be sanctified, husbands and wives walking together as fellow heirs of the grace of life; and training their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; that the young may be early drawn to Christ, and kept from the evil that is in the world; that great grace may be given to all teachers of youth; that the blessing of God may rest on all schools, colleges, universities, and Sunday-schools; for all Christian Associations of young men and young women; for the protection of women and the home, the reformation of fallen men and women, and the equalizing of the scale of morality for both sexes; for all who are in affliction.—Deut. vi. 1-15; Prov. iv; Ephes. vi. 1-18; I Chron. xvii. 16-27; 2 Tim. i. 1-14; Coloss. iii. 12-25; Isa. xii.

FRIDAY, JAN. 7. *Prayer for Missions.*—That the Church of Christ may recognize the glory of the commission to "preach the Gospel to every creature," and may feel it a privilege to make sacrifices that it may be fulfilled; that far greater zeal for the Divine glory and far more pity for the perishing may be imparted by the Holy Ghost to all the people of God; that faithful laborers may be greatly multiplied, and that all converts may be comforted, upheld, guided and made useful; that the hearts of the unconverted may be opened to receive the truth; that Christian missionaries may be favorably received by heathen rulers and peoples, and that native Christians among the heathen may be kept steadfast and made zealous in seeking the salvation of their countrymen; that God's ancient people, Israel, may acknowledge Christ as the Messiah; that the time may soon come when, according to prophecy, the Spirit shall be "poured out like floods upon the dry ground," and "the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."—Acts ii. 20-40; Isa. xli. 1-8; Matt. ix. 36-38; Rom. xi. 25-36; Isa. xxxv; Eccles. xii; Isa. xlii. 1-16; Acts x. 34-48.

SATURDAY, JAN. 8. *Prayer for nations.*—For the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the nations; for rulers and all in authority; for just and equal laws and righteous administration; for the better observance of the Lord's day; for the prevalence of the Spirit of Christ between employers and employed; that anarchism and all forms of lawlessness may pass away and men live quiet and peaceful lives in all godliness and honesty; for peace among nations, and the removal of all race and sectional antipathies; for the abolition of slavery, the opium trade, the liquor traffic, and all other immoral trade and practices; for the blessing of God on all efforts to remove the curse of intemperance; for the cessation of persecution for conscience sake, and of all oppression.—Ps. lxxvii. and xvi; Joel ii. 23-32; Rom. xiii. 1; I Thess. v. 12-24; Zeph. iii. 14-20; Rom. xiv; Matt. vii. 1-12; I Peter ii. 13-25; Hosea xiv.

SUNDAY, JAN. 9.—*Sermons.*—"Thy Kingdom Come."—Matt. vi. 10.

A friendly call is not a pastoral visit. Social intercourse, however pleasant, is not, or at least should not be, the principal thing aimed at. With the head of the house at business, the children at school, and perhaps some of the younger members in situations, how are all to be brought together for religious exercises? We are quite aware that there is no one best way of doing anything. The best way in one congregation may not be the best way in another. Still, the conditions under which the work must be done are much the same in our town and city congregations. There is fortunately little difficulty in the country, as the great majority of the people there are masters of their own time. There is a great danger lest pastoral visitation, in the proper sense of the word, should become a thing of the past.