

TERMS, NOTICES, ETC.

The RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER is issued every Wednesday, from the office of publication, York St., Fredericton.

Terms: \$1.50 a year, in advance.

If not paid in advance the price is \$2.00 a year.

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Items of religious news from every quarter are always welcome. Denominational news, as all other matter for publication, should be sent promptly.

Communications for publication should be written on only one side of the paper, and business matters and those for insertion should be written separately. Observance of this rule will prevent much copying and needless confusion and mistakes.

ALL COMMUNICATIONS, etc., should be addressed RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER, Box 375, Fredericton, N. B.

Religious Intelligencer.

REV. JOSEPH McLEOD, D. D., EDITOR.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 1887.

A HELPER—There is no one, says the Christian Register, whose presence in church affords the minister so much habitual comfort and support as the steady-goer. Whether it rain or shine, whether it be hot or cold, the steady-goer is always in his pew. The minister always knows where to find him. His eye, sweeping over the church, is always sure to light on the steady-goer's pew. When he writes his sermon he has the steady-goer in mind; for he is morally sure that he will be there to hear it. Should he be absent, he is either off on a journey or it is an indication that something is wrong with him or his family. He may not say much to the minister, but his habitual presence at church is an indication that he believes in church and pulpit; and he that lends his ear is likely to lend his hand to support them.

Is Christianity Progressing?

It is no uncommon thing to hear it said that the religion of the Bible is losing its hold upon the people; that the old-time power of the gospel is witnessed no more; that, in a word, 'Christianity is a failure.' And this kind of talk has become so common that many good people are almost persuaded that there must be something in it. It is refreshing, therefore, when, at times we light upon statistics which tell the truth, and prove that so far from losing its hold upon the popular mind and heart, there has never been a time, in this country, if ever in the history of the world, when Christianity made such progress and so swayed the thought of the race as just now. It is quite practicable, though requiring patience and perseverance, to compile statistics which are thoroughly convincing; and for the latest effort in this direction we are indebted to the *Independent*, which has done the same thing in other years and is able to compare the present with the past. In a late issue, that paper contains not only the results of careful inquiry as to the present status of the various denominations of Christians found in the United States, but also a comparison between the aggregates of the present year with those of four years ago, in 1883. Summing up all the smaller 'branches' of each general denomination under our head, it gives the following aggregates:

	Chs.	Min.	Mem.
Adventists	1,472	821	97,711
Baptists	40,847	27,889	3,727,007
Christian Union	1,500	500	120,000
Congregationalists	4,277	4,000	436,379
Friends	700	500	105,000
German Ev. Ch.	675	500	125,000
Lutherans	7,573	3,990	930,829
Methodists	47,392	29,493	4,532,638
Methodists Ep.	350	500	101,000
Moravians	83	64	10,686
Presbyterians	12,888	9,429	1,082,486
Episcopalians	4,524	3,865	490,531
Reformed (Ger. and Dutch)	2,004	1,342	239,974
Roman Catholics	7,010	7,638	7,000,000

MISCELLANEOUS.

	Chs.	Min.	Mem.
Universalists	685	673	35,550
New Jerusalem	90	70	5,015
Unitarians	365	459	29,000

There are Christadelphians, Plymouth Brethren, and other small bodies, and a number of independent congregations, not included under this head.

The Universalists, the Swedenborgians and the Moravians have lost slightly; the Moravians, one church and six ministers; the Swedenborgians, four ministers and the Universalists, twenty-four churches, forty ministers.

and six hundred and eighty-eight members. Is not this general fact one of great significance?

Commenting on the above figures, the *Independent* says:

If Christianity is really in the declining stage, something still called by its name has its heritage of vitality and productivity.

The gains of the four years are magnificent. The net increase of members is 1,631,799. That is, the Churches have in this period not only received enough new members to make good their losses by death, discipline and otherwise, but to increase the number of professing members by over sixteen hundred thousand. This allows, as will be noticed, only a comparatively slight gain to the Roman Catholic Church. Sixteen hundred thousand increase in four years is at the rate of 407,949 a year, or 1,117 every day in the year, or 46 every hour in the day. Is not this a grand demonstration of the propagating power of Christianity?

The increase in churches has been 15,325. This means a gain of 3,831 every year and more than 10 every day. And every new society means a new building; means an investment of money, and investments mean faith in the present and future of Christianity. The increase of ministers is 9,694, which is about 12 per cent, and is at the rate of 6 1/4 a day, or 2,423 a year. This, too, is an indication that the alleged decay of faith is purely imaginary. The churches must have some vitality in order to go on adding 2,400 ministers every year to the great army already in commission, and furnish means for their support.

The table of net gains shows that the Methodist family is at the head of the list, with the Baptists second, the Lutherans third, the Presbyterians fourth, the Episcopalians fifth and the Congregationalists sixth. The order is a little different if the various families be arranged according to present strength in numbers. The Methodists are first, the Roman Catholics second, the Baptists third, the Presbyterians fourth, the Lutherans fifth, the Congregationalists sixth, the Episcopalians seventh. Of the 19,018,977 communicants nearly every fourth communicant is a Methodist, every fifth a Baptist, every seventeenth a Presbyterian, and every twentieth a Lutheran.

More than 132,000 churches, almost 92,000 ministers, and over 19,000,000 members in a population of less than sixty millions! What a mighty force in the education and civilization of our country! Inspired and guided by the Spirit of God, united in bonds of Christian fellowship, this mighty force must be irresistible.

Famine in Asia Minor.

The *Independent* publishes some particulars of a famine now prevailing on the Alicia plain in Asia Minor, a region bordering on the Mediterranean sea, and embracing the ancient towns of Tarsus and Adana. The state of affairs is so deplorable as to render an appeal to the benevolent public an immediate duty. The harvest time has just passed, but not a single sheaf of grain will be cut in all the plain, ordinarily so fertile, save in a few fields artificially watered. The city of Adana is in the center of this region, and from this place the Rev. G. F. Montgomery wrote, May 5th and 6th, of a severe winter with much suffering, during which the people had lived on in the hope of better times ahead. He adds:

"Now the spring has come, and the heaven is as iron, and the earth as brass. There is no grass for the cattle, no harvest of the winter-sown grain, and no sowing for the usual summer crops; absolutely no opportunity to earn a single piaster of money; the little oil in the bottom of the cruse and the handful of meal in the barrel are fast wasting away, and there is yet at least twelve months before there can possibly be any work or another opportunity for a harvest. Already most of the farming villages in the vicinity are quite deserted. The people had hoped to save their vineyards, but now the leaves that are just beginning to come out are turning yellow, and vines are beginning to dry up, and will be ruined. Numbers of people are trying to sell copper vessels, beds, furniture, cows and oxen on the street, at one-fourth of their worth. Cows are being sold at the ridiculous price of thirty piasters each—about a dollar and a quarter."

A committee, appointed at Adana to present an appeal to benevolent people in America, have sent the following statement, which is vouched for as correct by American missionaries in Turkey:

"A square section of our most fertile plain, 3,600 square miles in extent, extending from Mersine, on the west, sixty miles to Missis, on the east, and sixty miles from north to south, is stripped of its glory and beauty, and remains a sad desert. A part of our vineyards did not begin to put forth their new branches, and those that did so are already beginning to wither."

The yearly exports from these fields, during the last few years, in cotton, sesame, oats and millets, have been 800,000 L. T. (about three and one-half million dollars), and the wheat and barley produced have been worth even more.

This year, also, because there is no grass, the flocks and herds are mostly starved. Butter, cheese and milk are with difficulty found.

From these statements you will understand something of the calamity which is upon us.

This section of country contains over 100,000 inhabitants, of whom 20,

000 are able to find a living without help. But 80,000 are destitute and cannot be kept from starvation unless help is brought to them from without. Many of them have lived until now only by selling their furniture, in some cases even to the beds from under them."

"Three days ago I came across a little girl twelve years old trying to sell a small glass hand lamp on the street for one piaster that she might buy bread, as she said that they had nothing to eat at home and after this nothing left to sell."

"The sad sights we are compelled every day to witness cannot be described with the pen. All eyes are full of weeping and the air is full of lamentation."

"Unless the benevolent of America and England have mercy and reach out their pitying hands toward our country with generous help this large number of poor people must perish from starvation."

"For our part we think it sufficient to put this sad matter before you and implore your pity and aid."

Among The Churches.

No. 3.

When last we visited Rev. J. W. Clark he was in charge of the Norton Midland pastorate of which we wrote last week. He is now minister to the Tracey Mills and Knoxford churches. He is near the close of his second year with them. His labours have been blessed to the people. He has been invited to continue their pastor another year, and is, we think, likely to do so. Recently he had to remove from Tracey Mills to Centreville, a mile and a half or more distant from the church. He is not quite so conveniently situated for his work, but could not avoid moving, there being no home for him at the Mills. The circuit needs a parsonage. There is a movement towards purchasing or building one. It has not been begun a day too soon; and we hope the brethren will quickly push it forward now. The churches are fully able to build, and owe it to themselves and their minister to do so, being careful to erect a house in every way suitable for the purpose.

On the arrival of the train at Centreville, the nearest Railway Station, we were met by Bro. Clark. A drive of four or five miles over the hills brought us safely to his pleasant home, the generous hospitalities of which we much enjoyed during our sojourn.

A word, in passing, of the railway that part of it between Fredericton and Centreville. It is in good order, as good, so far as we can judge, as we have ever known it to be. Paint has done much for the station buildings. What were before, in many cases, ill kept and unattractive buildings have, by needed repairs and the judicious use of paint, become pleasant and attractive. The management has done well in making this improvement.

In this reference to paint there is a suggestion to many house owners, and especially to farmers. While there has been a manifest increase in recent years in use of paint on farm houses, there is still room for improvement in many places. Paint is cheap, and its use would not only improve the appearance of the buildings, but would also add to the market value of the properties on which they are.

Just above Fredericton we passed the steamer Centreville. She had run around the day before on the down trip, and her passengers were compelled to complete the journey by rail. She has in other years made the trips without difficulty when the water was as low or even lower than now. It is thought that the ice and heavy freshet of last spring formed new bars, changing the channel.

On the train was Rev. Wm Kinghorn going to his appointment at Hartland. He goes fortnightly. The alternate Sabbaths he devotes to other places as opportunity offers. There were also several Methodist ministers going, by appointment of their Conference then in session at Marysville, to fill Sabbath appointments at various places.

Centreville is a thriving village. We first saw it something over a score of years ago. It was then in its infancy. There was, we think, but one store, kept by Geo. W. White Esq. The country about it was for the most part unbroken forest, and with but small clearings and improvements. It has grown rapidly. There is now a considerable village; it has ten or more stores of various kinds, three carriage factories, a furniture factory, two large hotels,

three churches, and many very pleasant residences indicating the possession and enjoyment of much comfort. There are four ministers resident in the village, Revs. Messrs. Harvey and Howard (Baptists), Flewelling (Episcopal) and Clark (Free Baptist).

Next week the Western Baptist Association is to meet in Centreville.

The Sabbath was a delightful day. Bro. Clark's appointments were Knoxford in the morning and Tracey Mills in the evening. At both these services it fell to our lot to preach. The people in these places are good church-goers, evidently appreciating the privileges of the Lord's House, the solemn worship and the ministry of the word. The day was one of Christian enjoyment, and we trust was profitable to all who participated in the services.

Knoxford is a flourishing farming settlement. The farms show evidences of diligence and thrift, the houses are comfortable, and the residents are a steady, diligent people, who have a marked interest in moral and religious work.

At Tracey Mills the people are apparently pursuing the even tenor of their way. The church there is one of the large ones of the denomination. It has had much faithful work by devoted ministers. Among the pastors whom we remember as having ministered to it are Revs. Thos. Connor, G. W. McDonald, Jos. Noble, A. Taylor and the present pastor, Rev. J. W. Clark. Under their labours many souls have been converted, and the church led to take a good interest in the general Christian work carried on by the denomination. During the past spring a good revival was enjoyed, and eleven were added to the church. The singing in this church has always been a notable feature; it is now, as for many years, well done, contributing much to the interest and profit of the services.

Rev. A. Taylor's home is at Tracey Mills. He is absent at present. Mrs. Taylor has for several years been in poor health. The day we saw her she was feeling some better than usual, but she is very weak and suffers much distress. All that can be done for her comfort is done, yet she seems not to improve. She expresses faith in the wisdom and love of God, and says "Thy will be done," even if it involves weakness and suffering for the rest of her life. We trust she may yet have better health; for this we hope the friends of these aged Christians will pray.

Writing of the sick we are reminded of Deacon John A. Owens, who has for several months been in poor health. He is well known by the ministers and many others of the denomination, having been clerk of the second district for several years, and a member of Conference for the same period. He has always taken a deep interest in the work and welfare of the denomination, and has been a safe counsellor in difficult cases. We found him quite weak in body, but with unwavering faith in Jesus. "Looking into the future," he said, "there is light, and all and only because 'He loved us and gave Himself for us'." We are not without hope that he may yet be better in health; to this end many who know and love him in Christ are praying.

Rev. E. B. Grey's home is in Knoxford, and we were glad to meet him at both the Sabbath services. He is home for a brief visit, and will return to his work in Campbell Settlement and Canterbury immediately after the second district meeting. He is enjoying very good health, and ready for the work to which he has devoted his life.

The INTELLIGENCER has a large list of subscribers in the Tracey Mills pastorate. Thanks to the good words and judicious efforts of the pastor and other brethren the list has been more than doubled within the last year or two. It is likely, we think, to be still further increased soon.

We have very pleasant recollections of our first visit to this pastorate, and were glad again to meet the friends of that time as well as many whose acquaintance has been made since.

Religion in Italy.

(Extracts from a paper read before the Acadia Missionary Society by Fred. C. Hartley.)

The subject is altogether too broad for a full and particular discussion and all that is aimed at is to give some account of the state of religion in that country where probably two apostles died for Christ's sake—Italy.

The first article of the Italian constitution says that the Catholic religion shall be that of the state; and it is so. Popery is as it has long been the religion of the Italians and today 25,000,000 of them are, nominally at least, subject to the Pope's mandates.

Nevertheless the power and influence of that venerable man, known to his followers as the angelical vicar of Christ and considered by them as the infallible representative of God on earth, is diminishing although this is so, yet those who do remain faithful seem more attached to him than ever. As sailors upon a sinking vessel rally around their captain prepared to obey all orders, so do they cling to the Pope determined to stand or fall with him. It does not necessarily follow because some remain faithful that they believe all that is taught at Rome. Indeed it would seem as though the case were exactly opposite. Some years ago 9,000 priests signed a petition requesting the Pope to surrender his claim to temporal power. Here refused. What did those 9,000 priests do? They continued to preach that the temporal power of the Pope is of God. Rev. Mc. Prochet tells us that at one time there were eight priests who were willing to throw away the collar if he would but give them a situation. He was not able to do so and those priests went on saying masses as usual. It would almost seem to us as though his reverence and his faithful ones would be discouraged. But no! they defend their ground, ply more vigorously than ever the confessional, that powerful weapon of Rome, open competition schools wherever they are not able to have complete management of the public ones, and wait as they say for better times.

Besides these faithful priests we find in Italy a great host of good Roman Catholics. They are good, that is, they are earnest and cling closely to their own religion as the only anchor of salvation. Yet how strange do the forms, in which the religious aspirations of the poorer Italians are expressed, appear to us. To a few thinkers they may appear only a comic show; but to us they savor not only of superstition but also of blasphemy and it requires a long acquaintance with the people to enable one to see how much real piety exists among them and with what reverence they perform those rites which seem to us so irreverent.

While there are as we have said many faithful Catholics, still, all are not such. Many of the inhabitants of Italy are Catholic only because they were born such. They are not particular themselves whether they have any religion or not and have little more reverence for the Pope than we have.

While speaking of Catholics we must not forget to mention the so called new or liberal Catholics, those who after trying in vain to make the religion to which they have so long been subject suit their enlightened consciences are now gradually breaking away from the church of Rome.

Thus have we described in brief the state of the native religion of Italy, that religion which of all the corruptions of Christianity that have ever existed, presents the most opposite views to the simple doctrines of the gospel of Christ, and which must decline just in proportion as the true religion of Christ gains ground.

Before we proceed to the Protestant religions of Italy, we must mention a class which we wish it were possible to omit; but alas the unbelievers have made sad inroads into this country. Their number, it is true, is but small yet their influence is every day growing and pervading the masses. These Free-Thinkers, Materialists, or whatever else they may be, showing as they do catholicism to be in direct opposition to freedom, find it an easy matter to gain access to a people who are so ground down as the poorer class of the Italians and who are the more anxious for liberty on account of having been so long deprived of it.

Passing on from these we next find ourselves considering a sect of native Christians,—the Waldensians, there are certainly a most remarkable people. They date their rise from 1180 A. D. when Peter Waldo, moved of God, went forth to persuade his countrymen of the error of their ways and to reduce the manners both of the clergy and of the people to the simplicity of the apostolic age. They have endured much for Christ's sake; and having passed through no less than 33 different persecutions are today a token of God's wonderful dealings. They are scattered all over Italy and are doing much to change that land of darkness into a land of light. The latest available reports give them 45 churches, 40 evangelical stations, 40 places visited by evangelists 3,000 communicants, 2,000 pupils in their day schools and about 110 workers.

Early in the nineteenth century Christians in France, England and America, began to awaken to the fact that there was something for them to do in Italy; Waldensian converts were at first procured as preachers and

teachers; afterward men were sent from the home societies. Many of these, especially of the former, were without any training and had but very little learning, but they were prospered of God and by 1870 they had succeeded in gathering together a goodly number of congregations. Some of these were then united under the head of the Free Italian Church. Since that time there has been a steady growth in this denomination and now there are Free Italian churches in almost every large city. They have a membership of about 2,600.

The Methodists have made good progress with their work in Italy, owing to the energy and activity of their workers, especially of Rev. M. Jones and Rev. H. Piggott. They are divided into two synods, Northern and Southern and number in all 44 churches, with a large list of communicants. They have established several schools, that at Padua being especially worthy of notice.

The operations of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board have been attended with much success. In 1870 they appointed W. N. Cote M. D. to superintend the work at Rome. At first everything seemed dark and gloomy, and all circumstances were adverse. But gradually fruits began to follow the labours of the devoted missionaries. In 1878 a chapel which cost \$35,000 was opened at Rome and other stations reported progress; In 1883 the Baptists of Italy united under the head of the Apostolic Baptist Union, there are now 13 American Baptist missionaries in Italy. The British Baptists are represented by Rev. Jas. Wall and he is assisted by a few other labourers.

The Free-Will Baptists have a small mission in the Italian capital under the direction of Rev. N. H. Shaw.

The Plymouth Brethren have also established a mission in Italy and gradually other denominations are awaking to the fact that there is a great work to be done there and are preparing to help on the siege of the modern Jericho, so that the walls of superstition which enclose it may be thrown down and disappear forever.

Summing up what has been said we find three classes at work in Italy. Papists, Infidels, and Christian teachers. The first have to aid them the ignorance and habits of the people; the second, the natural tendency of the human heart; the third have nothing but the gospel. Is it too much for us to expect that the last mentioned shall win in this great struggle for souls, and that the time will soon come when the gospel of life and salvation shall be established even in Catholic Italy.

OUR INDIA LETTER.

DEAR INTELLIGENCER,

A few days ago I made a pleasant call on Babee Jogendra Nath Mitter, the district judge of Balasore. He fills one of the highest positions it is possible for a native to occupy in the government and is what I would call at home, a gentleman.

"Have you," said I, "ever read the English Bible?"

"Yes," said he, "a little, but I do not understand it very well. Parts of it are very difficult to understand."

"Certainly, we need not expect to understand it all; but there is enough of it plain to show us our duties in this world and to lead us to be better. But have you not been struck with the great contrast between the life of Christ and the lives of the many gods spoken of in the Hindu shastres?"

"Yes, I have. Christ was undoubtedly a good man. Such a pure and unselfish life as he lived I think the world has never seen before. But it is hard to believe that He was God."

"It cannot be so hard as to believe that each of those so-called 'gods' of the Hindus was god. There cannot be much of God about them when they fight with and devour one another in the way described by the Hindu sacred books."

"We do not believe that they were gods but simply heroes, extraordinary men."

"Do not the lower classes worship them?"

"Yes, but the educated know better. We cannot believe that God the Father ever came to earth in the form of man."

"How then do you reconcile Christ's goodness and purity with His claims to be God?"

"I do not believe that He ever claimed it. These are mistakes in the records."

"Well, I shall not attempt to prove to you that He was God but I am sure that when you know more of Him and when He has saved you from your sins you will find no difficulty in believing it. I confess that was a stumbling block to me but I have no more doubt now of His divinity than I have of my own existence."

"I would like to read the Bible and understand more of the life of Christ, I would like to read the Bible and understand more of the life of Christ,