

TERMS, NOTICES, &c

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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.

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Religious Intelligencer.

REV. JOSEPH McLEOD, D. D., EDITOR

WEDNESDAY, Nov. 16th 1892.

—THAT RELIGION which does not make men useful to their fellow-men is nothing but a name. Men who are saved, are called to serve God in blessing their generation, and they find opportunities to do it, and have joy in it.

—“No ONE does well who does not do his best,” is an old saying, and true. Not only should one do the best of which he is capable, but he should make himself capable of doing the best work. And he should put conscience in everything he does.

—EARNEST PREACHING always gets a hearing. Though men may feel kindly and sometimes respectfully, under the sermon that reaches their consciences and shows them just what they are, they respect the faithfulness which tells the truth. They may feel quite comfortable under, and even be flattered by the wordy notions which the pulpit sometimes utters, but in their thoughtful moments they regard such utterances with contempt.

—It is TOLP of an old gentleman that, whenever the church to which he belonged had made a liberal offering, to which he had contributed the smallest possible amount, he would move about among the people saying, over and over, “Didn’t we do nobly?” Other people’s liberality was useful to him as a means of hiding his own penuriousness. He appropriated their good-deeds as though it redounded to his personal credit. There are, it is to be feared, too many of his kind.

—THE MATTER of church support is but poorly understood. Take the membership of the churches all the country over there are but few who appreciate the need of a generous support of the church of Christ, and contribute to it as they should. Some—not a large number, we are sorry to believe—do all they ought, while the majority give very meagre, and often grudging support. When Christians learn to more honour the Lord with their substance they will have richer spiritual experiences, and the cause of Christ will have greater prosperity.

—MOTHERS little know how much they influence their children. There is no human influence so potent—so enduring. The Bishop of Carlisle, speaking of the influence of mothers in the early life of their children, says, “I am one of those who lost their mothers at a very early age. I was very little over six years old when my dear mother was suddenly taken from me. I say deliberately, and without any amount of exaggeration, that though I have since been at school, been under tutors, been at college, and had all the experiences of life, I do not believe that all the lessons that I have received since that time, put together, amount in value and in importance to the lessons which I have learned from my mother before I was seven years old.”

This Year—WHAT?

Another year of work as a denomination of Christians is now before us. The Conference over, the ministers are probably, by this time, pretty well settled in their places, and the church machinery is set for the year’s running. And now what?

The last year was a fairly good one; not more than that may be said of it, so far as it is possible to judge by the reports made. The additions to the churches were not as large as could have been desired, and in some other respects the results of the year’s operations were not fully up to the measure of the highest Christian hope. It is not an unmeaning complaint, nor is it a reflection on the denomination, to say that, looked at all round, the results of the year’s work were not all that could be desired. To say that they were quite satisfactory would be to declare the denomination’s ideal of Christian activity, Christian liberality, and Christian success lower than we believe it is.

We would not, however, be understood to speak lightly of the results of the work of the year, which was better in some respects than some of its predecessors, nor should the work of any year be lightly thought of. We feel sure that often the unseen effects are possibly greater than those which are apparent, and that afterward, sometimes many years afterward, the good may be clearly seen which for the time was concealed from us. The best thing to do, the right thing, is to gladly recognize the degree of blessing received, thank God for it, and take courage for the future. At the same time we should always make careful note of failures, seek to ascertain the causes, and determine, by the grace of God, to do better now and in all the future which is given us.

To express desire that the year just now begun may be a good one, even the best in our history, is easy. The desire, we are sure, will meet a sympathetic response from the hearts of all the people. But the expression of such desire is not enough. It will be utterly vain unless there is something more than mere desire. There needs to be—must be, prayer, sacrifice, consecration, faithful personal living and labour, wise and courageous leadership, earnest co-operative work, and upon and within all the baptism of the Holy Spirit. These things being done and had there will be true success, for “the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” But if there is disregard of these things there will be failure of the success which might be achieved. Even though the work move on in orderly fashion, and more or less good effects be apparent, both the degree and the character of the results will be meagre and unsatisfactory.

We have a large number of faithful ministers, men who have felt, each, “Necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is me if I preach not the gospel,” who are expected to watch for souls as those that must give account,” and who realize their responsibility as appointed to such watch-care. We have many well organized churches, having in their membership a great host of converted men and women who love God and desire and pray for the prosperity of His cause and the conversion of those who are still in the darkness of sin. We have a large number of earnest men and women engaged in Sabbath School work, and who are truly desirous of benefiting the young whom from Sabbath to Sabbath, they teach.

All these classes from the working force of the denomination, on the human side. The question for us all to ask ourselves is, are we satisfied that the work entrusted to us is prospering as much as we desire? If not, what should be done? It will probably occur to those whose thoughts are quickened by this query that the great need is a larger and fuller endowment of power from on high. We need the Holy Spirit as the chief working force in all our activities. Without His abiding presence, His leading, His quickening and strength giving, our human efforts, however well meant, must be largely futile. The preaching services become formal, the prayer meetings a routine of songs and speaking, the Sunday schools ineffective, and the home worship a task somewhat hard to perform. But with the Spirit’s presence, all these forms of worship and Christian work become life-full, are a joy and profit to those engaging in them, and a power to convict, persuade and convert the unsaved.

Let us seek, anew the baptism of the Holy Ghost, both for our own comfort and for the more effective service we will be enabled to do.

At the beginning of this denominational year it would be well for each church to have a season of confession and prayer for the presence and power of the Spirit, and for special blessing on the ministers, that they may plan wisely their work and be more than ever blessed in leading the flock of God and winning many souls to Christ. Surely if the churches wait before God, in the faith of the promises, He will come near to bless them and endue them with power; and they will not only be gladdened by new and richer personal experiences, but will have the joy of seeing many converted.

Let us seek to have this a year of revivals in all the churches, by living, praying and working for it. With a genuine spiritual revival there will come new life into every branch of our work; nothing will languish; everything will feel the divine impulse; the work in every department will go forward with power, and God will be glorified.

Stray Notes.

NO. I.

Near the end of October is later in the year than one would choose to start on a trans-continental trip. A month or six weeks earlier would have been better, assuring milder weather and other conditions necessary to the fullest comfort in travelling. But one cannot always choose his time. He must go when the circumstances say so, either by making a favorable combination, or insist imperatively. The latter was the condition in this case.

The day of starting was bright enough—even summerlike—making one dread the journey less than if it had been a cold, chilling day.

It is well that the C. P. R. west-bound train from St. John starts at night, late. Nobody can object to passing through much of the country traversed by the short-line under cover of darkness and while in the oblivion of sleep. Through the Eastern townships is a pleasant enough ride, and that is done in day-light.

The west-bound traveller has about four hours in Montreal—arriving there at 4.30 p. m. and leaving, at 8.40. If he has been there before he can visit a good many points, a large number of people, and do considerable business in four hours. We do not undertake in these jottings to describe Montreal. It is worth visiting, and grows on one at every visit. It is enough to say that it is the finest, as it is the largest city in the Dominion.

Between Montreal and North Bay is a night’s ride, Ottawa and whatever else there is to see is unseen. At North Bay, on Lake Nipissing, is the junction of the Grand Trunk with the C. P. R., and where west-bound travellers from Toronto take the train. From Grand Bay till the north shore of Lake Superior is reached there were about twenty four hours of unmitigated dreariness, a good portion of which, happily, was spent in sleep. Quite early in the morning the first view of the lake was had, and then till well along in the afternoon, Heron Bay to Nipigon, the lake was almost constantly in sight. The ride along this section is very fine, tunnels and trestle-work and bridges alternating, with ever-varying views of lake, and rugged shores, and high-rising headland. The building of this section of the road must have been very difficult and expensive.

Sudbury Junction, nearly one hundred miles west of North Bay, the Sault Ste. Marie road makes a junction with the C. P. R. main line. This road, commonly called “the Soo line,” passes through the Sault Ste. Marie, the south-eastern point of Lake Superior, into Michigan, and goes by one branch, along the south shore to Duluth at the western point of the lake; while another branch bears southward, having its terminus at Minneapolis.

Of the Sudbury region everybody in Canada has heard, for here are the much-talked-of nickel mines, than which, it is claimed, there are no richer anywhere.

Port Arthur, at the head of the Lake, is somewhat in sack-cloth just now. By reason of some friction between the C. P. R. people and the town, and possibly for some other reason, in addition, the railway has transferred its headquarters at that point to Fort William, four or five miles farther west. The change is, presumably, better for the railway, else it would not have been made; but it is certainly not good for Port Arthur, the growth of which has been checked, and its business hopes greatly disappointed, for the present at least. On the other hand, Fort William is flourishing, and probably will continue to flourish by the impulse given it by being made the headquarters of the railway and the port for the shipment of grain carried by the lakes.

At Fort William we were glad to meet, though only for a few minutes, some old New Brunswick friends, and to learn that they are well and prospering. Here, too, we had to drop an hour of time, the second hour lost since leaving the Atlantic sea-board. For instance, the train arrives at 3.45, remains twenty-five minutes, and leaves at 3.10. It seems just a little odd, but it is what one has to count on when he journeys towards sunset.

To Winnipeg from Port Arthur is four hundred and thirty miles, and is

run in about nineteen hours. There is nothing particularly inviting much of the way, and it is not a serious loss that the journey includes a night.

Winnipeg grows steadily, it is said. For a long time after the collapse of the boom, the city had a full share of the hard times and serious struggles which inevitably follow the inflation of values and reckless speculations. But now values are normal, business is steady and healthy, and the city is going on surely. Like all these western places it looks the new city that it is. And yet it is remarkable, the substantial, and, in some instances, even elegant, character of the buildings. They indicate the faith of the people in the future of the country, a faith that will not be disappointed. We can notice much improvement since a visit six years ago, and we have no doubt that at the next visit, if ever made, there will be signs of progress at a still more rapid rate. Five days were spent in the city, and in the brief intervals of relief from pressing duties we enjoyed studying the city not only as to its appearance but as to the feeling of the people about it. They talk like people who are well satisfied with the present, and have no doubts about the future, and who have the courage necessary to meet and overcome the difficulties peculiar to life in any new country.

Lessons from Peter’s Deliverance.

ACTS XIII: 5-11

Now that we know the blessed result of the unceasing prayer of the church on behalf of Peter, it just remains to ask: What use shall we make of such knowledge?

For one thing, how encouraged we should be to pray even for blessings in respect of which, while we pray, we have to say as Jesus said in the garden, “Not as I will, but as thou wilt.” What encouragement to pray without ceasing, though for a long time, the Lord seems to shut out our prayer. He is able to grant our request, and will do it, if in His wisdom and love He sees it would be best, even if He has to do it by angelic instrumentality. Who can tell indeed, how much we have already been blessed by means of such instrumentality? In answer to our prayers for daily guidance and protection, doubtless we, and those we love, have often been the subject of the unseen ministration of angels, for it is written:—“Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation?”

Again, “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them.” “Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.” “But, as a matter of fact,” says a recent writer, does “the angel of the Lord encamp round about them that fear Him and deliver them?” The Christian’s foot is dashed against a stone. The scarlet plague has come nigh my dwelling and carried off the household pet: where was his angel? Satan enters the heart of a man and the life of an innocent school-girl is at the mercy of a murderer; where was her guardian angel? A flash from the black cloud and a good man breathes no more; where was his angel. Each day’s pilgrimage is beset with hidden perils. The death angel is dogging our every footstep. No wonder the heart cries out: “Are there any holy angels on the path of life?” Reflect a moment.

What is the ordinary course of our life? Is it full of daily accidents? Is it not rather crowded with daily mercies, unseen and unnumbered? Is not calamity occasional and not habitual? Remember, the angels are not God. They are servants, and not rulers. And when Infinite Wisdom sees the impending peril, and knows that some higher good is to come to you, and to His universe, by allowing the evil to smite you, and He restrains the willing feet and mighty hand of some heavenly guard who would fly to your aid, reproach not the the remissness of the angels. Doubt not their existence. Suspect not the Infinite love. Have faith in God, who loves you better than you love yourself, and who will suffer no real harm to come to upright souls; for there is something higher than life; dearer than health or wealth. Your spiritual perfection is a nobler thing than all these. It is that, which the angels are commissioned to aid in securing. It is intense and constant prayer for that which touches their sympathy, and has power over their guardian ministry.

There is a matter which ought to trouble the members of the church of Christ in these days much more than I fear it does trouble them, at least in many instances. It ought to trouble them a great deal more than the imprisonment and threatened death of Peter troubled the church in Jerusalem.

It is a matter which still calls for the unceasing prayers of the church unto God, and that because something more than angelic instrumentality is required—nothing less than an act of Divine power directly put forth by the agency of the quickening and life giving spirit can meet the case. I refer to the conversion of sinners—sinners asleep, when they ought not to be asleep, because they are sleeping in sin, and death—eternal-death is just awaiting them because of their sin. They are asleep and bound too, bound with chains—chains of evil habits, which they cannot of themselves strike off, and, what is worse, do not want to strike off, at least not enough to make the effort to do it, looking to the Lord to help them as they need. O if Peter’s condition called for the unceasing prayers of the church unto God for him how much more should such prayer be offered on behalf of those who are in the prison of condemnation, and know not how soon all opportunity of obtaining deliverance and eternal life shall justly be cut off. It was all right for Peter to sleep, if he could, until he was awakened by the angel, and commanded to arise. It is to his credit that he did sleep in such a place and at such a time; and if he had been left asleep until awakened by Herod’s executioner, it would have been worse for Herod than for Peter. It would have been well with Peter; but it will not be well with sinners if they sleep until awakened by the righteous judgment of God—anything but that. Thank God that while we do not now expect prayer to avail in the miraculous deliverance of any from temporal death, or any other physical evil, as there is not the need for such miracles now that there was in the early history of the church; still there is a power in the united unceasing prayer to instrumentally effect this greater deliverance required. Should not the church therefore use this power? O if she would do it. An effort is made in that direction sometimes, but how feeble it is in comparison with what the exigencies of the case require. It is not an earnest, persevering effort such as was put forth on behalf of Peter. If it were so, do you not suppose that in answer to such prayer the spirit of the Lord would come upon sleeping sinners, like the angel came upon Peter, and by his awakening and constraining power, many would arise; their chains would fall off, and they would guard themselves, bind on their spiritual sandals, and follow the Spirit forth into the light and liberty and service of the gospel; and those who had prayed for them would have the joy of hearing them declare what God had done for their souls.

But, alas, the church itself is now too often sleeping, when it would better be praying. So many professing Christians seem far more concerned about their worldly affairs than about the conversion of sinners; and, too often, some of the members of the church, are more ready to find fault with one another than to unitedly pray for the salvation of the unsaved. O brethren members of the church, who read these lines, if there be need for it, let the writer exhort you to wake up and pray. Pray first for yourselves, and then for the perishing round about you. Do not neglect so to do, lest the blood of them that perish should so far be required at your hands. “Lay hold on God’s strength” and “give Him no rest,” as the prophet says, until he come in the mighty convincing and converting power of the Holy Ghost. The unceasing prayer of the church with God for His most desirable blessing, will be instrumental in bringing it, for the promise of such a blessing in answer to such prayer is implied in the command “Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence and give Him no rest, till He establish and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” And the history of the church, ancient, apostolic, and modern, witnesses to the promise. It has always been true that “as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.” Therefore it must be, that God’s “set time to thus favour Zion” is just when the children of Zion thus awake and cry mightily unto Him.

And the same is true in regard to those who are indifferent about their own salvation—asleep in carnal security. To such, also, let the writer address an earnest word. “What meanest thou O sleeper, arise and call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon thee that thou perish not.” Yea He has already thought upon thee, and therefore calls upon thee saying, “Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light.” Therefore while the Spirit of God, in answer to prayer already offered on your behalf it may be, is applying to your heart this call of His word, O give heed to the call, looking to the Lord to enable you to do what you cannot do of yourself and then by His power you shall be delivered from the chains that bind you to sin and Satan; and there will be joy, not only in the church on earth, but in heaven also—joy because the dead is alive, the lost is found, the devil robbed of his prey, and hell of its victim. “There is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth.”—Luke xv: 10.

Richmond, N. B.

India Letter.

DEAR BROTHER McLEOD.—It is a little over a week since Bessie and I returned to Balasore. Brother and sister Ager reached Darjeeling in the evening and leaving Rilla with them we started for home the next morning. In less than twenty-four hours the snow-capped hills and invigorating breezes were far behind us and we were trying with punkas and ice to make life bearable in the heat and glare of Calcutta. In a few more days we were home, the beautiful house which is fairer to me than all the stately mansions of Calcutta and Darjeeling. I found the boys well. The ordinary routine of work had been faithfully carried out and the house and compound were in spotless order. I do feel so thankful for my pretty pleasant home and for work which I can love so much. It is now nearly a month since I have been allowed to read and write. Shortly after going to Darjeeling I worked one morning with a mist dancing before my eyes. In Calcutta on the way home I consulted the best oculist in the city. He said there had been a hemorrhage back of the eye caused by overtaxed nerves. He recommended a long rest from all care and anxiety and enjoined perfect rest for my eyes for one month. Obedience seemed hard at first with two months’ accounts undone but I have obeyed and by the kindness of my neighbours and the help of my boys my accounts are done and letters written. I really could see to read and write, but am obeying orders in hope of a complete recovery before long. The anxiety in regard to Rilla and the long days and nights of watching, the loneliness at Toony and the struggle about sending the children home have resulted in this I suppose. Since I decided to send the children home my mind has been in perfect peace. I believe God has blessed the decision. They will sail for home in February, probably, with Dr. Nellie Phillips. The good work has been going on at Ujura. Two more families have broken caste by eating with the Christians. Several have asked for baptism.

Bahadur Shah for Mrs. Boyer.

Balasore, Oct. 1st, 1892.

Denominational News.

FROM REV. J. T. PARSONS.—Sunday the 30th of October was a day of marked interest and the occasion of profound thanksgiving to the little church at Gibson. The hall in which we held our service for the last year each Sabbath evening, had gone into other and unfriendly hands and we received notice that we must vacate by the first of November. Before this, we thought it scarcely possible for us at the present to build a place of worship for ourselves. The Church was small and represented but little financial strength. The expense of fitting up the Hall where we had been worshipping, and the necessary expenses, consequent on a new organization, were of too recent a date for us to think of voluntarily assuming new responsibilities. But when it became a question of either building, or discontinuing our services a heroic, self-sacrificing spirit seemed to inspire both church and congregation and we unanimously decided, in spite of unfavourable surroundings, at once, to “arise and build.”

On the first of September the carpenters went to work, and on the 30th of October the building was set apart for God. The size of the church is 46 by 28 with a neat portico in front. The finish is of ash which, filled and varnished, is both handsome and substantial.

The opening service was held at 11 o’clock on Sunday morning, when Rev. C. T. Phillips of Woodstock preached an exceedingly practical and very instructive sermon from Deu 22: 8. Theme, “The Church, its mission and how its work is to be accomplished.” In the p. m. at 3 o’clock Rev. Gideon Swin of Carleton County preached from John 15: 5 on the absolute necessity of divine help in the successful accomplishment of our work for Christ. The sermon was earnest and impressive. In the evening at 7 o’clock Rev. G. W. Foster, of Tracy Station gave us a very interesting and pointed sermon on the duty of individual Christians, founded on Heb. 10: 25. All the sermons were listened to with marked attention and deep interest and can but result in lasting good. The dedicatory service at the morning meeting was read by the pastor, and the dedicating prayer was offered by