TER MS NOTICES.

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ITEMS of religious news from every quarters 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, MAY 29th, 1895.

An investigation made by the Pennsylvania W. C. T. U., shows that eighty per cent of the evangelical churches in the state now use unfermented wine at the Lord's Supper. The other twenty per cent ought to do so, and doubtless, will within a few years.

Present service is what God asks, not the promise of service tomorrow and next year. If we honour our Lord and are blessed, it is by the things done today—not by the good we think we will do at some other time.

The christian who believes that a high state of feeling is more important and more truly religious than a high character, has misunderstood the gospel. It is well to be joyous, but it is quite as well, and vastly more important to be pure. The joy which has not a thoroughly christian character for a foundation is not real christian joy.

The Florida Legislature has passed a bill prohibiting the publication or sale of any book purporting to be the history of an outlaw. The reason for such legislation is that such publications do much to corrupt the minds of the young, exciting in them a love of adventure and crime. There can be no doubt of the pernicious influence of such literature, and its prohibition is warranted. But what small evil is wrought by such books compared with the evil wrought by the rum traffic. And yet many of the men who are ready to endorse prohibition of the books are as strongly opposed to any interference with the greater curse.

Concerning indulgence in worldly pleasures by professing christians, Bishop Mallalieu speaks a word of warning which we commend to beginners in the christian life. As black frost on tender plants results in speedy death, so indulgence in such worldly pleasures as wine drinking, card playing, theatre going, dancing and like things destroys spirituality in the soul. People guilty of these things are never earnest, aggressive Christians; they are good for nothing in revival work. They hinder the devoted pastor who toils to save the perishing; they bring a reproach upon the cause of Christ; they are in great danger of losing their own souls. The day of judgment will be an awful hour to souls guilty of such things. It were far better to make no profession of religion, far better not to assume the name of Christian, than to do so, and, by a vain, giddy, worldly life, disgrace both the name and the profession. What the Church and the world greatly need is out and out Christians, men and women who will make no compromises with sin.

The glory of missions is seen, Joseph Cook says, in four things:

1. Their origin. The movement began in Paradise, and was reinforced in the great commission on Olivet and the planting of the kingdom of God, which was typified in the stone cut from the mountain to fill the whole world.

2. Their motives operating on the church of God. These are found in the greatness and peril of man. Man is immortal, and to insure a blessed immortality he must be made pure.

3. Their methods. Go teach, baptize; secure repentance, faith, conversion, and organization into the church. With the living voice goes the Bible.

4. Their triumphs. They made a new East, a new Europe, a new America, and hasten to conquer the remotest nations. The gates of the nations are all open; the head of the Christian column already enters the strong work of paganism. The objections to this movement are frivolous; Evolution finds a new headship in Christ, and paganism objects to the succor of the poor and war on caste. The leveling principle is the glory of the gospel, and the hindrances will ere long be swept from its path.

A Missouri Senator, named Morrisey, was shot, a few days ago, in a house of ill-repute in St. Louis by a woman of like character as his own, with whom he had been intimate for years. He was a rumseller, and had succeeded in becoming a political boss in one or the city wards. His vicious life was well known, and its end was not different from what might have been expected.

And yet, both when living and when dead the public made its bow to him. After his death at the hands of his partner in debauchery and crime, the State Senate adjourned "out of respect to his memory, and appointed a committee to attend his funeral." The Senate that has no more respect for personal and public decency than to do honour to such a character must be well-nigh shameless. What a lesson to the young of the State.

The first Sunday in June is children's Sunday. The *Christian Standard* tells something of the beginning of the day. It began with some children; it began in a christian home; the thought was born in family worship:

"The father prayed that the whole world might hear the gospel; that the churches might give liberally to this end, and that many reapers might be thrust out into the great harvest field. When the prayer was over the boys said they had some money they wished to give to send the gospel to the children who knew nothing of Jesus. The father said, 'Well, go and bring it and count your pennies, and see how many you have.' They did so, and found that they amounted to one dollar and thirteen cents. It was not a large sum, but it was large enough."

A few days later the incident was related in a speech at a Disciple's Convention. It made such an impression that it was at once decided to ask the children to make one offering a year for the support of foreign mission work. The offerings in the first year (1881) amounted to $750. Year by year since then they have increased, in 1894 amounting to $23,486. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth."

It has been repeatedly said that nobody would ever read the evidence taken by the Royal Commission on the Liquor Traffic. But one man, at least, has already read it. Rev. T. H. Siddall writes in the Yarmouth *Herald* that he has "just finished reading the six volumnious Blue Books containing the evidence" and found them both instructive and interesting." He says:

"The evidence *pro* and *con* covers well the entire field of the liquor question. Undoubtedly there is an advantage in having side by side all that can be said in favor of and against prohibition. The prohibitionist in these books finds ample material to sustain his position, also, those who are opposed to prohibition will find all they want. The variety of opinion here expressed fully gives the current views as met with in all classes of society. It can scarce be conceived that somebody has a view as to the liquor question not found in these 4937 pages. "If such there be, go mark him well," as a stranger from some remote planet. It is well that all that can be said and thought upon a great question should be set in order; so that the whole question in all its relations may have due weight and consideration."

Perhaps not many will follow Mr. Siddall's example, and read all the six volumes of evidence, but as books of reference they will doubtless be much consulted, especially for confirmation of the conclusions reached in one or other of the Reports. Of the reports, only brief outlines of which have yet been given to the public, Mr. Siddall says:

"The Minority Report is in accord with the weight of evidence presented. How the Majority Report can so jauntily cast aside the overwhelming evidence recorded as to the trend of public thought is indeed a surprise."

Rev. Dr. Dewart has just retired from the editorship of the *Christian Guardian*, after twenty-six years service. The *Guardian* is the chief paper of Canadian Methodism, and under the able management of Dr. Dewart has been worthy the church it represents and its important mission. He is a man of decided convictions and great force of character. As an editor, the "Christian Advocate" well says, he has commanded the respect of contemporary journalists, secular and religious. His powerful pen has been the advocate of many good measures in Church and State, and a weapon much feared by those who seek to promote evil schemes by plausible statements or specious reasonings. Nor has he confined his literary efforts to the *Guardian*; but as occasion suggested or demanded he has written for the secular press, both as an individual and an editorial contributor.

His abilities in different fields are marked. Whether as the composer of the best short poem elicited by the death of TENNYSON or the most comprehensive exposition of the true sphere and limitations of biblical criticism, higher and lower, his personality, now graceful, then strong, is strikingly manifest.

He sailed last week for England, where he will represent the Methodist Conference of Canada at the several English Conferences.

The District Meetings.

On another page will be found the list of District Meetings, with the place and date of the holding of each. The session of the Second District meeting is the first to be held, and comes this year a little earlier than usual, Saturday June 15th. The others follow in July, August and September.

The District meetings are always seasons of interest. To them the reports of the churches are sent, and their membership is composed mainly of representatives appointed by the churches. They have the closest relation to the life of the churches, and can afford the readiest and best help to them when needed. To keep perfectly informed of the condition of the churches and of the state of religion within their respective limits, and to provide for the religious needs within their territory, is the prime duty of the District meetings.

Church reports are usually fairly accurate; they give a very good idea of their numerical strength, the additions, the money contributed for church support and other religious purposes, the number of preaching and other meetings during the year, Sabbath School statistics, and, sometimes, some information in addition to what is set forth in the regular form of report. It has seemed to us sometimes, when listening to the reports, that, important as the information is which they set forth, there are other facts affecting the life and efficiency of the churches which ought to be stated. This information may, perhaps, be best supplied by the pastors and delegates. If, either when the reports are read or at another meeting subsequently, the condition of each church could be carefully inquired into, much might be learned which would help to a better understanding of the true state of the cause and its needs, and the required counsel, or help in other form, be provided for. How to get at the facts is a question of method simply, and may be left to the wisdom of each District; but to get the fact is of greatest importance. Every District Meeting should understand every part of its organization as thoroughly as a good business man understands every part of his business; just as a farmer understands every part of his farm, what it is yielding, whether it is yielding all it should, and what it needs in order to be productive in the largest and best degree.

The reports of additions to the churches this year will be very encouraging, there has been quite general revival interest. For the gains in membership there will be thanksgiving. But while thankful for numerical gains, the District Meetings will do well to inquire as to what is being done in the churches to build up in christian faith the new members they have received, and to utilize them for the promotion of the cause. Much that promises to be strength in the churches is sometimes allowed to become weakness and even a burden, just by lack of due care and cultivation. To prevent, so far as possible, this lamentable result in any of the churches should be the concern of the District Meetings.

The churches will report what they have done for missions. It may be well to compare the returns of this year with those of other years, to see what progress has been made in the practical interest of the churches in this part of our work. With increase of members, increase of knowledge and increase of christian experience there should be corresponding increase of support of the Lord's work.

The question of pastorates will probably need to be considered in all the meetings. There has been marked improvement in this matter in late years; yet it needs constant attention lest there be a falling into the old irregular condition. It should be the purpose of every District Meeting to see that every church is included in a pastorate, and that every group of churches has a pastor. Then there is in almost every District some community in which there is no church of any denomination, and which needs our care. Such places should be provided for.

The foregoing and many other things will demand consideration by the District Meetings. The brethern should determine to devote to them all the time they require. Much neglect is often due to the too great anxiety to reach an early adjournment. The King's business demands haste—i. e. it should be promptly done; but it, also, demands our best attention, and should be well done at whatever cost of time and energy.

We trust the District Meetings may be seasons of real spiritual interest, fruitful of good to the communities in which they are held, and fruitful of more and more systematic and energetic prosecution of the work entrusted to us in every part of the field.

Preachers and Preaching.

"Knoxonian" during a three months vacation was a listener instead of a preacher, and thinks he learned some things in the pew that he never could have learned in the pulpit. He says he heard thirty sermons, preached by thirteen different preachers. The sermons were of various degrees of merit, but there was no one of them from which he did not get some lessons. Some of the general conclusions he draws from his hearing and observation are the following:

More than ever am I convinced that on an ordinary text, on an ordinary occasion by an ordinary preacher half an hour is quite long enough for a sermon. There are exceptions no doubt. A Scotch or Irish congregation in the country that has only one service in the week, and that really enjoys good preaching may be an exception. Special occasions are exceptions. Eminent preachers who are strangers may be exceptions. But for ordinary occasions and ordinary men half an hour is quite long enough. There is no earthly use in hammering away at a congregation after a preacher has lost his grip of their attention. On a very hot day twenty or twenty-five minutes may be better than even half an hour if the preacher has his matter in good shape.

More than ever am I convinced that the textual sermon such as John Hall preaches and Spurgeon preached, or the topical sermon with a clean cut proposition such as Bushnell preached is the true ideal of a sermon. The essay style, so popular with many American preachers, is a downright failure. It is worse than a failure; it is a fraud. It is no sermon. It is weak. It is a mollusk. It has no back bone, no ribs, no nothing. It is unfit for manly delivery. A morbid fear of being considered old fashioned drives too many preachers into dawdling over a weak essay that is no sermon and can never take the place or do the work of a sermon. This subject is so large and important that it will stand more discussion that can be given to it here but it will keep.

More than ever am I convinced that the right kind of preaching for a Canadian congregation lies midway between the frigid "high and dry" and the sensational. I heard the "high and dry" in abundance during Lent, and I heard a sermon in which the preacher declared that some pillars of the church are caterpillars and in which he found a place for the Scotch elder who said that though he could do nothing else he could object. Between these extremes the best pulpit work can be done. A sermon may be grave, solemn and instructive without being heavy or dull; it may be bright without being sensational in the bad sense of that word.

My three months experience leads me to ask whether it would not be a good thing in Canada to give more attention to the service without giving any less to the sermon. * * * Might it not be well to ask if this dislike is not in part a swing to the other extreme from something that I need not mention? Would it not be an improvement to divide the long morning prayer into two parts and offer one part just before the sermon? Would any serious harm be done if the people should join audibly in repeating the Lord's prayer?

More than ever am I convinced that in the matter of preaching Canada does not need to take a back seat in any company. Too many of our people have a weakness for thinking that every man who preaches in a large city or whose name they see often in print is a Chalmer and a Guthrie and a Spurgeon and a Beecher rolled into one. A little travel would cure them of that weakness. I heard several representative preachers from large American cities—men who receive salaries that it would stagger most of our Canadian congregations even to think about—and I could count twenty Canadians in less time than it takes to write this sentence who preach quite as well—some of them a good deal better—than these American brethren. And you may be sure that when a man goes from home he does not take his poorest sermon with him.

All Along the Line.

Under the above heading, the "Christian Guardian" says some things which need to be pondered by all christians, and which are commended especially to the new members of the churches.

The calls and claims of Christian work are too numerous and varied to justify any Christian in confining his interest and energies to the promotion of merely one object, however good. An object or enterprise may be an excellent thing, yet it may absorb more than its just share of interest and support. "Meditation and prayer are good things; but the monks of the middle ages made a great mistake, when they spent their lives in ascetic seclusion, instead of going out to right the wrongs and relieve the sufferings of humanity. There may be a few who have a special mission, and who have an adaptation for one work; but the ordinary Christian should be "ready to every good work."

Within the Church there is the missionary work, which is the expression of aggressive Christian life; the education of the young, so that they may be prepared to play their part bravely and successfully on life's stern battlefield; the diffusion of wholesome religious literature, so that our people may not have zeal without knowledge; the home work in our local churches, which is essential to make every church a centre of religious power; and many other forms of Christian work which require both personal labor and liberality. Every member of the Church should feel an obligation to take an active practical interest in all the enterprises which it has been found expedient to inaugurate. These cannot succeed if our people do not sustain them.

Outside of our Church operations, there are many social and philanthropic movements, which deserve the support of Christians of all churches. The promotion of Temperance, municipal purity, the improvement of the condition of the poor, and all measures that are adapted to benfit the people should receive our support. We have no faith in the idea that Christians should stand aloof from politics and public affairs, as if they would be soiled by touching them. We profess to believe that the Christian religion is the mightiest and most benign influence in the world. Let us, therefore, apply the principles of Christianity to all the affairs of life. Men who do not rise above all sectional narrowness, and take an active part in everything that aims at promoting the the well-being of the people are not worthy to be citizens of a free and progressive country.

Voices and Echoes.

A translation has been given out by the apostolic legation at Washington of an encyclical letter from the Pope addressed to the heads of Catholic churches throughout the world. It is a plea for universal prayer, looking to the unity of Christendom, to be offered before and on Pentecost.—*Globe.*

All this talk about the Pope's desire for the unity of Christendom may sound very well to some people. But a little thought about what the Pope means by christian unity will show how absurd it all is.

A little boy was coming home with his mother from church when he heard her saying that the sermon was not worth much. The little boy immediately turned round and said: "O mother! what could you expect for a half-penny?"—*Tit-Bits.*

The little fellow was a philosopher. One reason, perhaps a chief reason, why so many people hear and get so little good from really good sermons is because they are so small in their support of the church and religious work generally.

Persons who happened to be on Jeffrey's Hill, Saturday evening, between 9 and 10 o'clock witnessed a dreadfully sad sight—one which they are not likely soon to forget. It was that of a man in a state of intoxication and carrying in his arms a pretty little child about two years old. The man staggered up the street muttering to himself. It was the saddest sight that has been seen on the streets of St. John for many a year.—*Daily Telegraph.*

Why so sad? Because the man was drunk? or because, being drunk, he carried a child? If he had not had the child, would his staggering and muttering have been noticed and reported as "the saddest sight seen for many a year."

TOO OLD.—In a recent interview, Gladstone said that he was too old a man to have an opinion of any kind on the "new woman" and that "his ideal woman had not altered in the past threescore years and ten."

Some of the Brethren.

The editor enjoyed a Sabbath at Douglas and Mouth Keswick. These churches are ministered to by Licentiate Keirstead, a student at the N. B. University. He is well-thought of by the people, and his ministry has been helpful. At Keswick there have been some conversions, and the ordinance of baptism will probably be administered soon. At Douglas the church-building, which was begun during the pastorate of the late Rev. Mr. Downey, is yet unfinished, though some progress has been made. It is in contemplation to complete it this fall. We hope it may be done; and it only can be if the people go heartily about the work.

One of the churches in Rev. S. J. Perry's pastorate is Rusiagornish. It was our privilege to spend last Sabbath with him there. Last year a good revival blessed the church and community under his labors. The spiritual life of the church has remained stronger and more active since. The Young People's society is reported interesting and exerting a good influence. Two Sabbath schools flourish, one of them organized this spring. Bro. Perry keeps the claims of the several branches of denominational work before the people, and with good effect. Last Sabbath was Home Mission Sunday, when he presented the claims of the work and took the people's offerings. It is this systematic presentation of the needs of the work that bears fruit, not only in present contributions, but in the enlistment of the sympathies of the young, whose support of christian work will be on an increasingly generous scale. The other churches of Mr. Perry's pastorate are having a good degree of prosperity. At Waasis a church building has been begun, which, it is hoped, will be completed soon. At Mouth Oromocto a good revival was had during the winter.

Old Maids.

I use the legend at the head of this article under protest, and use it only that I may designate the class of people I prefer to think and write about as "unappropriated blessings." For convenience I will abbreviate that appelation and use the letters, U. Bs.

So many thoughtless, heartless jibes and coarse jokes have been flung at the U. Bs. that I do not wonder that the weak and timid have been driven into the doubtful haven of matrimony, not that matrimony is a doubtful blessing, *per se*, but those who make mercenary marriages, and those who marry to prove that they can do so, will find that they have proven too much, and that only those whom God has joined together can hope for pleasant married lives.

Never was there a greater mistake than to imagine it is from necessity that there are so many U. Bs. Few indeed are there among them who have not declined to be more than a "sister" to more than one ardent wooer; and had they held themselves more cheaply and been less true to their ideals, they might have married and been unhappy ever afterward. If you think this an exaggerated statement look about you, and you will find that for one uncomely U. B., with a doubtful temper, you will find ten wedded ones more uncomely and with tempers so vinegary and naggy, that your spinster will seem a saint beside them.

If the unwritten histories of these single women could be written, and read, what revelations of heroism could be made known. Here is one who, when her lover plead with her to say what day it should be, bravely said, "I cannot leave the old folks now," and when he, too impatient to "bide a wee," wooed elsewhere, she took up life's burdens, and won a brighter crown than that of wifehood and motherhood, And here is another, whose love sleeps in the restless sea or beneath the daisies, and because she has not met her ideal, and would scorn to put in his place an idol of clay, she has been true to that memory through the long years. And yet another, who, through some cruel misunderstanding, has become estranged from the one who was her "Prince Charming," is reminded of what "might have been" by some old tune, or a faded cluster of flowers, or a rippling brook.

Ah! I think if we only knew the tragedies that are hidden away in many of these, seemingly commonplace lives, one would have a greater regard for the women who have too much brain and heart to marry any man just to prove to the world that they need not remain in single blessedness from necessity.

My sex precludes me from ever being an old maid, but I would rather be a half dozen (if I could) than marry the average man. Marriage has troubles enough, with love and respect and esteem—but these wanting, it is hell rather than heaven.

THADDEUS.