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## Religious Intelligencer.

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Rev. Joseph McLeod, D. D., - - Editor.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1903.

### Editorial.

—Two dedications on one Sunday, both in the Fourth District. See reports on next page.

—Just now the INTELLIGENCER will be glad if the ministers will speak to their people of the necessity of prompt renewals. New subscribers, also, will be acceptable. Anything the brethren can say or do to help along this part of the work will be much appreciated.

—Giving, says Dr. MacLaren, is essential to completeness of Christian character. It is the crowning grace, because it is the manifestation of the highest excellence. It is the result of sympathy, of unselfishness, of contact with Christ, of drinking in of His Spirit.

—To have a church with the habit of systematic support of the Lord's work, the training must begin with the children. It is not easy to change the habits of old people. Even when they are well-disposed towards good causes they are more in bondage to the prejudices and habits of a life-time than they know, and find it difficult to do even what their sympathies prompt. But beginning with the children in the home and the Sunday school, teaching them not only the duty but the blessedness of supporting Christian work, the churches will soon be filled with members who will rejoice to be permitted to honour the Lord with their substance.

—Steadily the several Methodist bodies in England are moving towards union. Committees have been appointed to confer on the question and to seek a way of adjusting the differences in doctrine and practice which have kept them apart. It is not very long ago that none of these denominations thought union desirable, much less possible. Now they are all seeking it. The leading Methodist papers favour union, and counsel conciliation. Amongst the reasons urged for union are the difficulties and dangers caused by a growing secular-

ism, and the advantage which the foes of religion have in the division of Christian forces.

—The *Church Times*, London, in a reference to Dr. Clifford, the great Baptist leader in the fight against the English Education Bill, classified him and his followers with the heathen. Taken to task for the insult, instead of expressing regret, it seeks to justify its attack in this silly, if not dishonest, way:

If the language were our own, we would gladly withdraw or vary it out of regard for the Rev. Doctor's feelings. But it is not our own. We took it from the evangelic injunction: "If he will not hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

The writer of that paragraph has no regard whatever to the context of the Scripture words he quotes. We are reminded of the young curate, of the High Church order, who tore three words of this very passage from the rest and preached from the text, "Hear the Church!" in the imperative. Somebody who was present remarked that the young man would be quite as much justified in using the words, "Hang the law and the prophets!" as a text.

—Dr. John Watson (Ian MacLaren) predicts a great revival. In a recent sermon he declared his belief that the world is on the eve of a great spiritual movement—the greatest "since the days when all Rome succumbed to the teachings of Christ in the first century." One who listened to him when he spoke of his conviction, says none who heard could fail to receive "some inspiring impression, or who will not long remember the picture the preacher drew of a day to be hastened on by mutual love and service, when the mountains shall come down, and the valleys be raised up, and there shall be an open road for the coming of Jesus Christ." When the eternal divine love, which gave up God's well-beloved and only-begotten son to death for lost sinners, finds its reflex in the hearts and lives of those who have accepted Him as their Saviour—when professing Christians understand that they are called to service as well as to salvation, then the eagerly expected revival will come, and it will come first of all in the hearts and lives of God's professed people.

### PASTORS AND CHURCHES.

That the year upon which we, as a denomination, have entered may be a good one—more successful in soul-winning and in extending the kingdom of Christ than any of its predecessors, is, doubtless, the desire of all who give earnest thought to the matter. Much depends on how the year is begun. A few suggestions may help to a right beginning.

Has the mid-week prayer meeting in your church been allowed to cease? It should be re-established now. No church can have the degree of spiritual life desirable, nor be the efficient Christian force it should be without such prayer meeting. Even though there be but few to attend, the meeting should be regularly held. The effect on a community

of the discontinuance of the mid-week prayer meeting is bad. The unconverted may not say much about it, but they notice it, and are not impressed favourably towards religion. Be sure to light again the fire of the week-night meeting for prayer. The Lord will surely bless those that do so, and will make it a blessing to the community.

Church reports show that the Lord's Supper is less generally observed than it should be. The disregard of this ordinance is a thing to be deplored. In every church the observance ought to be with as much regularity as possible. It is not possible to have it as frequently in some churches as in others, but it is possible to have the ordinance administered in every church. Let us hope that the reports at the close of this year will show that not one church has been without the Lord's Supper. It is a precious ordinance, in the observance of which much spiritual blessing is experienced.

Better support of pastors would not only be good for them, but the churches would profit by it too. None of our pastors receive large salaries; many of them receive very moderate salaries, and the support of some is quite meagre. Our people are not poor. The great majority of them are in comfortable circumstances. They live well, and are prospering. They are not unable to furnish good living salaries to their pastors. Wherever this is not done, it would be well to begin doing it now. Think it over, brethren, pray about it, and then increase your contributions to your churches. None will be poorer for it. "There is that giveth and yet increaseth."

Support of mission work, home and foreign, should be on a more liberal scale than has been done for several years. The reports of the treasurers of the mission funds are not as pleasing reading as they might be. Some of the churches pay liberally to these branches of the work. But many churches have no share at all in them. This is not as it should be. Every church should do something for missions. Begin this year. Not only will the mission work benefit by thus doing, but the churches themselves will have a new and better spiritual life. "He that watereth, himself also shall be watered."

Both the fund for aged and sick ministers, and the fund for ministerial students need to be more in the thought of the churches. The contributions to both are very meagre, and come from very few churches. Our old ministers have strong claims on the churches. They have worn themselves out in faithful labours. Now that they are unable to work at all, or to do only partial labour, they ought not to be forgotten. Their last days should be made comfortable. Let every church this year contribute something to the Aged Ministers Fund.

And if we would have the ranks of the ministry kept full we must not neglect the young men who are making such commendable efforts to prepare themselves for the work of the ministry. The Student's Fund should always be large

enough to afford help to these young men when they need it. They are worthy. The churches can best express their sympathy with the coming ministers by contributing to this fund.

Pray for your pastor. Some do, but not all. Their failure to do so is, probably, because they have not thought. Did church members realize how much their pastor needs their prayers, they would not fail to often supplicate the throne of grace in his behalf. It is easy to criticize a pastor; no religion is necessary to do it. But it is not criticism he needs. He needs sympathy—the kind that finds expression in prayers, as well as in practical help in his work. Does he seem cold and formal? Does he seem lacking in spiritual power? Criticism will not make him less formal, nor increase his spiritual power; but a new baptism of the Holy Spirit will. Pray for it. When a pastor knows that his people are so much concerned for him and for the success of his work that they are praying for him—that very fact is itself an inspiration. He humbles himself before God, he seeks for the endowment of power, he does the work he is capable of for the edification of the church and the multiplication of disciples of Christ. Pray for your pastor now, at the beginning of a new year of work, and keep on praying for him. Besides the blessing that will come to their pastor in answer to his people's prayers, and the blessing that will come to them through his truer and stronger ministry, they will, in the very exercise of prayer, get a new nearness to God, a new spiritual glow, and a deepened sympathy with all God's purposes and all God's workers that they cannot know otherwise, and which they will find a very precious experience.

In Christian work, as in everything else, much depends on leaders—not everything, but much. "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward," was the word of the Lord to Moses at a most critical time in the history of that people. Moses, true servant of God that he was, did as God bade him; he gave the people the divine marching orders. And, faithful and courageous leader that he was, he went before them, in the faith of God's promise. What they were commanded to do seemed, humanly viewed, an impossibility. But as, obedient to God's order, they took up the march the way was opened before them. And so it has always been. The host of God, obedient to His command, has overcome difficulties, triumphed over foes, and moved on "conquering and to conquer." And so it will be.

There is, however, need of true and brave leadership. There is no room for men who, like Aaron, yield to the clamourings of the timid, the discouraged, the fault-finding. Leaders need the spirit of Moses, who, hearing the voice of God, went immediately about doing as he was commanded, and kept at it in the face of all difficulties and dangers and foes. And God made him strong for it all.

The ministers of the church of God are appointed to leadership in Christian work and in all things that make for