

POOR DOCUMENT

THE WEEKLY HERALD.

VOL. 1. NO. 2.

FREDERICTON, N. B., SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1881.

\$1.00 A YEAR.

KING SAUL REJECTED.

A SERMON PREACHED BY
REV. A. J. MOWATT,
IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, FREDERICTON,
DECEMBER 11th, 1881.

"Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king."—1 Sam. xv. 23.

Two weeks ago I spoke of the king's trial at Gilgal and his being found wanting. That was really the turning point in his career. There is a turning point somewhere, it seems to me, in every man's career—a point where there is a decided change for the better or worse—a point where the life-course verges markedly to the right or to the wrong. Gilgal was that point with King Saul. From the summit of that historic hill there began a gradual decline, a slope downwards, in his career. You can see it in almost every step he took after that a decided change for the worse. Now it was indignation and injudiciousness. Next it was rejection of God's word and rebellion against the Divine will. Then it was despondency, demoniacal possession, green-eyed jealousy, vengeance, persecution, bloodshed. Lastly it was abandonment, doom, death. Poor Saul! what a down-fall! Of course, there were now and again partial recoveries in his fall. Several times he seemed to get on his feet again, and made some sort of effort to regain what he had lost and start anew for the right. But those efforts to improve never amounted to anything. They were only partial, momentary, worthless. My subject to-night brings before you one of these fresh starts of Saul to do better; but, as we shall see, he really did worse.

We have here, first, a new commission from the Lord to Saul as king. He had failed once, but the Lord is willing to try him again. He is slow to give up any man, and He never does so until all that has been done for him could be done for him. He gives men every opportunity to retrieve what they may have lost and do better. He affords them chance after chance to rise. No man can say he has had no chance. It is true that some seem to us to have a better chance than others. And that is the case. But there is not one who has not had chance enough. And indeed, it is not always those who have the worst chance, or what we regard as the worst chance, who fall the worst. We have seen men who had the poorest opportunities in every respect—a poor bringing up, a poor education, a poor example shown them, a poor influence brought to bear upon them—turn out well, and rise to moral and spiritual eminence. I do not know whether Saul solicited another opportunity to try again. Perhaps he did. Men often think if they had another chance to do better, they would do better. Old men think if they had their lives to live over again they would live very differently. Dying men think if they were only spared a little longer they would turn over a new leaf and begin right. Wicked men think they would reform if they could only get a chance to begin again. We have all thought so, I suppose, a good many times. And no doubt Saul thought so, too, and perhaps he may have gone to the Lord and implored Him to let him try again. He may have thought that, with the experience he had had, he would be more on his guard another time and would do better. But whether he asked the Lord to try him again or not, the Lord did try him again, and gave him as good an opportunity to retrieve all he had lost as He did before.

The good old prophet Samuel came to him from the Lord, and reminded him that he was the Lord's anointed, and as such was bound by the most sacred obligations to do just what the Lord told him to do—only that; nothing more, nothing less. He then gave him his commission, telling him most particularly what he was to do. There was a people called Amalek that had distressed Israel greatly during the exodus, and the time had now come for the Lord to take vengeance upon that people for their dastardly wickedness. Many hundreds of years, of course, had passed away since that, and the Amalek that then was, and that had done the wickedness, was not the Amalek that was to be judged. It was the same nation, the same people, but not the same individuals. How strange are the Lord's dealings! He takes His own time for putting His vengeance into force. We would think—you and I—that the right time and the best time to take vengeance would have been when the wickedness was done. But God thought differently. For hundreds of years He lets the matter of grievance between the two peoples lie untouched, and when it is all but forgotten by both Israel and Amalek, He takes it up. God never forgets, and every wrong thing done He will avenge some time or other. Oh that men and nations would mind that!

Well, the king's commission from the Lord was that he should go and smite Amalek. It was to be utter extermination. He was to spare nothing. "Man

and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass"—everything was to be utterly destroyed. He was to make a clean sweep. It was a stern and terrible commission. But it was the Lord's, and it was all right. It was the iron age of Jewish history, and stern methods were necessary in those stern, fierce times.

In our day there are weak sentimentalists who have a great deal to say about God's being so loving and merciful that He will not hurt His creatures. He is too good to have a Hell in His universe, too tender-hearted to destroy any one. But look here! What does this mean? He is whetting His sword, and without a word of warning He is going to plunge it into the heart of a nation. The poor little unoffending children and the dumb animals are to be slaughtered as well as the fighting men. A whole nation and people are to be blotted out of existence, because some hundreds of years before their ancestors did a cruel and dastardly deed of blood—fell upon Israel's rear, and destroyed the weak and the sick, the women and the children, the dumb ox and the senseless sheep.

And history is full of just such horrors. The giant earthquake, slumbering for ages, suddenly awakes at the dead hour of night, and buries thousands without a moment's warning in the ruins of their own homes. Five or six years ago, a tremendous tidal wave came sweeping and surging in upon sleeping India, and splashed the death-dew into the dusky faces of some two hundred thousand of the people. Only three years ago, the angel of destruction flapped his pestilential wings and skimmed low over the Mississippi valley, and town after town all but died outright. Oh, let sentimentalists talk as they like about God's love. He has a sword, and sure of a grand reception at Gilgal! Here Samuel is on his knees, the tears streaming down his cheeks, and his heart all but broken with sorrow, and he is pleading all night with God to have mercy upon poor Saul! Look on this scene and that; the pageantry of the king, the empty pomp and parade, on the one hand, and the anguish of the prophet's soul, and his tears and pleading earnestness, on the other; and what a serio-comic tragedy our world-life is! We are proud of our attainments, glorying in our successes, rejoicing in the happy issue of our enterprises, and anticipating something still grander to come; while angels are weeping for us—if angels can weep—and loved ones are breaking their hearts about us, and praying prophets and apostles and ministers are beseeching God's mercy on our behalf through long, lonely hours! Like Saul we congratulate ourselves on our well-doing and well-being, when, at the same time, God and angels are weeping over our ill-doing. Oh, I think, if there is one thing more than another we should pray for, it should be that we might be kept from forming a false estimate of ourselves! And yet, nothing is surer than this, that the world and the church are as full of people as they can hold who are over-estimating themselves; and not only that, but who have utterly falsified themselves. You will hear them laughing, when, if they knew just how it was with them, they would be sighing and crying. You will hear them boasting of their success, when all heaven is weeping over their failure. You are sitting there to-night, and you are saying, "How good I am! How happy and hopeful!" But, this moment, heaven is frowning down upon you, and hell is reaching up to you, and they are to take hold of you as you sit, these pews and crowd these galleries.

O God, wake up these souls, for they are perishing, and they do not know it! They are thinking that they are saved, and that all is well, when they are lost and all is ill. Oh, let us see ourselves as we are, even though it all but overwhelm us with despair, for even despair is better than a hope that is no hope! We have now Samuel's meeting with Saul at Gilgal, and his message to him respecting his rejection as king. Samuel got up from his knees when the morning came, and went to meet Saul. But Saul had not yet arrived, or rather, he had passed on some distance to Gilgal. Samuel then went to meet the king there. Saul was glad to see him. He expected to be commended for the way he had fulfilled his commission. Hear how the king addressed the prophet—"Blessed be thou of the Lord; I have performed the commandment of the Lord."

Just then there was a great bleating of sheep and lowing of cattle, and the prophet asked what it all meant. "It is said Saul," that is a sacrifice for the Lord." Then Samuel, with an awful sternness, told the king his doom. "Stay and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night. When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast not thou made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel? And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and a fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then

didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord? It is for sacrifice, you tell me, but hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, to hearken than the fat of rams. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king!"

What a message that was to have brought one straight from the Lord! As the aged prophet, just from his knees, just from the divine presence, with a strange glory still suffusing his venerable countenance, with the tears still wet on his cheeks, stood there before the guilty king, and told him his doom, how had the king must have felt! Saul was not yet so hardened that he was insensible to rebuke. He felt keenly the sharp thrusts of the truth-word in the prophet's hand, and I would not wonder much if he trembled as he stood there. The truth makes the mightiest tremble sometimes. I think I see the opposite of Amalek turn deadly pale, and his knees shake under him, and all his grinders fall him. He is humbled, convicted, penitent. "I have sinned," he says, and the tears come into his eyes; "I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words, Samuel. I have been a fool. I feared the people and obeyed their voice. But, oh! surely there is pardon for me. Surely the Lord will not cast me off. Come and help me to worship the Lord, and seek his mercy." Thus pleaded the king with Samuel, but his repentance came too late. He had been trusted again and again, but he could not be relied on. Samuel told him sadly that there was no use going to the Lord and begging his mercy now. He had gone too far. He had sinned once too often. His doom was fixed. He was rejected as king. It does not mean, you will observe, that his soul was lost. It was simply an official rejection. But that was not good for him—not good for his soul. I hope Saul was saved notwithstanding his rejection as king, and notwithstanding his waywardness. But oh! I tell you, there is not much that is at all satisfactory to show that he was. There was a tenderness of conscience about him all the way through, a soft place in his heart, a soul-hungering after God's peace. Every now and again the tears of penitence would flow, and he would seem to be so sorry that he was what he was. But, in a little, he would dry up his tears and get to work again to do wrong as bad as ever. It always seems to me that there is a constitutional weakness about him—a want of mental and moral balance, a sort of insanity; and, if so, we must judge him gently—perhaps we had better not judge him at all.

Poor Saul! how had he felt that he was rejected! He begged Samuel to do wrong as bad as ever. It always seems to me that there is a constitutional weakness about him—a want of mental and moral balance, a sort of insanity; and, if so, we must judge him gently—perhaps we had better not judge him at all.

But there is a worse rejection than even that. Yonder is a throne in the skies, a kingdom eternal. Jesus invites us to come up to it, and high as heaven is, with Jesus to help us, we can get there. We can sit on yon throne of glory. We can wear yon bright crown. But if we would, we must strive here. We must wake up and lay an earnest hold of the hope set before us. We cannot sit idly here, if we would reign up yonder. And yet, how easy the most of us are taking it! The grandest opportunities of our being something are one by one passing by us, and we are looking on and seeing them pass by us, and still we do nothing. Another year of such blessed opportunities is going to close in a few days, and here we are to-night, perhaps, as far as ever from Christ, yes, farther than once, perhaps. By and bye, they will cease altogether, and then we will wake up to find that all is lost, forever lost. "Rejected! I am rejected! No crown for me! No kingdom for me! No heaven for me! No glory to come for me! Lost! Lost for ever!" O God, grant that no soul here may ever know the woe of what it is to be rejected.—Amen.

SUNDAY SERVICES.
FREDERICTON.
CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL.—The Bishop of Fredericton, Metropolitan of Canada, Rt. Rev. J. Motley, D. D.; Bishop Coadjutor, Rt. Rev. H. T. Kingston, D. D.; sub-dean, Rev. Finlay Alexander. Services on Sunday—Celebration of the Holy Communion, 8 a. m. Morning service, 11 a. m., at which the Rev. E. P. Plawinski will be ordained priest and Mr. Henry Montgomery be ordained a deacon; Evening service, 6.30 p. m. During Advent besides the usual daily services there are special services on Wednesdays and Fridays at 6 p. m., with an address.

CHRIST CHURCH (St. Ann's)—Rev. G. O. Roberts, rector. Morning service at 11 a. m., with the celebration of the Holy Communion; evening service at 3.45 p. m. The sermon at both services will be by the rector. Sabbath school at 2.15 p. m., at the Madras School Room.

ST. DUNSTON'S CHURCH.—Rev. J. C. McDevitt, Parish Priest; Rev. O. Prellwitz, Curate. Sunday services—Low Mass at 9 a. m.; High Mass, at 11 a. m.; Vespers, at 3 p. m.; Sabbath school at 2 p. m. The Ladies Branch of the St. Vincent-de-Paul Society meets in St. Dunstan's Hall immediately after Vespers. The male branch of the Society at 6.30 in the same place. Masses will be said every day during the week at 7.30 a. m. Masses will be celebrated at Manners-Suttons to-morrow at 11 a. m.

METHODIST CHURCH.—Rev. E. Evans, Pastor; Rev. L. W. Wadman, Assistant. Morning service at 11, sermon by the Rev. Mr. Wadman; Evening service at 6.30; sermon by the pastor. Subject, "The temptations of Jesus." Sabbath school at 2.30 p. m. There will be a prayer meeting on Wednesday at 7.30.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.—Rev. A. J. Mowatt, pastor. Morning service at 11; sermon by the pastor. Subject, "The temptations of Jesus." Evening service at 6.30; sermon by the pastor. Subject, "Saul's madness." Sabbath school at 2.30 p. m. There will be a prayer meeting on Wednesday at 7.30.

BAPTIST CHURCH.—F. D. Crawley, pastor. Morning service at 11 a. m., sermon by the pastor. Subject, "The temptations of Jesus." Evening service at 6.30, sermon by the pastor. Subject, "The tribute of Paul to Christ." Sabbath school at 2.15 p. m., when the review exercises will be conducted by the pastor. Week night school services on Monday and Friday evenings at 7.30.

FREE BAPTIST CHURCH.—Rev. J. McLeod, Pastor. Prayer meeting at 9.30. Morning service at 11 a. m., sermon by Rev. Mr. Rend. Evening service at 6.30, sermon by the pastor. Sabbath school at 2 p. m. Prayer meetings will be held on Wednesday and Friday at 7.30.

MARYVILLE.
METHODIST CHURCH.—Rev. W. W. Brewer, pastor. Services at 11 a. m. and 6.30 p. m. Week services every evening at 7 o'clock. The pastor will preach morning and evening.

ST. MARY'S.
The services in St. Mary's Church, Rev. William Jeffrey, rector, will be held on Dec. 18th and 25th, and on Jan. 1st, at 11 a. m.

LINCOLN.
The Rev. Mr. Wadman will preach in the Methodist church at 3 p. m.

GRAND.
METHODIST CHURCH.—Rev. John S. Allan, pastor. Service to-morrow at 11 a. m. Sermon by the pastor. Subject, "Catching fish."

MARLBOROUGH.
METHODIST CHURCH.—Service at 3 p. m. Sermon by the Rev. John S. Allan.

The sermon in the next WEEKLY HERALD will be by the Rev. G. G. Roberts, Rector of Christ Church, and the theme will be appropriate to the Christmas season.

The next WEEKLY HERALD will also contain a Christmas story and some choice Christmas poetry for the children.

Many men look as if butter would not melt in their mouths, and yet can spit fire when it suits their purpose.

Said a youngster in high glee, displaying his purchase to a bosom friend on the sidewalk: "Two cocoanuts for five cents, that will make me sick to-morrow, and I won't have to go to school."

"Madam," said a medium, "your husband spirit wishes to communicate with you." "No master," said the widow; "if he's got no more spirit in the other world than he had in this its not worth bothering about."

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Church News.

The Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church raised last year \$107,932, an increase of \$31,656 over the previous year.

Cardinal Borromeo, Prefect of the Congregation, died at Rome on the 2nd Dec. He was born at Milan in 1822 and was created Cardinal in 1868.

Mr. Robert Arthington, of Leeds, England, has offered to give £2,000 towards the establishment of a Wesleyan Mission in Central Africa, along the route of Stanley and Livingston.

There are 700 colored men in the Colleges of the South preparing for the Baptist ministry.

The recent consecration of the Rev. Dr. W. M. Wigger, as Bishop of Newark, N. J., was celebrated Thursday evening, Dec. 1st, by his fellow-alumni of St. Francis Xavier, by a complimentary dinner to the Bishop, at Pinard's. Dr. Wigger is the first member of the College to receive this ecclesiastical preferment. About sixty persons were present, including Bishop Corrigan, the Rev. S. H. Frisbee, S. J., President of St. Francis Xavier College; the Rev. Dr. H. A. Brann, the Rev. Father McGeehan, Moriarty, Healy, Riordan, and Hoey, Senator F. Treanor, &c. Cardinal McCloskey was expected to be present, but illness prevented his attendance.—N. Y. Tribune.

The following Communion was sent to Mr. Hopper's organ, but declined—
(For the Christian Visitor.)
THE BAPTIST ACADEMY QUESTION.

St.—In your editorials concerning a Baptist Academy in N. B., you assume that if such an institution existed, all its Baptist students would matriculate at Acadia College. In your last issue you ask: "Why not have a Seminary in N. B., and gather in our Baptist boys for Acadia?" And said: "As a matter of fact in respect to students N. B. University is more of a Baptist College than Acadia."

We have had a Baptist Seminary in New Brunswick, and you, Mr. Editor, was connected with it for four years, three of which you were the Principal, and yet during that time the students matriculated at the N. B. University and not at Acadia. What proof have we that a Baptist academy in St. John would be a better feeder for Acadia than was the late seminary under the principalship of one so loyal to Acadia as you now are.

Further, during the existence of the old seminary, there was an institution in St. John, for which its friends there (not the denomination) claimed and obtained a grant on the ground of its being a Baptist institution. How many did it send to Acadia?

Yours, respectfully,
RICHARD H. PHILLIPS.
Fredericton, Dec. 1, 1881.

SERMONS AND SALVATION.—Mr. Beecher, a week ago to-day, surprised the Plymouth Church congregation by preaching a sermon which occupied in the delivery only a little more than thirty minutes. During his long ministrations in the most famous of American pulpits, and in one of the three or four most famous pulpits in the world, Mr. Beecher has seldom limited himself to less than an hour and twenty minutes. It is to be hoped his short sermon on last Sunday was not a mere accident. There are very few men whom the world cares to hear speak every seventh day in the week for sixty minutes. The Plymouth pastor is one of these half dozen distinguished orators and divines; and when he sets the example of brevity in the pulpit the precedent is one that churchmen will do well to follow. The sermon on the Mount is not only the greatest ever preached, but also the briefest of which we have a record. Quality, not quantity, is what is wanted in the pulpit. Tremulous, tedious, trashy sermons, have given us empty pews, coldness, indifference, perhaps infidelity. The pulpit should keep pace with the age—an age of Atlantic cables, telephones, electric lights. Let us have electric lights, not tallow candles in the pulpits.—N. Y. Herald, Dec. 4.

The Empress Eugenie, in adding eight rooms to her already large house at Farnborough, is having one apartment fitted up with relics of Prince Louis Napoleon. The Queen of England has the dressing room of the Prince Consort at Balmoral as he left it. His hat and gloves are on the table. There is in addition an effigy of him on the bed.

Sir William Heathcote, late M. P. for Oxford University, by his will declared that if any person made tenant for life of his estates, or a tenant entail before he comes into possession, shall join the Society of Jesus, or any order in communion of the Church of Rome, he is to forfeit his interest as though he were dead. Sir William was a moderate High Churchman.