

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER,

And Bible Society, Missionary and Sabbath School Advocate.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY, FOR THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF FREE CHRISTIANS OF N. BRUNSWICK, AT ONE DOLLAR A YEAR, IN ADVANCE.

E. McLEOD, Editor.
GEO. W. DAY, Printer. Office, No. 6, King Street.

That God in all things may be gloried through Jesus Christ—PETER.

R. J. UNDERHILL, Editor.
B. W. CLARK, Editor.
WILLIAM PETERS, Editor.

NEW SERIES.

SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1854.

VOL. I.—NO. 40

Religious.

NIGHT, DAY-BREAK, AND CLEAR DAY.

"Awake, thou that sleepest."—Eph. v. 14.

"Let us put on the armor of light."—Rom. xiii. 12.

READER, are you one of "the people who sit in darkness?" And do you love darkness, because your deeds are evil? Has a ray, even one ray, from the glory of God, in the face of Jesus, ever gladdened your soul? Come and let us reason together. Perhaps you do not know whether you have passed from darkness into light. Come, then, and be not afraid to examine and decide.

1. If you are addicted to gross sins, you are a child of darkness, and therefore a child of the devil, an heir of hell. If you practise anything which you would not for the world that others saw you do, you are a child of darkness, for you feel a desire that these doings of yours may be hid in night.

2. You are a child of darkness if you do not perceive how the world lies in wickedness. If the world is very pleasant to you; if its frolics, its gaieties, its dances, its songs, are sweet to your taste, then, alas! all is night with you. If you are never grieved at observing forgetfulness of God in the world's business; if you are never made uneasy when reading the profane and ungodly attacks made in public newspapers on the cause of God; if you never feel shocked in hearing the oaths and seeing the covetousness of a market-day, or a fair, if your heart was never made sad by the thought, that these attitudes are on the way to hell, then "the darkness has blinded your eyes."

3. You are a child of darkness if you reckon all points of doctrine very much alike. There are some doctrines which are essential to salvation. Thus it is essential to salvation to know your lost state as a sinner, and to lean on Christ Jesus alone. But if you see no greater importance in these truths than in a correct moral walk, and think that men may be safe if only they be sincere, you are a child of darkness. The equalizing gloom of darkness rests on you, for, like a man at midnight, you cannot distinguish the relative importance of the objects around you.

4. If you do not work for God, you are a child of darkness: for you are sleeping in inactivity; and "they that sleep, sleep in the night." Do you ever deny yourself for God? Do you give up this or that pleasure to prevent your mind being distracted or unfitted for his service? Do you rise a little earlier to obtain time for prayer, when otherwise you would be deprived of it? Do you redeem time? Do you visit the sick, send the gospel to the heathen, speak of spiritual realities to your friends, and all for his sake? If not, then you are not a child of light.

5. If you let convictions slip, you are a child of darkness: for you act as sleepy men do when roused during night. They awake at the loud knock, rub their eyes, move themselves, then fall back to their sweet slumber, and wish to be left undisturbed. You say like Felix, "Go thy way for this time;" and Felix was truly a child of the night, though awakened at the moment by Paul's loud appeal.

6. Though you love believers, and approve of their holy life, yet still you may be of the night. Perhaps you are one of many in our land who love their pious parents and friends, but do not love their piety. You respect good people, for they are kind. But in all this, you are not loving Christ in them. You like to see the stars shining in the dark night, but you do not yourself seek to shine with the light which they possess.

7. You are a child of darkness, if you do not see that Christ is the chief object pursued to the sinner. A man, during night, may see meteors, falling stars, many flashes of light, yet all this proves the more that it is not day. He admires these, because all is darkness round; were it day-time, they would all be unseen in the flood of glorious light from the sun. And thus it may be with you; you may have had your convictions of sin, and your flashes of joyful hope; yet unless your soul has seen and felt Jesus and his finished work to be the source of all a sinner's hope—his Son—you are still in night. Whatever discoveries you have made in Scripture; whatever errors you have escaped from; however many sins you have given up; whatever sacrifices you have made; all this proves nothing regarding daylight in your soul, if Christ the Sun have not filled it with his surpassing glories.

8. If you have not seen your vileness, and the filth of your garments of unrighteousness, you are a child of night. An Ethiopian cannot see his own or his neighbor's blackness, if all is dark about him; and it is even thus with the sinner. If he sees not that his own corruption, and his fancied robe of righteousness, are loathsome before God; if he think proudly of himself, have a good opinion of his heart, and trust that there is at least something worth in his deeds, he is in gross darkness.

9. Once more. He is a child of midnight who is unalarmed at sin. He is like a man in the depth of sound slumber; there may be death at hand; a sword may be hanging over his sleeping form; the earthquake or the fire may be leveling his dwelling, still he is unconscious. O unconscious sinner, you are a child of hell! The less you feel your sin, the more evidence you give of being asleep; and "they that sleep, sleep in the night." Awake, thou that sleepest! Perhaps not the rising sun, but the lurid glare of hell, may give the warning that thy time of rest is gone! Come, then, and inquire how it is that day begins to take the place of night. Be not deceived!

Remember the Son of man cometh as a thief in the night, and the surprise and remorse of the sinner overtaken in his darkness then will never, never end! There are souls now passed into light, who were once as dark as you. There are sinners now become children of the day who once were as you. Are you beginning to desire a change? Like the shipwrecked crew, (Acts xxvii. 29,) are you wishing for day? Look around and cry, even in the midst of your gloom, "Let the day break!" There is a day-spring from on high that visits souls, and guides their feet into the way of peace. (Luke i. 79.)

Let us see a man on whom the light is dawning. It is near the day-break with a sinner, when his conscience is awakened to feel sin. His sleep is done. He cannot rest quietly in sin any more. Perhaps, like Peter, his conscience was awakened by the cock-crowing—by some recollection of impressive warnings which he despised at the time; or it may have been some providence, some Jonathan's storm that sounded in his soul, "What meanest thou, O sleeper! arise, call upon thy God." Or it may have been a minister's voice proclaiming the Lord's call, "Awake, thou that sleepest!" (Eph. v. 14.) But remember, reader, this awakening is not itself the dawn of day, though it generally precedes it. For there are cases where convictions are strong and long continued, and yet the convicted sinner remains a child of darkness. Rest not, then, in mere convictions. They are hopeful appearances; but go on and see if there be other signs besides.

3. It seems to be near the dawn with a sinner, when his past days look like a dream, or a vision by night. Now, his pleasures, company, songs, and even his lawful business, seem trifling and vain, compared with the new realities that are opening on his view. His past enjoyment in them he reckons "as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty." (Isa. xxix. 8.) Their folly, their rapid flight, above all, their debasing power, makes the man feel, "What fruit had ye then of those things of which ye are now ashamed?" (Rom. vi. 21.)

3. New objects begin to appear, and former things assume a new aspect. He sees the preciousness of his soul; the holiness and justice of God; the disgusting features of sin. As yet the greatest truths may be indistinctly perceived by him, as at early dawn, when the morning is still grey, even hills and stately forests are dimly seen. Yet there is a brightness in the scene far more attractive than before; its pits and marshes, wherein so many fall, are seen and crossed. God, as revealed in his word, through the cross of Christ, begins to engage his whole soul. The people who know God, become the objects of his love. (Ps. xlii. 3.) as in the case of John Bunyan, when just emerging from the shades of night—"How lovely now was every one in mine eyes, that I thought to be converted men and women; they shone, they walked like a people that carried the broad seal of heaven about them."

4. He is expecting light from above. He does not expect that the light that is to show him the way to the Father's open arms will come from himself;—no; he believes that it shines into the heart by command of him who at first said, "Let there be light." (2 Cor. iv. 6.) This Day-spring is from above, (Luke i. 78.) Is it, reader, your convictions, and repentance, that gives you comfort, and makes you imagine that you are a child of light? Then is it not yet dawn with you; for it must be Christ, the Day-spring, that gives true peace. If your feelings are the grounds of your hope, instead of the Saviour alone, beware lest you be satisfying yourself with the sun's reflected rays. If your holy life, as you fancy it to be, is the ground of your hope, you are preferring the beautiful scenery which the sun paints with his brightness, to the Sun himself. But a soul that is really advancing on to the full day is satisfied with nothing short of that ray from the face of Jesus, which fell on the face of ransomed Abel, and faithful Abraham, and all the saved. (Rev. xxii. 4, 5.) He might possibly kindle a torch for himself, but he knows that this would drop out of his hand, when he came to pass through the dark valley. He will be satisfied with nothing but what the Holy God himself will be satisfied with. The light that the Father sheds on Immanuel's face, is the light he seeks for.

5. There is a gradual increase of light. There is no going back; no returning to the world. Impressions are not effaced; truths are not forgotten; anxiety does not decay. A soul really led by the Spirit out of darkness, can no more go back, than can the sun once risen. Difficulty after difficulty is cleared away; cloud after cloud breaks up. The soul now feels an increasing anxiety for Christ, and sees more than ever that the reason why his wants are unsatisfied, is his imperfect acquaintance with the work of Jesus. He can now distinguish between justification and sanctification; he sees that he has to do with the former first of all; and that a sinner must be washed with clean water, before the Spirit will abide in him.

6. The sun appears through the cloud. The full work of Christ appears to him to be the very remedy he needed for his soul. He sees the Sun of righteousness, and all is day. He lets that glorious Sun pour its light over his uncomely soul; and, lo! he is now "altogether lovely." Mists still linger, but they are gradually dissolving; dark clouds float at times over his sky, but at such times he keeps looking to the quarter whence he knows light will break forth again. He obtains assurance of his salvation. As in the case of the natural sun, if the eye be in the line of the ray of light, then, of course, the shining ray will

be perceived—so, he gives a steady, direct look to the Sun of righteousness, and feels that his free beams are shed even over his own vile soul.

It is now clear day. The shadows of the dawn have passed away. He lives, expecting another rising of this same Sun in sevenfold brightness, when grace shall be changed into glory. He is searching much into God's character and ways day after day; but his discoveries are dim, compared with those that he looks for at his Lord's second coming. "To you that love my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise." (Mal. iv. 2.) Yet, strange as it may seem to the world, the child of light is not gay, nor does he feel any tendency to levity in his joy. The reason is this: the bright sunshine he enjoys is the fact of God; and he stands ever in his presence. The rays of favor are all from foreign grace! He is humbled, therefore, under a sense of enormous load of benefit conferred upon him; the weight of grace and glory bends down his soul. Holy awe regulates his communion with God, while, at the same moment, he possesses the joyful confidence of a child. He has reverence, like the seraphim, while he has a joy that sometimes springs up almost as high as theirs; and in such a moment of mingled reverence and rapture that he fully realizes heaven.

And many times, his God and Father deepens this awe and reverence, by giving him personal afflictions to bear. The child of light is despised by the world, that he may learn to bathe yet more in the fountain of life above; and that, when one earthly comfort after another withers, he may take all his light from the Sun that never sets. At other times, the Holy Spirit leads him to such awful views of his remaining corruption, and such deep insight into the mystery of sin, as would confound and crush any soul whose confidence was not fixed on Jesus alone, and on Jesus to the uttermost. Or, it may be, he is oppressed with anguish, not through fear of his own condemnation or suspicion of his personal safety, but by what he sees around him—the contempt poured upon his God, and the hastening perdition of unconverted souls. Like his Master, he feels "The reproach wherewith they have reproached thee, is fallen upon me!" and, like David, he looks into the pit, and cries, "O Absalom, my son, my son!" He has hours of painful wrestling with his God, in their behalf; his bitterest hours on earth are the hours wherein these sorrows, because of his God, and because of perishing men, rush into his soul! Indeed, his joy would never be complete, if he sees in Calvary how his God has been glorified to a degree that swallows up all the contempt of men and devils; and how, when Jesus comes again, his glory will burst forth even from hell, and hallelujahs ascend to his name, even over the smoke of everlasting burnings. At present it is a painful blessedness he lives in, the very joy of his Father's face often creating new sources of anguish; but then he knows that thus he is to be refined as gold. And instead of these trying moments, causing him to doubt his Father's love, he rather tends to assure him of it the more; for his Father lays these burdens on him, just because he has first given him the joy of the Lord as the strength in which they are to be borne.

O sinner, child of darkness, and of the devil, and of hell, come and be a child of light! Will you choose to lie with fallen angels in the blackness of darkness forever? Will you love darkness, until it become your only portion? Will you indulge your dark deeds, secret sins, black desires hidden in the heart, and black clouds of anger, sabbath-breaking, uncleanness, pride, covetousness, envy, evil-speaking, discontent, selfishness? O come, and be a child of light! Let the Sun shine on you; let his beams burst into that dark cave of your heart! This is God coming in the person of Jesus, into the view of his creatures, like the sun after the gloom of night. It is God coming into the sight of his fallen and hell-deserving creatures! It is God coming in an aspect that invites you, and speaks holy love to you! For he comes to show you how he may now be "just, while he justifieth the ungodly." The various rays of his attributes are combined to form this "great light" that shines on those who sit in the valley and shadow of death. Shall it shine on you? or have you made up your mind to "sleep on, and take your rest,"—to love darkness now, and dwell in darkness forever—to be a sinner now, and a companion of devils hereafter? Is there nothing terrible in hell,—the devouring fire, the everlasting burnings?

Is there nothing bitter in "the dregs of the cup of trembling,"—the vials in which is filled up the wrath of God? Is there nothing sweet in the light of heaven,—the glory which God hath prepared for them that love him? Is there nothing desirable in the joy of the Lord,—the peace that passeth all understanding,—the rest that remaineth for the people of God? Is guilt better than pardon? Is wrath better than love? Is death better than life? Is damnation better than eternal blessedness! Are the burning flames as pleasant as the cool waters of the fountain of life? Is the lake of fire and brimstone as safe and peaceful as "the sea of glass like unto crystal," on which the redeemed are standing in triumph? Is your father the devil, (John viii. 44,) who deceiveth the whole world, more to be regarded than the word of him who is the faithful and true Witness! Lie down, then, in thy shame, and let thy confusion cover thee! "Walk in the light of thy fire, and in the sparks that thou hast kindled." (Isa. i. 11.) But soon a bright gleam of glory, seen afar, from the children of the light and of the day, shall tell thee what they have received from the Sun of righteousness, and what thou hast lost forever! "Yet a

little while the light is with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you, for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of the light," John xii. 35, 36.—Kelso Tract.

JOHN WICLIFF AND THE BIBLE.

On the 17th of May, in the year 1378, when King Richard II. was but seventeen years of age, being the year after the insurrection of Wat Tyler, a meeting took place at the monastery of the Black-friars, in London, composed of eight bishops, fourteen doctors of law and six of divinity, with fifteen friars and four monks, forming in all a council of forty-seven great men to consider how they should put down certain opinions which were hateful to them, and prosecute the people suspected of holding them, one of whom, and indeed their leader, was John Wiclif, a priest, who had been educated at Oxford. He had not only delivered many lectures on the corruptions of the Romish Church, to which he belonged, but he had also spent a great part of his life in translating, first the New Testament, and then the Old, out of Latin into English, for the use of the people. He was at this time about fifty-four years of age, and was called "the Gospel Doctor," famous for his disputes with the mendicant friars. These friars affected to be poor, and, with a wallet on their back, begged with a piteous air both from high and low, but at the same time they had great houses of their own, in which there was much waste, wore at home costly clothes, gave great feasts, and had many jewels and treasures. They would kidnap children from their parents, and shut them up in monasteries.

It happened, however, just as this great synod at Black-friars began to discuss the four-and-twenty heresies and errors which they had met to consider, the city of London was shaken by an earthquake when some of the assembled doctors doubted whether the object of their meeting might not be displeasing to Heaven; but their president, Archbishop Courtenay, declared that it needed an earthquake of opinion, and a violent struggle to be made by the Roman Church, to remove such teachers as John Wiclif; "whereat the meeting proceeded, and condemned all his opinions, declaring that he should certainly not be permitted to preach them any more."

He was soon afterwards silenced from preaching in Oxford, which gave him the more leisure for his Bible-work. In a house of his monks, doctors, priests, and students, Wiclif raised his noble head, and, turning a look on Archbishop Courtenay, which made him shrink away, uttered these simple, earnest words:—"The truth shall prevail." Having thus spoken, he prepared to leave the court; and, like his Divine Master, he passed through the midst of them, and none ventured to stop him. He then withdrew to his cure at Lutterworth. He finished his translation in 1380, four years before he died, and gave one manuscript of the Old Testament, written on vellum with his own hand, to St. John's College in Oxford. At this time being ill, four friars and four aldermen, supposing him near death, came to his sick chamber, to inquire if he would recant his opinions. Wiclif beckoned his servants to raise him in his bed, and fixing his eyes on his visitors, exclaimed, "I shall not die but live; and shall again declare the evil deeds of the friars!"

England, Scotland, and Ireland were at this time covered with monasteries, and filled with friars, who wore robes of black, white, and gray. The mendicant or begging friars, especially, were always gathering up wealth for their church, and binding the people with fresh chains of superstition. Wiclif saw that they trampled the Bible under foot, by their overbearing authority, and he resolved that the people of England should have the Bible, and compare it with the voice of the friars.

Being a very learned and thoughtful man, he may probably have known for himself, from the page of history gathered from all ages, the fact, that the great instrument of human improvement was to be found in the circulation of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue.

He recovered from his sickness, and completed his work: there is reason to believe that the whole was finished, and many copies transcribed and spread abroad, some time before the reformer's death, which happened in 1384; and after his death, his doctrines spread so fast, that a writer of that day has angrily recorded, that a man could not meet two people on the road, but one of them was a disciple of John Wiclif; yet these poor followers, in that age of manuscript, could perhaps only copy parts of the precious Book which had been translated for them, which they often did into small volumes, that they might the easier hide them, for the having and reading of which, as in the times of old, people who were detected were burnt to death, with the little books hanging round their necks.

The council of Toulouse, held in 1229, was the first that forbade, in definite form, the reading of the Bible. "We also forbid the common people to possess any of the books of the Old or New Testaments, except perhaps the Psalter, or the Breviary, or the Hours of the Blessed Virgin, which some out of devotion wish to have; but having any even of these books translated into the vulgar tongue, we strictly forbid."

Now, you know the "Breviary" and the "Hours of the Blessed Virgin" are not parts of the Bible at all; but this distinction the friars did not wish the illiterate and blinded people to perceive. They said, that "alas! the gospel pearl was cast abroad and trodden under foot of swine, and that the gospel which Christ had given to be kept by the clergy

was now made for ever common to the laity."

Until Wiclif undertook this task, no one appears to have executed a complete version of the Bible for England. In spite of all the efforts made to deprive him of this honour, it remains his own. All the search made by antiquaries establishes the fact. He gave the whole Bible to the people, he gave it without note or comment, and he was the first man that did so.

Ten years after Wiclif's death, a bill was brought into the House of Lords, to forbid the reading of the English Bible. Twenty-four years after his death (1408), a convocation was held in St. Paul's to ordain that no book of his should be read, either in public or private, under pain of excommunication; but it was all in vain. His writings, and especially his translation of the Bible, found their way to all classes, and the latter became from that hour "the Book of the people." Forty-four years after his death, according to a decree of the council of Constance, his grave was ransacked for his "body and bones," which were burnt, and the ashes cast into the brook Swift, which runs near his church at Lutterworth. This brook conveyed them to the Avon, the Avon into the Severn, the Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean, and thus the ashes of Wiclif were the emblem of his doctrines, gathered from the Bible, and now dispersed all the world over.

In Wiclif's days, the great doctrine proclaimed by the priests of Rome was, that to obtain pardon for sin, penance must be borne: the people were to fast, to go bareheaded, to wear no linen, and to whip themselves. Sometimes twenty persons might be seen in procession, wearing hats with red crosses, and stripped to the waist, the first four lashing themselves as they went along with whips of knotted cord, which drew from them streams of blood. Twice a-day, in St. Paul's church, did these men fulfil their self-imposed torture; tens of thousands, went on pilgrimage to Rome, in pairs, visiting all the churches by the way, and giving money to the priests; then the priests told them, that if they would give still more money, they might find indulgence from all this hardship; they might have indulgences even for murder, lying, and stealing, if they could pay for them. These indulgences were sold openly in the market-places of the chief cities of Europe. Wiclif preached the doctrine of reformation from all this, in his pulpit, as well as by his works. He was an earnest teacher of the Lutterworth poor. He visited them in their cottages. He was familiar with the home of poverty and the house of mourning. While administering the Lord's Supper, he was seized with insensibility, fell on the pavement, and died two days afterwards.—29th December, 1384.

You perceive he did not die a martyr, although he fully expected and was ready to do so. His followers did, in great numbers.

William Sawtre was the first man burnt in England for the Reformation's sake. He was a clergyman in London, who openly taught the doctrines of Wiclif, and declared, that "a priest was more bound to preach the word of God, than to patter his prayers at certain hours"; for which, and other statements, glorying in the cross of Christ, and supported by Divine grace, he was cast into the flames of martyrdom, A. D. 1400.

There is an account of a martyrdom, in 1410, of John Bradby, one of Wiclif's followers, who was carried to Smithfield, and there, in a cask, burnt to ashes. At his execution was present Henry V., then Prince of Wales,—the "Prince Henry" of Shakespeare,—who, pitying his sufferings, offered him pardon, if he would recant, and had him taken out of the fire, promising, as he was already lamed, to allow him threepence a-day during life; but the martyr rejecting the proffer, and refusing to deny his faith, was again thrown into the flames, and his soul ascended thence to heaven.

The first female martyr in England was Lady Jane Broughton. She was burnt at eighty years of age, "being known to read the Scriptures."—"Her daughter," says Southey, "the Lady Young suffered afterwards the same cruel death with equal constancy."

These sufferers were called "Lollards," and the most famous amongst them was Lord Cobham, in his younger days the gay and giddy favorite of Henry V., but who, becoming acquainted with the Bible, through Wiclif's translation, "learned to abstain from sin." This noble soldier made no secret of his opinions. At a great expense he collected, copied, and dispersed the Scriptures among the common people, and even maintained preachers to travel about and declare Wiclif's doctrines. His life and trials are extremely interesting. He escaped from the Tower of London, by advantage of a dark night, and hid himself among the Black Mountains in South Wales for four years. He was at last taken and roasted to death over a slow fire, in St. Giles's-fields, in London, now covered with the abodes of poor Irish people, but which was then a thicket where the persecuted Lollards met for worship at the dead of night.

We must only mention (to induce you to seek out their histories) the names of John Huss and Jerome of Prague, who suffered on the continent for the same principles, and add a word or two more about the monastery of the Black-friars, where the "earthquake council" was held. This was built in the time of Edward I. and his queen, and comprised a very large territory, near the Old Castle Baynard. They had houses and shops within their bounds. It was surrendered to Henry VIII. in the thirteenth year of his reign, at the time of the suppression of monasteries, and he granted it to private persons for houses and gardens.

The Black-friars' church was large, and richly