

Religious Intelligencer.

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F. McLEOD, Editor.

That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.—PATER.

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WHOLE NO. 191

Marks of Religious Declension.

1. When you are reluctant to religious conversation, and the company of serious, heavenly-minded Christians, and enjoy yourself best with men of the world.
2. When, from preference, you are absent from meetings for prayer, and you yourself in Sabbath meetings, are easily detained from them, and are ready to excuse such neglect.
3. When you are afraid to consider certain duties seriously, lest your conscience should be troubled, and insist on facility.
4. When it is more your object, in doing duty, to pacify conscience, than to honor Christ, and to spiritual profit, or do good to others.
5. When you have an overcritical spirit respecting preaching; are dissatisfied with the manner, as being too plain, too intellectual, or not according to some favorite model; or with the manner, as too doctrinal, or unperceptive; or when you complain of it as too close, or as suspicious of personality.
6. When you are more afraid of being accounted strict, than of sinning against Christ by negligence in practice, and unfaithfulness to your Lord and Master.
7. When you have little fear of temptation, and can trifle with spiritual danger.
8. When you thirst for the complacency of men of the world, and are more anxious to know what they think or say of you, than whether you honor the Saviour in their sight.
9. When scandals to religion are more the subject of your conversation, than of your secret grieving and prayer before God, and faithful endeavors for their removal.
10. When you are more afraid to encounter the scorn of an offending man by rebuking sin, than of offending God by silence.
11. When you are more bent on being rich than holy.
12. When you cannot receive deserved reproof for faults, are unwilling to confess them, and justify yourself.
13. When you are impatient and unloving towards the frailties, misjudgments, and faults of others.
14. When your reading of the Bible is formal, hasty, less-wise, or more intellectual, and unattended with self-application; or when you read almost any other book with more interest than the book of God.
15. When you have more religious abhorrence at home; are apparently fervent when "seen of men," but languid when seen only in the family, or by God alone.
16. When your religious taste is more for the new things of men, than for the old things of the treasury of God's word.
17. When you call spiritual slowness and withdrawal from Christian activity by the names of penitence and penitencelessness, while sinners are going to destruction, and the church suffering declension; undisciplined in the presence can be united with spontaneous fidelity, and penitencelessness with most anxious seeking of the salvation of souls.
18. When, because there is false zeal abroad, you will neither trust yourself nor others, even in that "fervency in spirit, loving the Lord," which Paul taught and practised.
19. When you are secretly more gratified at the falls of some professor of religion, than grieved for the wounds he inflicts upon the church.
20. When, under chastisement of Providence, you think more of your suffering than your sin, and look more for relief than for purification from sin.
21. When you confess, but do not forsake sinning.
22. When you acknowledge, but still neglect duty.
23. When, under slight temptations, you are ready to do the strict, straight lines of the law; doing improper things on the Sabbath; not being exactly just in business transactions; swerving from strict veracity; and doing such things without much shrinking of conscience.
24. When your cheerfulness has more of the levity of the unregenerate, than of the joy of a son of God.
25. When you live so little like a Christian, that you are embarrassed and ashamed in attending religious duties.
26. When you say in yourself, of this or that sin, "It is not a little one;" "the Lord pardon this servant in this thing;" and look so lightly on sins called small, that you are not disturbed respecting great ones; when, also, you laugh at sins in others, instead of reproving them, and mourning before God.
27. When the habit of neglecting duty is used as an excuse, instead of an aggravation, and a reason for penitence.
28. When you have so many worldly plans, and please yourself so much with success, that you are unwilling or afraid to think of death; and in your daily manner of living say, "I would live here always."
29. When you think more of being saved by Christ, than of serving Christ; more of security of heaven, than of deliverance from sin, saving dying men, and honoring God.
30. When you shut your eyes from self-examination, for fear of what you shall find

in yourself to alarm you and shake your hope.

31. When you lean on the opinion of others that you are a Christian, instead of faithfully searching your heart and life, and comparing them with the "sure word."
32. When you speak more frequently of declension in the church, than in your own heart; or talk of both more than you mourn and pray before God, and labor for a better state of things.
33. When the worldly spirit, savor, and care of the week follow your father into the Sabbath, than the spirit and savor of the Sabbath follow you into the week.
34. When you are easily induced to make your duty as a Christian bend to your worldly interest.
35. When you can be in frequent association with men of the world, with a reluctance less than your soul, heart, or you do to the good, or to God.
36. When, in your thoughts, reading, or conversation on religious subjects, your claims of head, ingenuity, and justness of conclusions, urge your spirituality and earnestness, and love to Christ and his gospel.
37. When your orthodoxy is the most or all there is which is right in you; and when you content more about its positions, than you strive for holiness.
38. When your zeal, instead of being "according to knowledge," is according to your pride and prejudice; and you are more occupied in censuring the weakness of others, than in affectionate endeavors to persuade them to do their duty, and quietly and humbly to do you own.
39. When your activity in religion depends upon the excitement of occasions, instead of being the fruit of steady, spiritual-minded, disinterested principle; and when you take more delight in the bustle of outward and popular religious movements, than in secret communion with God, and in duties in which you are retired from the notice of men.
40. When you think more of "the mote in your brother's eye," than of "the beam in your own."
41. When you find it difficult to tell wherein you are essentially different, as to your state of heart and habits of life, from what you were before you professed to be a Christian.

Reverend professor of religion, will you use these pages as a help to self-examination, that you may know yourself and your sin? Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. "Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, and be ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God."

Starvation Preaching.

OR, THE GOSPEL AT STARVATION PRICES.

MR. EDITOR.—A group of us, gathered about the centre table in the parlor, a week or two since, were greatly interested in your article with the last of the above titles, which was read to us by one of our number. And we rejoiced at the stern, but just rebuke administered in it, to the "thousands of our Christian congregations who enjoy" (so meekly and meekly enjoy) "a gospel furnished them at starvation prices."

The subject, as you well remark, is one of deep moment, not merely to the comfort and happiness of ministers, and in view of the silent sorrows of their wives and children, but as it affects the general cause of education for the ministry. Multitudes of young men who would otherwise go into the ministry, are led to other callings by the painful groans made by the churches for the support of those who preach the gospel to them. They would be willing for themselves alone, to meet the labor and self-denial; but they are not willing to subject their families to the starvation system of ministerial living—to see their wives drudges, and their children without the means of a thorough education, and both of them themselves should be taken away by death, left to poverty and want.

You justly say, "Parents do not encourage their children to become ministers, for the simple reason that they wish them to live and not die." And even the children of ministers are often suffered to enter secular employments, without remorse, because their parents know too keenly the trials of their own vocation, to wish them "entailed upon their posterity." An intelligent layman lately said to the writer: "If I had a dozen sons, I would not let one of them go into the ministry; I would let an excellent minister; if my sons are led by Providence to the ministry, I will not object; but after all that I and my family have suffered in it, I cannot advise them to enter it." And the same cause is leading not a few who are in the ministry, to leave it for secular business, that they may not be of the number of those who "provide not for their own household," and thus "deny the faith, and are worse than the infidel." One minister of the writer's acquaintance has, within the year, given up his profession, in which his family were starving, and entered a railroad office, where he receives more than four times his former salary for less than one half his former labor. Another, within a few years, has left the ministry;—in which, though he lived with the utmost economy, he was continually running in debt

to become the agent of a cotton mill, where he received more than three times the amount of his former salary, while his labors are far lighter.

And still another,—a faithful servant of his Master,—who, in addition to his salary, has been obliged to spend the whole of his patrimony, that he might live decently and educate his children, lately said to the writer that one of his sons, with a very imperfect education, and less than twenty-two years of age, was earning more annually, as a clerk in a city store, than he, the father, had ever received as his annual salary, though the latter was a finished scholar, and an able and eloquent preacher.

Shame—shame on our churches, that they should leave over their parsonages "the dark cloud of prospective bankruptcy," while so many of their members are surrounded by wealth. And shame upon our rich Christians (?) that they should leave the faithful minister of the gospel by day and by night, long children can be fed, and soul and body kept together; on his miserably small and half-paid salary, while they have wealth enough and to spare! Many a professing Christian spends enough every year, on a single pleasure hunt, or a fashionable party, or on new and elegant furniture, to more than pay the whole salary of his minister—practically acting on the principle that his present is all that he ought to give, or has to give, for the support of the gospel, whether it be supported or not.

I will close, for the present, with some remarks by Dr. Alexander of Edinburgh, showing how great the labors, and how small the compensation of ministers, leaving some facts—telling facts from some of our New England churches,—for a future communication.

Dr. Alexander, in speaking on the subject of ministerial support, says: "I am ready, without any beating about the bush, to say that we are all underpaid for what we do. I was talking lately with a London business man—a successful merchant. He said to me, 'And if it be a fair question, what do you get?' I told him. 'Well,' he answered, 'is that all you get?' 'Yes,' and compared with what many of my brethren get, it is very fair.' 'And what do you do for that?' I said that I would enlighten him upon that. 'In the first place,' I composed and wrote what would be fully two thick octavo volumes, about as much as any literary man, bending over his pen, thinks of doing, and more than some do, in a year. In the next place, I have to do as much speaking every week as a lawyer at the bar in good practice. Then, in the third place, to do as much visiting as a surgeon in average practice would do. And in the next place, I think I write as many letters as many of you great merchants do.' 'Well,' he said, 'is yours an extraordinary case?' I said, 'Not at all, a man's duties correspond with his sphere, but many of my brethren do as much,—some of them, perhaps, a little more.' 'Well,' he said again, 'they may say as they please about ministers getting too much for their work, but none of us would do half your work for four times your pay?'

Another word you may hear further on this topic from
Yours, &c.,
N. S.

No Cross—No Crown.

A youth girded himself to the journey of life. A smile was on his lips; a glad, bounding pulse betrayed the full, joyous current that gave elasticity to his steps, crimson to his cheeks, and hope and exultation to his heart. He had read of those who had fainted by the wayside; but they had not commenced their pilgrimages with a frame as buoyant, spirits as light-winged, a will as strong, and a soul as undaunted as his own. He was resolved to win the crown of immortality, and he knew that he must climb many a mountain height before he reached the temple where it was cashed. But what cared he for the distance that intervened? He had a long day before him; the path was green, and the dewiness of early morning sprinkled in the fresh and flowery begonia. The summits of the hills were soft, and smooth, and blue as the heavens on which they gracefully and majestically undulated. Like Obadiah and Absalom, he seemed to hear the morning song of the "bird of paradise," and the breezes of Eden rustled in his hair. In imagination he beheld that crown of burning gold, which set so royally on his brow; and he went on bravely, rejoicing, though, as the sun rose higher, the sultriness of advancing day grew on his cheeks, and he was constrained to push back his moistened locks, and wipe the sweat drops from his forehead.

At length the sun poured down a full tide of mountain glory, too oppressive to be borne, and the youth staggered and turned his wistful eyes to a grove by the wayside, whose entrance, arched by interlacing vines, wooed him as to the embrace of a friend.

Just as he was about to embrace himself in the leafy coolness, a hand was laid upon his arm, and he saw a stranger in a pilgrim's garb, standing before him. He wore a countenance of grave sweetness, and his eyes beamed with serene and steadfast light.

"Can ye not bear the heat and burden of the day?" said he, and his voice sounded like the low deep notes of an organ. "Think ye the golden crown is allotted to the idler in the towers of ease? No; it is the guerrier

of toil, the price of exertion, the reward of self-sacrifice, of enthusiasm and unflinching energy. Do you relinquish the prize?" "No, father," replied the youth; the stranger was not old, but there was something in his aspect that expressed a divine paternity. "No, father, but I am faint and weary, and my feet are beginning to blister from the dry and sandy path. If I rest, it is only to gather strength to renew my journey."

"Follower," said the stranger, "the night cometh when no man can work. Go on, and strength shall be given. Go on, if thy purpose is holy, and thy ambition pure. Take my rod and staff, and it will support thy weakness; bind my sandals on your feet, and they will protect them from the burning sands; and take this cross on your shoulder and bear it even to the gate of the temple. Fear it though with bleeding flesh and shrinking frame; for by Him who sweats by himself, because there is no greater, the crown is only for him who bears the cross and despises the shame."

The eyes of the youth seemed girded with supernatural power, and he beheld, what he had not before seen, a cross, that must have been borne by the stranger, for the mantle that covered his shoulder was stained with blood, and he pressed his hand against his side as if oppressed with weariness. Constrained by a mysterious inexplicable power, the youth bowed himself down, and attempted to lift a burden at once so glorified and so accursed, but his trembling limbs fell to his sides, unable to overcome its weight.

"Fear not, I am with thee!" said the stranger; and lifting the cross as lightly as if it were a silver thread, he laid it across the shoulder of the youth, and taking his hand with a benign smile he bade him arise and be a good cheer.

"And then," said the youth, looking back upon the pilgrim, on whose broad forehead a sun fell with a strange glory, "if thou hast borne the cross, where is the crown?" The stranger lifted his right hand to heaven, as he slowly receded from view, and to the dazzled eyes of the youth, his face seemed like the body of heaven, in its clearness, and his drapery white and gleaming, so as no fuller on earth could whiten it. And he went on, endowed with strength from on high; with the pilgrim's staff in his right hand, and the pilgrim's sandals on his feet, he was enabled to bear the pilgrim's cross. It is true, his heart and his flesh oft-times failed, and his spirit panted under the weary load, while tears gushed from his eyes, and blood trickled from his wounded shoulder. But a voice seemed ever whispering in his ear, "No cross—no crown." And he fixed his eyes on the mountain summit, and toiled upward and onward, pausing only to "drink at the brook by the way," for the shadows began to lengthen, and chillness crept slowly upon the air.

"O God," he once exclaimed in the extremity of despair, while the cross he had borne seemed bearing down upon him with crushing weight, "my burden is more than I can bear! Is this rugged path, the same I entered this morning, so green and fresh, and blushing with new born flowers? Is this laden heart the same that then throbbled with such glad pulsations?—these weary eyes the same that mock'd the dawning sunbeams? O, if this be life's journey, why did I ever enter it? Why were such glorious aspirations given, combined with so much weakness?—such longings for immortality, yet such draggings down to earth?—such divine ambition bound by such mortal coils? Alas! my spirit is willing, but my flesh is weak."

Who that had seen that crushed and waried figure, travel-soiled, dim and dusty, with pale and tear-stained cheek, and dry quivering lips, and eyes like smoking torches, would have recognized the youth in his morning bloom of heart and cheek, his hope, and joy, and brightness? His knees bent under him—he is about to sink, as many a poor burdened heart has done in life's pilgrimage, when through the parting mountain shadows, he catches a glimpse of the temple which is the goal of his footsteps, glittering and flashing like the golden glories seen through wet clouds. He rises and presses onward, and as he remembers the promises of him who had himself borne the cross and despised the shame, and bound the sandals to his feet—when he recalls the divine challenge in which he melted from his sight—the sublime gesture slowly sweeping heavenward, his spirit burns within him, and his failing strength is renewed. He pressed onward and upward; the mountain stream dashes across his path, and the cold waters threaten to submerge him, but he plunges in, and they soon roll darkly behind him. The mountain side is whitened by the bones of wayfarers, who perished ere reaching the temple goal, now almost caressed by him.

Hark! Is it music that greets his fainting senses? No; it is the opening of the temple gate, on "golden hinges turning." Halt not, weary pilgrim; one more step and the goal is won! Thou canst lay down the cross, and the crown is thine! Joy to thee, triumphant traveler! From the mountain height—from the sun-dial temple, where thy feet are planted, thou canst look back on the rugged path, the volcanic ascent, and the fallen cross.

Who that beheld that radiant form, glowing with immortal youth and heavenly joy, with

that crown of sevenfold beams of glory on his brow, would recognize the travel-soiled and tear-blistered pilgrim, bowing and fainting beneath the crushing burden of life? Gossamer the dust-stains from his garments, the tear-stains from his cheek, the blood-drops from his forehead, and the anguish from his soul. How short the warfare—how enduring the triumph! How brief the toil—how everlasting the rest! How different the downward to the upward view!

A young maiden sat in her chamber at the twilight hour, and there was no one to witness the shadow on her brow. The breeze sighed through her lattice, and she sighed responsive to its mournful whispers; she was young, but her cheek was pale, and her blue eyes were darkened by a melancholy shade; she was young, but the fragrance had passed from life's dream. She had made herself an idol, and found its heart of iron, and its feet of clay; and she gathered up the fallen garlands with which she had crowned it, and crushed them withering to her bosom.

"O, Father in Heaven!" she exclaimed, in the loneliness and desolation of her heart, "let me not continue life's weary journey thus sorrowing and alone. I have gathered with a rash hand the blossoms of love, and they have faded in my grasp, leaving nothing but the print of the thorns. Doom me to travel a long, bleak way, whose darkness appeals, and whose coldness chills. O, my Father, one lonely traveler will not be missed in the great thoroughfare of humanity. Have I not my heart, and close my weary eyes?"

The young mourner bowed her head, and her tears dropped like summer rain. Was it the breeze that rustled in her loosened ringlets, or the wing of an angel unseen by mortal eyes? What is it whispers to her fainting spirit, and bids her rise and go forward on her Father's mission? Like Mary, she has been weeping over the grave of her earthly hopes; like Mary, she hears the voice of the Master, and she goes forth to meet him. Trembling and faltering, she goes forth obedient to the divine behest; she passes into the shadows of night. The sun will shine no more for her, but one by one the stars come out and hold their silver lamps over the wanderer's path. She has bowed her frail shoulder to the burden of the cross, and the promise of the crown sustains her sinking soul.

"Not a golden crown," she cries, "but one of unfading flowers—no leaf embalmed with the breath of immortal love, were worth all the gold that paves the streets of the New Jerusalem. Adieu, ye blossoms of earth!—Never more shall my hand gather your glowing clusters; your beauty hath turned to ashes and your fragrance to poisonous exhalations—the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valley shall replace your perishing bloom."

Like a pale moonbeam, the young maiden parted the shadows of night, as her still footsteps left their print on the dewy grass. Her steps had been light as the summer breeze, but the burden of the cross pressed her onward, and those who followed could tell that a weary foot had preceded theirs. By and by the moon lifted her angel face above a bed of white fleecy clouds, and mingled her soft, holy light with the inner light dawning in the morning in the maiden's soul. Long and lonely was the path she trod—sometimes through woods, dark and deep, impervious to the heavenly rays, where the melancholy notes of the midnight bird alone were heard; over rugged hills and solitary wastes, through cold streams, and wild dreary wastes she passed, watching for the day spring on high. Not to the gorgeous temple on the mountain height was her glance uplifted. It was turned to a green field, where soil waters smiled—to a bowser where the dove made its nest, and the rose of Sharon bloomed. Exhausted nature, as basked in morning's rosy light she beheld the borders of the promised land. She pressed forward with panting breath and failing limbs, but fell prostrate beneath the crushing weight she had borne so bravely and enduringly. Poor wanderer! poor forsaken wanderer! hast thou followed thy Master's steps in vain?—Is there no rest for the tempted and weary spirit?—Has God forgotten to be gracious, and are his promises void?

No! One approaches and lifts her drooping form. "His head is wet with dew, and his locks are heavy with the drops of night." Unseen, he has been the companion of her journey, her protector, and her guide. He has not forsaken her, who has put trust in him. Immortal joy thrills through her frame, glows on her cheeks, and beams in her eyes. Her robes are white as the blood-washed through that surround the throne of God; and a wreath of unfading roses, refulgent with divine love, the only crown she sought, encircles her brow. She stands upon the cross, her stepping stone to Heaven, triumphant, a-living; and looks back upon the clouds rolling behind her, with a smile that illumines the darkness.

"No cross—no crown." From the tongues of angel choirs, sounds this motto for the pilgrims in the journey of life. From the bed of pain, the couch of languishment, the dungeon of despair—from the blighted heart of youth, and the frozen breast of age, amid disappointment, and sorrow, and agony, this sublime appeal to the immortal spirit struggling for victory or release is uttered; and its echo may be heard in the remotest abodes of suffering humanity. "No cross—no crown." It is the song of life, the victor anthem of death, the chorus of eternity. [Caroline Lee Hanz.

The Sinner's Helplessness.

Man is helpless without the Holy Spirit.—This is a revealed truth; yet how prone men are to misapprehend the teachings of inspiration, as to imagine they can do something for themselves—something at least, towards working out their own salvation. When Paul exhorts the Philippians to "Work out their own salvation with fear and trembling," he is addressing those who had already been born again, and he immediately adds, "For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." But though this is a revealed truth, let not the sinner make it a salvo for his conscience. Let him not suppose he is to sit still and wait for God to come and convert him. Let not the arch-enemy of your soul persuade you, sinner, that you have to "wait God's time," and thus induce you, as he may others, to settle down into carnal security and supineness. Remember Satan is a great expounder of Scripture and of Gospel doctrines, and he always takes care to explain them so as to suit his own purposes. Beware then how you trust to his expositions. True it is, you are utterly helpless, and there is help for you, if you will ask for it. We need not stop to discuss the question whether there are any promises in God's word to impenitent sinners. Certain it is, that the promise "ye shall receive," is to those who ask; the promise "it shall be opened," to those who knock; "ye shall find," to those who seek. "In the day when thou seekest me, with all thy heart, I will be found of thee." The Syro-chaldee woman did not turn away in discouragement when she had asked once or twice. She continued to press her suit until the answer came. Just so, sinners, you must do. Seek until you find, or you are lost forever. The blessed Saviour has said, "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Go then and ask God for his Holy Spirit. Tell him you are undone; that you are utterly helpless without him. He will not turn you away, for he delighteth in mercy. He has condescended to swear by himself, because he could swear by no greater, saying: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live."—Ezek. 33: 11. [Am. Baptist.

Drifting.

It was only the Niagara river that a man fell asleep on the Niagara river. During his slumbers the boat broke loose from her moorings, and he awoke to find himself shooting down the rapids directly towards the cataract. In vain he shrieked for help, in vain he tried to row against the current. He drifted on and on till his light craft upset, when he was borne rapidly to the brink of the abyss, and leaping up, with a wild cry, went over and disappeared forever.

In the great battle of Gibraltar, when the united fleets of France and Spain attacked the impregnable fortress, one of the gigantic floating batteries broke from her anchorages and began to drift directly into the hottest of the British fire. The thousand men who formed the crew of the unwieldy mass, vainly strove to arrest its progress, or divert it from its path. Every minute it drifted nearer the English guns, every minute some new part took fire from the red-hot shot, every minute another score of its hapless defenders were swept like chaff, from its decks. The most superhuman effort failed to prevent its drifting with its human freight, to inevitable death.

A ship was wrecked at sea. The passengers and crew took refuge on a raft, the bones having been stove in the attempt to launch them. For days and weeks these unfortunate drifted about, without air or sail, on the hot, brozen tropical ocean. At last their provisions failed, and then their water. Still they drifted about, vainly looking for a sail, or hoping for a sight of land. The time had now come when that fearful alternative became inevitable—death from starvation, or feeding on human flesh; and they were just beginning to cast lots for a victim, when a vessel was seen far away on the distant horizon. They abandoned their terrible design the stranger would approach. The ship came toward them. She drew nearer. They strove her attention by shouts and by raising their clothing; but the indolent look-out saw them not. They shouted louder and louder; still they were not seen. At last the vessel tacked. With frantic terror they arose in one body, shouting and waving their garments. It was in vain. The unconscious ship stood steadily away. Night drew on and, as the darkness fell, the raft drifted and drifted in the other direction, till the last trace of the vessel was lost forever.

So it is in life. The intemperate man, who thinks he, at least, will never die a drunkard, whatever his neighbor may do, only wakes to find himself drifting down the cataract, and all hope gone. The sensualist, who lives merely for his gratification, drifts into an emaciated old age, to be tortured with painful agonizing diseases. The undisciplined, who never learned to control themselves, who are spendthrifts, or passionate, or indolent, or visionary, soon made shipwreck of themselves, and drift about the sea of life, the prey of every wind and current, vainly shrieking for help, till at last they drift away into darkness and death.

Take care that you are not drifting. See that