

Religious

Intelligencer.

BIBLE SOCIETY, MISSIONARY, AND SABBATH SCHOOL ADVOCATE.

E. McLEOD, Editor.

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

TERMS.— ONE DOLLAR A YEAR, IN ADVANCE

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The Different Stories in the Ark.

You will notice, that this ark had sundry stories in it. They are not all of one height. There were lower, second, and third stories. Now, this is a figure to me of the different kinds of Christians who are carried to heaven. There is a poor mourning brother, who lives in the bottom story; he is always singing, "Lord, what a wretched land is this!" He lives just near the keel, on the bare ribs of the ark. He is never very happy. A little light reaches him from the windows at times; but generally, he is so far from the light, that he walks in darkness, and seems very little indeed. His state is that of constant groaning; he loves to go and hear, "the corruption preachers;" he revels with delight in the deep experience of the tried faithful of God; he likes to hear it said, "Through much tribulation you will enter the kingdom of heaven;" if you paint the Christian life as a very gloomy one, he will like your picture, for his is gloomy indeed; he is always poring over texts such as these, "Oh, wretched man that I am;" or that other, "They that pass through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools." He is down in the lower story of the ark. But never mind he is in the ark, so we will not scold him, though he has little faith and very much doubt. With lower, second and third stories shall we make it? There is one of our brethren up a little higher, and he is saying, "I can not exactly say I am safe; yet I have a hope that my head will be kept above the billows, though it goes hard with me at times. Now and then, too, the Lord bestows 'some drops of heaven' upon me. Sometimes I am like the mountains of Hermon, where 'the Lord commanded the blessings even life forevermore.' He is in the second story. Well, but he is no safer than the other one. He that is in the second story is no safer, though he is happier, than the one on the ground floor. All are safe, so long as they are in the ark. For my part, I like the uppermost story best. I had rather live up there where I can sing, 'O God, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.'"

I love the place where the saints are always admonishing and encouraging one another with psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.

"Children of the Heavenly King, As ye journey, sweetly sing, Sing your Savior's worthy praise, Glorious in His words and ways."

I confess that I am obliged to go down to the lower story sometimes; but I like running up to the third deck whenever I can, and there I can say—

"Oh! how sweet to view the flowing Of his soul redeeming blood; With divine assurance knowing That He made my peace with God."

But I am no more safe when I am in the top story than when I am in the bottom. The same wave that would split the ship and drown me, were I in the lowest story, would drown me were I in the highest. However high some of us, and however low others of us may be, the same vessel bears us all, for we are one crew in one boat, and there is no dividing us. Come, then, my poor desponding hearer, is that your place, somewhere down at the bottom of the hold, along with the ballast? Are you always in trials and troubles? Ah! well, fear not, so long as you are in the ark. Do not be afraid, Christ is your strength and righteousness. The ark was in each and every department a secure shelter to all who were shut in. "Ah!" says one, "but I am down there, sir, at the bottom always, and I am afraid the vessel will sink." Do not be so silly; why should your heart beget such senseless fears? I knew a man who went up to the Monument, and when he had got half way, he declared it vibrated and was about to fall, and he would come down. But the Monument has not fallen; it is as safe as ever; and if fifty like him, or fifty thousand, went up, the Monument would be just as firm. But some poor nervous Christians are afraid Christ will let them sink. A wave comes against the side of the ship, but it does not hurt the ship, it only drives the wedges in higher. The Master is at the helm—will not that assure your heart? It has floated over so many billows—will not that increase your confidence? It must indeed, be a strong billow that will sink it now; here never will be such an one. And where, think you, is the power that could destroy the souls who are sheltered in the ark of our salvation? Who can lay anything to the

charge of God's elect, since Christ has died, and God the Father, had justified us? Happy assurance! We are all safe, so sure as we are in the covenant. The ark floated triumphantly on amidst the dangers without, and when it finally rested on Mount Ararat, and God spake to Noah again, saying, "Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing; then the inventory was complete, all were safely landed. So, too, will Christ prevent the perfect number of all his people to the Father in the last day; not one shall perish. The ark of our salvation shall bring all its living freight into the heaven of eternal rest.

"Truth is her compass, love her sail, And heavenly grace her store; The Spirit's influence the gale That wafts her to the shore."

"Nor winds nor waves her progress check, Her course she must pursue; And though you often fear a wreck, She's saved with all her crew."

—C. H. Spurgeon.

The Wrong Step.

"He prays well," said a young worldling, as he listened to the voice of a youthful Christian in the prayer-meeting; "but I don't think much of his religion." Why not? That young disciple had been enticed, under peculiar circumstances, at the solicitation of a professed minister of Christ, but who was in fact the preacher of "another gospel," to join in a dance in a ballroom. With little thought of what he was doing, or of the consequences, he had yielded to the invitation just to look in upon the gay assembly. That step led to another, until he had compromised his religious influence and wounded his Saviour. Then, when a few evenings after he arose to pray, and to speak a word for Christ, he was shorn of his strength. He had gone among the enemy, not to win them over to the Saviour, but to join in their sinful merriment; and what avail now the most earnest appeals from his lips?

Even if his departure from the right way be thought a slight one, still it did prove an effectual hindrance to his usefulness. The very appearance of evil should be avoided, would we win sinners from the error of their ways. We must keep ourselves unspotted from the world. A little stain upon a Christian's character will attract more attention than all his shining excellencies. That will be remembered while these are forgotten. When that young disciple arose in the prayer-meeting, those present who had seen him in the ballroom, had that scene of worldly gaiety before their vision. They saw him moving, in the dance, they saw the gay expression of his countenance, they could see nothing else; and so they set him down as a hypocrite, or at least as a person who ought not to assume the office of teacher and monitor to them.

Their judgment was a harsh one, for he was, no doubt, a real Christian; and when he prayed in their hearing, it was in the sincerity of his heart. He had been tempted, and he afterward seemed aware of his wrong step, and spoke with feeling of the peculiar circumstances of his position, and prayed for divine help to overcome temptation.

But the world will not make allowance for human frailty under the stress of strong temptation, nor do they hear all the heartfelt confessions of the penitent wanderer. The wrong step once taken cannot be retraced. It may be mourned over, confessed with shame, and never repeated, but its influence has gone forth, how widely, none can tell. How important, then, that every disciple of Christ guard well his steps, that he watch and pray lest he enter into temptation. Let him keep near to Jesus, his only strength in the hour of peril. And let him say with Leighton, "Shall I, that I am now cleansed in the precious blood of my Lord Jesus, run again into that puddle out of which He so graciously took me, and made me clean? Let the swine wallow in it; He hath made me of the sheep-fold;" let him remember those other words of the eminent saint, "You must row against the stream of wickedness in the world, unless you would be carried with it to the dead sea, or lake of perdition."

And the question may well be asked, what do you gain by mingling with the worldly in their carnal pleasures? You yield to please them, to gain their good-will. But in their hearts, they think less of you, they regard you as inconsistent, and you will soon hear some cutting remark which they have let drop behind your back. Oh, every way a Christian is a gainer by a strict adherence to his principles. He will have a good conscience, his influence will be salutary, his Saviour will be honored.—N. V. Christman.

Live near to God.

A fair young matron lay on her deathbed. It was in one of our western cities, far away from the home of her childhood, parents, brother, and sisters. The world was fast receding—the faces of loved ones around her, were becoming more and more shadowy—when some one bent down to her ear and said, "And what message have you for your distant sisters and brother?" "Tell them," said the dying woman, "tell them to live near to God."

The dying sister's warning asserted its right to be heard,—"live near to God." How full of meaning are these words. Those who obey them need not fear to die. But comparatively little stress is laid in the Bible upon the death of believers. If they live near to God, they are numbered with the righteous.

Basim was willing "to die the death of the righteous," but he was not willing to live their life of nearness to God.

ENGLISH ANNIVERSARY MEETINGS.

BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

We have received a report of the Annual Meeting of the Baptist Missionary Society held in Exeter Hall, London, on the last Thursday in April, Sir. S. Morton Peto, in the Chair. The Rev. Dr. Cumming was among the speakers. From an address by the Rev. James Smith, for many years a Missionary in India, we make the following extracts:—

He said:—I believe, brethren, that the time has arrived when India must necessarily obtain far more attention from the people of Great Britain, than ever it has obtained in previous times. I feel confident that the well-being of our country is closely and intimately bound up with our faithfulness to British India. We have been permitted to taste something of the fruit of our own doings. There is no doubt that the mutiny that has occurred has been the legitimate outgrowth of our own unfaithfulness, our own want of attention, more especially to the interests of the millions of British India. And further, I verily believe that there is so much of antagonism existing between Hinduism, and Mohammedanism, and Christianity, that it is impossible that these systems should for a length of time exist together. I cannot doubt that the late struggle has been the death-struggle between Hinduism and Christianity. Whatever may have been the secondary causes that have tended to produce the events of which we have heard so much, I am sure that it has a far deeper cause, and that cause is nothing more or less than this; Christianity has made itself to be felt, civilisation has made rapid strides in India. The Brahmin has seen his privileges depart; the Rajpoot has seen that he could no longer go on his marauding parties, and live without labour; and hence they have tried to drive back civilisation, and drive back Christianity, and re-introduce those times of darkness and cruelty that existed before the establishment of the British power in India.

Hinduism is not that flimsy thing which at first sight it appears to be. When I arrived in India, I remember looking at the temples and at the temple worship, seeing men with fans in their hands fanning dumb idols, to whom they also presented dishes of sweet food and fruit. I heard females singing rich music before them; and I thought, surely it is a most flimsy system. But the longer I lived there the more I was struck with its depth. It is something which is universally felt; it has its ramifications in every part of life, in the social circle, in politics, in commerce. You cannot escape it; it meets you everywhere. The rivers bear the names of the gods. Every man, woman, and child is after a god. The idols are stuck up in the streets wherever you go. Hinduism, as to its power, rests on its universality, the whole nation being immersed in it. There can be no doubt that the Hinduism has been, to a considerable extent, puzzled as to what Christianity really can be. There is so vast a difference between his own character and the character of those bearing the name of Christianity, that he has been led in many instances, to conclude that Christianity could be nothing at all. As for Hinduism, commerce, pleasure, everything appears to be immersed in it. The man's ledger is dedicated to the god he worships, and not an entry can be made in it until he has written the name of that god at the top; and every note on business or pleasure must have the same inscription. The shops are also dedicated to gods that are worshipped; and everything reminds you of it. It pervades the infant almost as soon as it is brought into the world, for then the mother takes it to the temple, and presents it to her god; this she does day after day and week after week, so that Hinduism grows with the child's growth and strengthens with its strength, entwining itself round every fibre of the heart and the affections. When the child goes to school, it finds its very book parcel of this Hindu system—the geography, the astronomy, the arithmetic, every single book used in the native Hindu schools, forms part of their religious codes. We have heard of Church and State. In India the Church has literally swallowed up the State, and made everything succumb to it. You find body, soul, and spirit, trampled upon by the priests, so that there is little or no moral life left in the people. You have there the most abject slavery the world ever saw. There that connection of an abominable religion with the State has been carried out to its full extent, and we have just been reaping the fruits of that connection. My resolution commences with speaking of stations that have been ruined in the North-West Provinces. If I acted from the dictates of my own feelings I should almost pass over the brethren who have there been put to a cruel death—Mekay, and Walyat Ali, and many others. But, Sir, I feel I cannot do it. Walyat Ali was my native preacher for eight or nine years. I travelled with him day after day for weeks and months and years. He was almost my only companion in preaching the gospel. His wife (one of the first of that class brought to a knowledge of the truth), I was myself privileged to baptize as well as his daughter. Never can I forget the feelings of thankfulness realized in my own mind when I saw that woman delivered from her prison-house, and brought into the liberty wherewith Christ maketh his people free. She was, I think, nearly forty years of age when her husband taught her to read. She had then never been out of her house except in a covered conveyance, never been privileged to walk in the green fields and to behold the beauties of nature as you behold them. Sisters, let me call your attention to this fact, that ladies in India are everywhere thus kept in a prison-house; they never look on the face of a man except their own family; never breathe the fresh air, but live, as it were, in another world. After having learned to read the Bible she told her husband that she was anxious to be baptized. I visited her, and found her with her face covered by the thick cloth. "What am I to do, Sir?" she said, "I have never been out of the house in my life, and have never looked upon men except of my own family." That was a difficulty we cannot really appreciate. One Sabbath, when my wife and another Christian lady were with her, they took her each by the hand and led her down my garden. I can almost see her now as she walked forth, for the first time, on God's earth, and viewed, for the first time, the beauties of the world in which she had so long lived. You may judge of my feelings when I first saw her thus released from her prison-house, and realizing the liberty of the children of God. I baptized both her and her daughter. She soon aided in getting up a large class of females who met on the Sabbath afternoon in the chapel at Chitaura. I have sometimes gone and listened at the chapel-door—for gentlemen were not admitted inside—and have heard Feima, as she approached the throne of grace, and lifted up her heart and voice to God in prayer for the conversion of her fellow countrymen. I have heard her as she has read the New Testament, and in her own simple language, explained its meaning to those by whom she was surrounded. I have heard her as she has given out a hymn and then raised the tune—one of those sweet Indian tunes that I am anxious soon to hear again; and I have been delighted as I stood there, and my heart melted with joy that God had brought one, at least, of those poor imprisoned females to a knowledge of the truth.

There is one scene connected with her family that I must mention. I mean the death of her eldest son, about twelve years of age. I used to visit him every day, and his mother, Fatima, and Walyat Ali, used to stand by his bedside weeping at the thought of so soon losing him. I have heard him time after time turn to them and say, "Why do you weep for me? I am going to the Lord. You will soon meet me in heaven." To the last moment of his life he did his duty to comfort his parents. Little did I think that one, at least, would so soon meet him, and little did I think that a mother, so delicate, having been brought up as it were in a hot house, would be called to pass through such dreadful scenes, still less that she would be able to sustain such unprecedented trials. After Walyat Ali was sent to Delhi, I preached the gospel there from time to time, as I had often done before. Delhi was a city on which we had placed many hopes. I have sometimes seen 1,200 people assembled together in the magnificent bazaar in one of the finest streets in the world, and have watched them as they have listened to the preaching of the gospel for an hour or an hour-and-a-half, then, perhaps, thirty, or forty or fifty of them would follow us all the way home. I visited Delhi after Walyat Ali had been placed there, and I found that his influence was being exercised to a considerable extent.

When we were standing preaching in the streets of Delhi, some of the Moulees opposing the gospel, and not succeeding, one of them said, "Ah, if Mohammedanism was in power we would soon make you feel a sharper argument than any of these, and that would soon stop your mouths." It is true God has in his own inscrutable wisdom permitted this evil to overtake us. Our brethren have been cut down. Walyat Ali has rendered up his life for the sake of Jesus Christ. But is there any reason why we should be cast down because of this? Never again can the natives say, "Ah, your natives Christians are paid." Never can they say again, "There is nothing but an outward show of Christianity, there is nothing of the heart." No, we can point to Delhi and to Walyat Ali, who might have saved his life, and more than his life if he had been willing to renounce his Christianity. But he followed his Master as to his suffering, and died witnessing to the truth of Christianity with his latest breath. The station at Delhi is a most important one for another reason. There we are the only preaching missionary society in existence. Hence, let me entreat you not to permit Delhi to be given up. The blood of our martyred brethren forbid it! I trust before another year we shall be prepared to rebuild the station that has been destroyed there, and to commence anew with evangelistic labours, that are destined not only to destroy Mohammedanism, but to introduce a new day to British India.

Home Missionary Society.

From an address by the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel on the subject of Home Missions we make the following extracts:—

The Hon. and Rev. Baptist W. Noel said:—Unhappily, there were some plain facts in the history of their country which were beyond dispute. It was a great country, and its population was distinguished by many virtues, and by much energy; but, notwithstanding, it was equally plain that there was a vast amount of irreligion in the land. No one denied that drunkenness was a great feature of the population of this country, and thus it was brought into a thousand other mischiefs. The evil was not only made known in the statistical tables from time to time published, and in the reports of the proceedings of temperance societies, but by the facts which were most disgraceful to the country. The great reverse which the country had sustained in the Indian war—the second battle of Cawnpore—was known to have been very much brought about by the drunkenness of one of the regiments. In that gallant defence of Lucknow which filled every Englishman with an admiration of the heroism of his countrymen, Mr. Rees recorded that on one occasion a number of soldiers, when their services were required, were drowned in intoxication, having obtained entrance into a cellar. Whence did these soldiers come but from our villages? They would never be drunkards unless villagers were drunkards. Every earnest man in the country felt that he had to contend with that great mischief amongst his neighbours. Nor was it less certain that there was a vast amount of neglect of public worship in the different parishes of England. They were accustomed to contemplate that fact in great cities with much sorrow, but the villages were no better. In numbers of them there was very little attendance at public worship amongst the working population generally; and if there was no public recognition of God, was there any worship in their families? Was the Bible read? Were the working classes in the habit of training up their children for God and heaven? It was evident that there was still a vast necessity for the earnest preaching of the gospel, to reach the minds and consciences of the people. In the Established church there was no opportunity of fulfilling Christ's command to preach the gospel to every creature.

The Church was said to be divided into three classes, the Low Church, the High Church, and the Broad Church. In the Low Church he had no doubt there were multitudes of devout, earnest men, who loved God, who gave their lives to preach Christ and to make their fellow-creatures as happy as they could, but none of them could go into his neighbors parish without permission. Thus many parishes in the land were shut entirely to the efforts of the most zealous men in the Establishment. It was for Dissenters, therefore, to carry out Christ's command to the fullest possible extent. If there were not sufficient earnestness among them to follow in the steps of those good men of whom they had heard in the report, there was nothing to hinder them preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, which saves souls, and with which God invariably works to save souls—they might go into every parish in this kingdom, and preach the gospel to every creature. That was what they might do and what they ought to do.

Some of them had observed what was taking place in Scotland, especially as regarded the reports of the sermons of Brownlow North in churches or chapels, or wherever congregations might be. Mr. North was not a minister, he did not profess to be a very educated man, he had not received a theological education; but he had been converted by Jesus Christ, he loved the Saviour, he was looking forward to a happy heaven, he believed what the gospel said, and therefore he spoke with a warmth of heart which went far beyond eloquence of language. Gordon Furlong had done the same thing, and he wished there were thousands of his kind in England to do so likewise. That was happily an old thing and not a new thing, which was from the beginning, and ought to be revived, but which partly the assumptions of ministers and partly the indifference of people had suffered to fall into desuetude. When the Christians of Jerusalem were expelled by persecution, they went forth everywhere preaching the word. Then all the servants of Jesus Christ that knew the gospel, and wished to serve him, must have been charged with the duty of making it known as they could to their fellow-men. There were numbers of men in this country who knew the gospel, and who might with great power go and proclaim it like North and Furlong.

Christ the heir of all things, who could have commanded the attendance of all the creatures in the world, was pleased to live in a low condition, that he might make it appear that eternal life hath not the least dependence on worldly wealth, either in his procuring it for us, or in our deriving it from him. What an unnatural and incongruous state of things would it be for angels to turn worldlings! And reasonable souls have the self-same blessedness to look after as angels have.—Bishop Reynolds

London Correspondence.

LONDON, May 7th, 1858.

This month of which poets have sung in their liveliest style has come with less than its usual floral fascination. The inconstancy of the sunshine and the prevalence of cold breezes, have hindered vegetation. Jack-in-the-green, however, has shown himself in the streets, and on the first of May ribbon favours hung from the heads of some carriage horses and the button-holes of their drivers. Yet there was not so much of this as years ago; and it seems as if our ancient ancestors, even the more innocent of them, were destined to decay. I wish some of the more exceptional of them in Church and State would evince an equal discrepitude.

MISSIONARY MEETINGS.

In the philanthropic and religious world May has acquired a distinction as the period of annual convocation, deliberation, specification and the like. It will meet your readers' wishes, I dare say, if I refer first of all to the anniversary meetings of the Baptist denomination; and these are entitled on the score of priority in date to the priority of reference I intend to award them. They are scarcely within the May-Meeting circle, literally not so at all, for they commence in the last week of April, and are all over when the Queen of Spring comes in led by the dark and rosy hours of the morning. Their position in the van of the other meetings may, or may not, be the most eligible for them to occupy; we, at least, may with a little pardonable vanity, regard them as filling a characteristic place. The Baptist Roger Williams first legislated in modern times for complete religious liberty; to Baptists is due the first impulse to modern missionary enterprise; a Baptist, Rev. Mr. Hughes of Battersea, was one of the most active early originators of the Bible Society; Baptist missionaries have done most to give the divine word to India's swarming millions; and a Baptist soldier, Havelock, is the most prominent example of a British officer forming and building up a church in the army.—The Baptist Union, which comprises churches of both divisions, general and particular, (i.e. Arminian and Calvinistic) had a very pleasant meeting. The statistics showed a net increase in the churches reporting, of six per cent—the highest for many years. The Bible translation Society, which was organized by the refusal of the Bible Society to give grants to translators who did not retain untranslated the word "Baptize," has received in the year £1305 13s. 9d., and has a balance of £61 13s. 1d. The Baptist Home Mission has 105 central and 98 subsidiary stations, with accommodation for 27,000 hearers. The year's additions by baptisms have been 401. The Baptist Irish Society has been usefully at work in a field of christian labour whitening to the harvest.—But the chief meeting of the season has been of course that of the Baptist Missionary Society in Exeter Hall on the 29th of April.—Sir M. Peto, the Treasurer, presided, and the speakers were Rev. F. Tacker, Dr. Cumming, Rev. J. Smith, (late of Chitaura, near Agra,) Rev. Dr. Spence, and Rev. Dr. Evans.—The year's income was reported at £22,946 15s. 10d. (an increase over last year of £1,479 11s. 4d.) and the expenditure £23,593 13s. 8d. The Freeman in reviewing the addresses of meetings has some careful and candid remarks, of a favourable complexion on the whole, and among others there are these—"The meetings of this year seem to us to have been characterized, to a more than ordinary extent, by practical purpose and plain common sense in the speeches.—We have seldom read reports so free from clap-trap and more eloquence of words.—And this quiet business tone of earnestness which deals with facts and discusses plans, and has an evident eye all through to work, is we think clearly symptomatic of a state of feeling which pervades the whole body."

Mr. Spurgeon preached on the first of our sermons annually delivered on Foreign Missions. His text was the last four verses of the 46th Psalm; the collection produced £146, in part due to the place of service, the Surrey Gardens' Hall, which admitted of a congregation much larger than before. It was filled—and this on a week day morning was proof evident of Mr. Spurgeon's sustained popularity. Rev. J. Aldis, of Reading, preached elsewhere in the evening from Acts 1:8.

The great meetings of other Christian bodies are in course of being held. Lord Pannure presided over the Wesleyan Missionary meeting, at which the year's income was announced to be upwards of £120,000. Yesterday the London City Mission summoned its friends to Exeter Hall, and the report stated that the year's income had been £32,230 10s. 3d., an increase of £1,536 17s. 4d. on the previous year. The Missionaries employed are about 330, and are performing a much required work in visiting the poorer classes, holding night meetings, assisting to form ragged schools, &c. Domiciliary visitation to be of much benefit needs peculiar gifts, and as so many workmen are from home all day the difficulty of getting at "the people" is greatly increased. Still the en-

"Least this should be enigmatical may say, that chimney sweeps have been sent on the first three days of May to dress themselves in gay colors and put one of their companions in a round tapering sort of box covered with leaves, which he shakes about to the amusement of all young children and some elderly ones. A winding dress if brought up as high as the head of the wearer and covered with green leaves would be a counterpart of Jack in the green."