

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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Moral & Religious.

Lost Convictions.

If you have the at vivings of God's Spirit, God has met with you, led you to reflect upon your sins, made you sensible that you are in danger of hell, awakened your concern for your soul, and inclined you to seek salvation. Take heed that you do not lose your convictions, and grow senseless of eternal things; that you do not return to your former careless way of living, and your former sins. Consider—

1. There is danger of this. Not all who are concerned for their souls, and who, by the workings of God's Spirit, are seeking and striving for salvation, hold out to the end. Many things intervene between the beginning and the end of the race, which divert and stop, and turn back those who commenced well. There are many who seem to be under strong convictions, and to be very earnest in seeking, whose convictions are but short-lived. And some who seem to be much concerned about salvation for a considerable time, it may be for years together, yet by degrees grow careless and negligent.

There is much in your own heart which tends to stupify you. It is the natural tendency of sin to stupify the conscience. And as corruption is reigning as yet in your heart, it will ever be ready to exert itself in such a way as will have a great tendency to drive away your convictions. And Satan is doubtless diligently watching over you, striving in all ways to abate and to hinder your convictions. He joins in with the sloth and lusts of your heart to persuade to negligence, and to turn your mind to other things. And the world is full of objects which tend to take off your mind from the soul's concerns.

2. Consider, if you lose your convictions, it will be no advantage to you that you ever had them; as to any furtherance of your salvation. Whatever terrors you have been under about damnation, to whatever reflections you have been brought concerning your sins, whatever strong desires you have had after deliverance, and whatever earnest prayers you have made, all will be in vain. What you have suffered of fear and concern will turn to no good account, and what you have done, the pains you have taken, will be utterly lost. When you have a risen against sin, and laboured in duty, have stemmed the stream, and have proceeded a considerable way up the hill, and made some progress towards the kingdom of heaven, if once you lose your convictions, you will be as far from salvation as you ever were; you will lose all the ground you have gained; you will go quite down to the bottom of the hill; the stream will immediately carry you back. All will be lost; you may as well never had those convictions as to have had them and then lost them.

3. You do not know that you will ever have such an opportunity again. God is now striving with you by His Spirit. If you should lose the workings of His Spirit, it may be that God's Spirit will never return to you again. If you are under convictions, you have a precious opportunity, which if you knew the worth of it, you would esteem better than any temporal advantages. You have a price in your hands to get wisdom, which is more valuable than gold and silver. It is a great privilege to live under means of grace, to enjoy the Word and ordinances of God, and to know the way of salvation. It is a greater thing to live under the powerful dispensation of the means of grace by an instructive, convincing ministry. But it is a much greater privilege still to be the subject of the convincing influences of the Spirit of God. If you have these, you have a precious advantage in your hands. And if you lose it, it is questionable whether you will ever have like advantages again.

We are counselled to seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near.—(Isa. lv. 6.) A time in which God's Spirit is striving with a man by convictions of his sin and danger, is especially such a time. It is a sinner's best opportunity. It is especially a day of salvation. God may be said to be near, when he pours out his Spirit upon many in the place where a person dwells. All should be calling upon God at such a time. But especially is God near, when he is pouring out his Spirit in convincing and awakening a man's own soul.

If God's Spirit is now striving with you, you have a precious opportunity. Take heed that you do not by any means let it slip. It may doubtless be said concerning many, that they have missed their opportunity. Most men who live under the gospel have a special opportunity, or there is a certain season which God appoints for them, which is, above all others, a day of grace, when they have a very fair opportunity of securing eternal salvation, if they did but know it and had hearts for it.

If the Spirit of God is now striving with you, it may be it is your time, and it may be your only time. Be wise, therefore, and understand the things which belong to your peace, before they are hid from your eyes. You have not the influences of the Spirit of God in your own power. God is sovereign as to the bestowment of them. If you are ready to flatter yourself, that although you neglect now when you are young, yet you shall be awakened again, that is a vain and groundless presumption.

4. If you lose your convictions, and return again to a way of allowed sinning, there will be less probability of your salvation than there was before you had any convictions. It is a fling or losing convictions is a very dangerous and pernicious thing to men's souls, and is often spoken of as such in God's Word; which was signified in the awful dispensation of God in turning Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, to be a standing emblem of the danger of looking back after one has set out in a way of religion.

The ill to which they are subject who lose their convictions is not merely the loss of their convictions. Their convictions are not only a means of no good to them; but they turn to much ill. It would have been better for them that they had never had them, for they are now farther from salvation than they were before. Having risen from heaven, and falling back, they sink lower and further down towards hell than ever they were. The way to heaven is now blocked up with greater difficulties than ever it was. Their hearts have now become harder; for light and convictions being once conquered, they evermore are an occasion of greater hardness of heart than there was before.

Man's heart is hardened by losing convictions, as iron is hardened by being heated and cooled. If you are awakened, and afterwards lose your convictions, it will be a harder thing to awaken you again. If you were only growing older, there would be less probability of your being awakened again; for as persons grow older, they grow less and less susceptible of convictions, evil habits grow stronger and more deeply rooted in the heart. But you greatly offend God by quenching His Spirit and returning to sin.—And there is danger that God will say concerning you, as he did concerning Jerusalem, "Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purified, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee."—(Ezek. xiv. 13.) If you were but sensible of one half of the disadvantages of it, and the many woes and calamities in which it will involve you, you would be careful not to lose your convictions. That you may be the better directed in taking care not to lose them, consider—

1. Persons falling into sin is very often the occasion of their losing their convictions. Some temptation prevails over them; they yield to some sinful appetite; they indulge in strife, or malice, or revenge; and thus provoke God to anger, and drive away the Holy Spirit.

2. Sometimes there happens some diverting occasion. Their minds are taken off for a short time; they are drawn into company. It may be they see something which revives a desire of worldly enjoyments and entertainments, or they are engaged in some business, which diverts their minds. They become less strict in attending private duties; and carelessness and stupidity by degrees steal upon them, till they wholly lose their convictions.

3. Some change in their circumstances takes off their minds from the concerns of their souls. They are taken up with new cares and business in which they are involved. It may be they grow richer. They prosper in the world, and their worldly good things crowd in and take possession of their minds; care increase upon them, and the soul is neglected and left to perish.

And what wilt thou say when God shall call for thee, or what wilt thou do when he shall deal with thee?

The Starless Crown.

It was after a lingering and painful illness that we were at length called to stand by the dying bed of one who, though still in the morning of life, had given her heart to Christ before the necessities of a dying hour drove her to him. Cultury did the work forward to the hour of her dissolution, sustained by that hope which is "an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast." As we bent over her to catch the last whispers of love, these words fell on our ears: "I love my Saviour, and have confidence that through faith in him I shall be saved; but Oh! it seems to me that mine will be a starless crown; I do not think I have been instrumental in saving one soul."

We tried to comfort her by reminding her, that often we do not see the result of our labor in this world; that it might be, her consistent work as a Christian had been the means

of inducing some soul to follow Christ, who would hereafter "rise up and call her blessed." But she continued repeating to herself these words: "A starless crown—a starless crown;" and then most earnestly did she plead with all about her to do something for him every day; so that when we came to die, we need not regret that we had won no soul to Jesus, but rejoice that, under God, we had been the means of leading many to his feet.

"A starless crown," what does it mean? What but that we have passed through this world surrounded by those who love not that Saviour who is our all in all—have seen them unmindful of his claims to their love and service, and have not been the means of rescuing one of them from "the death which never dies." Full well we know that "no man can come to Christ, except the Father draw him;" but as well do we know that, in due season we shall reap if we faint not; that he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Our own salvation is not the only design for which we were called from darkness, and "translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son." No; this is a narrow, ungenerous view to take of the ennobling scheme of redemption. When we have ourselves experienced the preciousness of Jesus' love, and feel that by his grace we are delivered from the thralldom of sin, as well as saved from everlasting death, what can we do but endeavor with all the energies which God has given us to bring others to the same Saviour, who is as ready to save them as us?

Oh, fellow-Christians, let us be up and doing. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand;" what we do for our Saviour, and for the souls perishing about us, must be done quickly. The emissaries of Satan are busy on every side, fulfilling his errands, determined to chase to their prison of despair as many souls as will be "led captive at his will," and shall we be less jealous of our Master's honor, less active in his cause? Remember, every soul saved adds one more to that "innumerable throng" who cast their crowns at Jesus' feet, and ascribe to him the praise of their salvation.

Every day we may do something for Him who has done so much, and who has done everything for us. Then, when the golden gates are opened to receive us, and we behold "Him whom not having seen we have loved;" as we join in those anthems of praise which ever swell through the new Jerusalem; as we bow in adoring gratitude, wonder, and love, before him, and cast our crowns at his feet, we shall find that they are not "starless crowns," but richly beset with stars which shall shine for ever in the firmament of God.—Am. Messenger.

The Love of Christ.

The arms of love, which were extended to a Magdalene, a Zaccheus, yes, to a thief upon the cross, are ever outstretched to receive us, and at each new fall they lift us up, and fold us in their embrace so firmly, that at last we can no more free ourselves. Dost thou ask if they are extended towards thee, thou fainting wanderer, who after a hundred falls and forgivenesses a hundred-fold greater, with shame and confusion of face there standest? Yes, be comforted. When I think of our Lord's answer to Peter's question, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?" Seven times? No, I say unto thee, until seventy times seven." I can say with confidence that thou wilt not be hundred and first time be thrust away, provided thy shame be not less, but even as great as thy fall. This is the way the Christian grows in grace. Would you have proof of it? Find it in all who have become great in Christ's school. Through stumblings and falls, they have progressed far enough to be able to say with John, in spite of the distance of the goal, the narrowness of the way, the strictness of the gate "His commandments are not grievous."

Church Members Column.

Hints to Church Members.

BY REV. JAMES BURNS, D. D.

IX.—Cautions to Young Disciples.

Dear young friends, let me urge upon your consideration, that you

(1). Do not form hasty friendships. Either for the purposes of mere society, or in business arrangements. Even in the church of which you are a member, be slow to form very intimate associates. For supposing all to be morally worthy of your esteem and confidence; yet their dispositions, spirit, temper, and habits of life, might not tend to your spiritual improvement and happiness. Many good men you may respect and love as Christians, with whom you could not live in close profitable intimacy, much less form successful business associations with them.

But especially I urge,

(2). Do not marry with unbelievers. This is not only an express scriptural commandment, but it is equally momentous from the very fitness of things. Read 2 Cor. vi. 14 to 18, and then as to Christ's law you cannot possibly doubt. But in addition to this, how do you expect the duties of married life to be carried out, and the social compact to be sanctified, if your partner is unconverted, and not living in the fear of the Lord? How will you train up your children for God and eternity?

How will you have spiritual union and fellowship with each other? How will you sympathize with one another in trouble and affliction? How can you be helpers of each other, in reference to the highest and most important of all concerns—the concerns of the soul. I would warn, entreat, beseech you to avoid this dangerous rock; and if you have any regard to your Christian consistency, spiritual character, usefulness or comfort, or it may be, even your salvation—DO NOT MARRY WITH UNBELIEVERS!

In the marriage state you will need all the help, sympathy and kindness, which the most devoted Christian can render. Thousands have had bitterly to repent—when the most sorrowful regrets were unavailing—the taking of a false step in this matter. If you go in the face of God's own command, remember, you can never consistently ask his blessing on your domestic circle. And in no matter is rebellion against God, generally more speedily followed by its natural fruit, than in such cases as these.

(3). Let me urge upon you, propriety in dress. A Christian, of all others, should treat with entire contempt the gaudy fashions of the world. Enrobed in the garment of salvation, it is beneath you to be absorbed in the subject of external decoration. Propriety in dress must be regulated by your station and means, having always a strict regard to modesty, as becoming persons who profess godliness. The apostle Paul addresses wives especially, on avoiding all costly decorations of person; and rather seeking the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. 1 Peter iii. 1-6.

A little frugality in dress would often enable professors to have much more abundant means of doing good, and being useful in the world.

(4). Be judicious in the selection of the books you read. We have now so many excellent books in every department of Christian literature, that there can be no excuse for reading foolish novels, and exciting romances.

When we can have marvellous and soul-stirring truth; why waste our means and time on unprofitable works of fiction? The book of your choice—of your daily reference and constant meditation, will of course be God's holy word; and next to that, let Christian memoirs, and select biography occupy your attention. It is almost impossible to read the lives of the wise and good, and not be wiser and better for it.

But here I need not enlarge, the travels and labors of Christian missionaries. The history of the Saviour's church. Useful expositions. The production of Christian philosophy, &c. &c. will all benefit both your head and heart. Read also our religious periodicals, that you may see what God is doing both in the church and in the world; and while thus enjoying the cheap Press of our times, see to it, that your reading is turned to practical objects, that by its influence you may be the better and more useful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. I only add here,

Be wise and economical with regard to your time, and do all things in reference to eternity. Of all talents, time is one of the most truly precious. Do not then while it away! Do not let it escape from you without its design being answered in you, by the wise improvement of its sacred moments. Live as much as possible by arrangement. Methodise your duties, and take care that the soul and the concerns of religion, have not the mere fragments of your lives.

It is Paul's exhortation—"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." And so apply time, that while you are diligent in business you may be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

The day of life is rapidly passing away. The night of death is approaching, and the realities of eternity are pressing upon you. Live, work, pray and labor, in reference to eternity. This world is not your rest—your final home. You are merely strangers on the earth, and sojourners as your fathers were. You are on your way to a better country. Seek it daily—live for it constantly. Keep it ever in view by a strong faith and a scriptural hope; giving all diligence, that at last you may be found of Christ in peace.

And now, dear reader, I commend to you these few brief hints; they have been written to furnish you with matter for serious meditation, and to lead you to a discharge of the various duties arising from your connexion with the church of Christ. I ask not to what community of Christians you belong, to the duties and responsibilities of church membership being ever the same. The church on earth while it is to be the scene of activity and labor—of toil and suffering; yet it is also designed to be as the outer court of the temple, through which the privileged worshipper, passed into the inner court; for the true Christian is to be trained and educated in the church on earth, that he may be fitted for the higher and holier services of the heavenly state. Remember, you have been called to God's eternal kingdom and glory. Then walk worthy of your exalted vocation, and live in the daily, hopeful, and joyous expectation of being one, among the countless number of glorified spirits, who with ceaseless songs of adoring praise, worship God and the Lamb in the heavenly kingdom.

And now, may the love of God our heavenly Father, in all its rich and satisfying enjoyments—the grace of the Lord Jesus in all its efficient plenitude, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, in all its consoling and transforming influences, be with you evermore!

Rules for Holy Living.

XXI.—Of Making Progress.

"Go forward."

Religion is the greatest business of life; therefore begin the day with God in prayer and reading his word—in meditation and solemn purpose.

"Let not a day go over your heads in which your hearts have no converse with God in heaven; and remember that, so far as you suffer your hearts to retire from heaven, so far they retire from a life of Christianity and peace."

Aim in all things at the glory of God, and the good of man.

Be continually striving in the daily occurrences of life to exemplify the fruit of the Spirit in holy tempers, kindness, meekness, patience, purity, truth.

Neither speak evil, nor hear evil.

If possible, get retirement at noon-day.

Watch, on all occasions, for opportunities of doing and gaining good.

Exercise habitual dependence on God, and trust in Christ every where.

Submit to trials, and use them.

Expect temptations, and resist them.

Prepare for injuries, and forgive them.

Inquire every evening if the day has been an improvement on the last.

Read these rules every morning with earnest prayer.

Religious & Secular.

The Martyr Spirit in India.

A letter from Dr. Duff, dated Calcutta, Nov. 6, and inserted in the Scotch Free Church Home and Foreign Record, gives a picture of sufferings the most harrowing, of faith the most heroic, and of deliverance the most signally providential. Our limits compel us to pass over the veteran missionary's notice of some of the "native martyrs" of Delhi, in order to give the case of Gopi Nath Nundi, an ordained native minister of the American Presbyterian Mission, stationed, till the outbreak of the mutiny, at Futehpore.

On the 24th May, the horizon looked so threatening that the magistrate of Futehpore advised all European ladies and native Christian females to leave the station for Allahabad. Gopi Nath, deeming it to be a duty to act on the advice, proceeded with his wife and family, together with the wives and children of the native converts, to that city—intending to return to his post as soon as he saw them all lodged in the fortress. On reaching Allahabad, he went on the very morning of the day on which the mutiny there broke out, and took possession of one of the mission-houses on the banks of the Jumna, at a distance of about three miles.

From this house (Mr. Owen's) on the evening of that fatal day, they were startled by the glare of conflagration in the cantonments, and the confused though somewhat distant noise of infuriated multitudes, commingling with volleys of musketry. They could not hesitate as to the cause. Cut off from the fort and the entire European community, after five or six hours of dreadful suspense, they resolved, before the dawn of next day, to attempt to cross the Jumna, and proceed to land by Mirzapore, distant about sixty miles.

They reached the opposite bank of the river about day-break, and set off on foot for Mirzapore. The fugitive party consisted of Gopi Nath and his wife, two boys, the elder of them only seven or eight years of age, the younger one about six, and an infant at the breast, who of course had to be carried—their servants in spite of every promise of ample reward, having refused to accompany them. After walking a few miles—the summer sun in a cloudless copper sky soon blazing upon them with furnace heat—their blistered feet refused to carry them any further, and they sank down fainting and exhausted. "Then," says Gopi Nath, "when in an awful dilemma, not knowing what to do, we raised our hearts to Him who is always ready to hear and grant the petitions of his believing people." Nor did they trust in vain. As they were praying, an empty cart came up, that was returning that way; and the driver, for a reasonable sum, agreed at once to take them on a few miles.

The cartman, having reached the distance bargained for, dropped them in an open field. . . . To their utter surprise, they were surrounded by the neighbouring villagers, armed with lathis (sticks with lead twisted round one end), swords, and muskets, threatening forthwith to rob and kill them. Again did they raise up their souls in fervent supplication; and again did God interpose for their deliverance. The zemindar of the place (a Hindoo) suddenly made his appearance just in time. Gopi Nath at once confessed that he and his family were Christians, and that their trust was in the God of the Christians. The zemindar—more intelligent than the armed ruffians—knowing more of the resources of the Christian British Government, and fearing a retribution, persuaded them to let their prey escape undamaged. He even procured the services of a cartman, who, for a moderate hire, agreed to take the party to Mirzapore.

During that day they made but little pro-

gress. They found shelter for the night with a Brahmin, who, though professing friendship, was overheard expressing a purpose to murder them, but this was frustrated by their keeping awake all night. Next morning the cartman was found to have absconded, and they were doomed to witness some revolting atrocities. It was not till the third day that they resumed their journey. As soon as they set out they were beset by bands of ruffians, but Gopi made no secret of his Christianity. They lost everything they had but saved their lives by running away while the ruffians were quarrelling over their spoil. Unable to reach Mirzapore, they retraced their steps to Allahabad.

"On landing (after crossing the Jumna) they were instantly encompassed with Mussulmans, who on learning that they were Christians, began to clamour for their lives. And killed there and then they inevitably would have been, had not the Lord put it into the heart of a Hindoo goldsmith to take pity on them, and receive them into his own house—while himself, his son, and brother actually stood with drawn swords at the outer gate to defend them. . . . A Maulavi, or learned Mohammedan, had, in the name of the King of Delhi, proclaimed himself acting ruler of Allahabad. And, when the goldsmith could protect them no longer, they intrusted the infuriated mob not to kill them, but to take them to their own acknowledged head, the Maulavi, that he might pass on them what sentence he pleased. On their way to the Maulavi, they were again and again on the eve of being butchered. At length, however, they did reach the Maulavi. Then followed a notable interview, which I shall give as nearly as possible in Gopi Nath's own words:—

"Maulavi—who are you? Gopi Nath—We are Christians. M.—What place do you come from? G.—Futehpore. M.—What was your occupation? G.—Preaching and teaching the Christian religion. M.—Are you a padre? G.—Yes, Sir. M.—Was it you who used to go about reading and distributing books in streets and villages? G.—Yes, Sir; it was I and my catechists. M.—How many Christians have you made? G.—I did not make any Christians, for no human being can change the heart of another; but God through my instrumentality, to the belief and profession of his true religion, some thirty or forty."

"On this, the Maulavi, lost his temper, and exclaimed in a great rage, 'Pie, fie; shame; this is downright blasphemy. God never makes Kaffirs, (Christians being such); but you, Kaffirs, pervert the people. God always makes Mohammedans; for the religion of Mohammed, which we follow, is the only true religion.'"

"G.—How many Mohammedans have you perverted to your religion? M.—I have not perverted any one; but, by the grace of God, about a dozen. Mohammedans have turned from darkness unto the glorious light of the Gospel."

"Hearing this, the Maulavi's face became as red as hot iron, and he cried out in great wrath, 'You are a rogue—a villain. . . . My sentence is, that your nose, ears, and hands shall be cut off at different times, so as to prolong your sufferings. Your wife must be dealt with in the same manner, and your children shall be taken into slavery.'"

"On this, Gopi Nath's wife, with undaunted courage, was enabled to say, 'Since we are to die, the only favour I ask for is, that we be not separated in our death; and that, instead of torturing, you order us to be killed at once.'"

"There was something in this remark which seemed to touch even the obdurate heart of the Maulavi. So, after having kept silent for a while, he exclaimed, 'Praised be God! you appear to be a respectable man; I pity you and your family. As a friend, therefore, I advise you and them to become Mohammedans. By doing so, you will not only save your lives, but be raised to a high rank.' To this Gopi's answer was, that 'he would prefer death to any inducement he could hold out to them to change their faith in Jesus Christ as the only true Saviour.'—Somewhat astonished at the calm and firm reply, and apparently incredulous as to this being the resolve of Gopi Nath's wife, he made a special appeal to her. Through God's grace at that trying moment, she staggered not in her faith, but replied, that she was ready to sacrifice her life in preference to her trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and the profession of his name."

"After further reflection, being evidently puzzled what to do—the Maulavi's final sentence was this: 'Well, out of pity, I will allow you three days to think over the matter; during these days you may have proper help in studying the Koran. At the expiry of these, I shall send for you. If you then believe and become Mohammedans, all right and good—it will go well with you. But if otherwise, your noses, ears, and hands must be cut off, according to the original sentence.' On which Gopi Nath remarked, 'It is all in vain; there is no occasion to wait so long for while God is pleased to continue his grace to us, we will not renounce our faith. And as God's grace never fails those who trust in him, it were better for you at once to order our heads to be cut off.' To this the Maulavi made no reply."

"While on the way to prison, guarded by fierce Mussulmans with drawn swords, Gopi Nath says—I raised my heart in praise and adoration to the Lord Jesus Christ, for having given us grace to stand firm in the trying hour. Repeating aloud Matt. v. 11, 12, I