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Brief View of the History of Missions.

[Continued from page 212.]

1806.—In November, 1805, the secretary received a letter from Rob. Ralston, Esq. of Philadelphia, informing him that Capt. Wickes would in the spring following sail in a ship of his for Holland; after which he would touch at London, in his way to Bengal; and that if we had any persons or goods to send, he would take them free of charge as to passage or freightage. The society having two young men on probation, Mr. Chater and Mr. Robinson, availed themselves of this kind offer to send them out. On April 12th they set sail for Serampore.

Early in January, Mr. Maylin and Mr. Fernandez, just set sail for England by way of America. Mr. Fernandez sen. came down at this time to take leave of his son, and brought with him two natives who wished to be baptized. Their names were Nund-kishore and Hedurum. On the 26th they were baptized. On the 27th, a new church was formed for Dinapore. Several of the members who resided in that part of the country, with Mr. and Mrs. Biss, were dismissed from the Serampore church for this purpose; and who chose Mr. Fernandez for their pastor.

A young man of the name of Burford, grandson of a Baptist minister of that name, a predecessor of Mr. Booth, heard Mr. Ward at Calcutt: and being deeply impressed with a sense of his sins, came to Serampore and opened his mind to Mr. Ward. He wept much. A few days after this, he seemed to find rest for his soul in the doctrine of Christ, which was recommended to him.

The principal events of the first six months of this year are the following—
Ground for the new chapel at Calcutta,

in a place called the Loll Bazar, is purchased for 7250 rupees; and after investing it in the hands of ten trustees, a shed or temporary mat-house is erected for present use—Proposals for subscriptions to the translation of the scriptures into the eastern languages are publicly advertised, and by June 14,000 rupees are subscribed—Mr. Biss has a dangerous liver complaint—Seeboo, a native brother in Jessore, dies; and, contrary, to his own desire, is burnt after the manner of idolaters. He dies declaring his faith in Christ, and recommended his wife to believe in him—Some are excluded for immorality; but others are received almost every month. Out of about forty, received within a year, four or five appear suspicious characters—The native preachers are very active, and in general very acceptable—The shed is opened in Calcutta, and many resort to it: some hearing with great attention, others mocking and loading both the missionaries and the native Christians with reproach—The converts at Kristnopore suffer much from their heathen neighbors; but bear all with patience and fortitude. During this period there appear to have been fourteen persons baptized; among whom were Mr. Ephraim Burford, the young man above mentioned, and three more from Kristnopore, the village where the New Testament was left, and read. Upon the whole, things at this time wore a very promising appearance. “We have,” says Mr. Marshman, in a letter of August 18, “the utmost reason for thankfulness with regard to the whole of our affairs. In no period has the mission appeared more promising.”

About the same time an extraordinary church meeting was called, in which the native brethren were given to understand the importance of their entering

they threatened to throw him into the fire, unless he would discover where he had hidden the supposed sum of money. He, probably hoping to escape, led them to a tree at some distance, and told them to dig underneath it. After digging some time in vain, one of them, enraged, pierced him through with a spear and shed out his bowels; another cut him across the breast! and a third cut off his head!

(To be continued.)

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FOR THE CHRISTIAN MONITOR.

Hindrances to Communion with God.

In my former remarks upon communion with God, I represented it in its higher and most cheering exercises: it must be confessed that many do not enjoy it in this degree, of the reality of whose religion, upon the whole, we entertain favourable hopes. But it is so enjoyed by some Christians; and I may add that it is a privilege generally attainable. I say *generally*; because there seem to be a few instances of persons eminent for piety & conscientious rectitude who obtain but little religious joy, or even comfort, in their earthly pilgrimage. This may be the consequence of bodily disease; of a peculiar mental constitution, tending to despondence and melancholy; or of that mysterious sovereignty of God, by which he often gives or withholds his blessings for reasons beyond our power to scrutinize. When such cases occur, they loudly demand our sympathy and our prayers. With the exception of these cases, we may safely lay it down as a maxim that when our intercourse with God runs low, and contributes little to our daily peace and happiness, it springs from our own fault, from something sinful in our conduct. The God of love does not ordinarily hide his face from his children until they provoke his displeasure by transgression. If a dark cloud prevents our vision of his smiles, it is a cloud of our own raising.

In this paper I wish to caution my fellow Christians against three or four of the most common and mischievous hindrances to communion with God. It ought to be premised that things of this sort hardly ever operate singly; they come rather in clusters, aiding and abet-

ting each other in the deplorable work of ensnaring the heart, and withdrawing it from the only true centre of its rest.

The first hindrance which I shall mention is ignorance of the Scriptures. I mean voluntary ignorance, the only kind which is culpable. It is true, and I acknowledge it with rejoicing, that neither great genius nor great reading is essentially necessary to make a Christian, and to carry a soul to heaven. But let it be remembered that the knowledge of truth is the basis of piety, that the bible is the standing medium of Divine communication, that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," under his blessing, for our spiritual improvement; and that no duty is more strongly inculcated upon us, or more happily exemplified, than that of a diligent, humble study of the sacred oracles. If then God has given us ability and opportunity for progressive acquaintance with the doctrines, precepts, and promises of his word, can we without shameful ingratitude be remiss in the pursuit of this heavenly wisdom? All other species of knowledge are mere vanity in comparison with this. And if we despise it, if we suffer the bible to lie by us a neglected book, through indolence, or the pressure of unnecessary worldly avocations, is it strange that God should chastise our folly with a cheerless, uncertain state of things in religion? I think not.

Another and a dreadful hindrance to communion with God is the habit of backsliding in our secret devotions.—Public worship has its utility; but God especially requires us to worship him in secret, as individuals, and to cherish with all our care the precious spirit of prayer which he has given us. To sink into the total omission of this duty for a length of time, can scarcely be thought compatible with even the lowest grade of experimental Christianity. At any rate, while such a condition lasts, it must preclude the possibility of ascertaining that we possess the Christian character. But where this does not take place, we are still liable to much pernicious declension in prayer, from the love of ease and the multiplied cares of the present life. We may lose our punctuality in attending the throne of grace, suffering trivial

concerns to break our appointments with God. We may perform our devotions in a cold and hurried way, without properly feeling, or even thinking, what we are doing, and in whose presence we are. We may lose our solicitude about the event of our petitions, and so miss the blessings which we ask in words, but of the value of which we are so little sensible. When once we begin to travel this downward road, how rapidly is our motion accelerated! When devotion becomes a mere formality, how irksome do we feel it to be! Our light turns to darkness; our peace and joy in God are gone; and commonly a spirit of lethargy succeeds a thousand times more to be deplored than any temporal calamity, and from which no deliverance is to be expected but by the scourging rod of our forsaken Father, no return but by the path of sorrow and brokenness of heart.

The third hindrance I shall mention is sinful shame. Under this expression I mean, at present, to include two things. One is the shyness and backwardness of Christians in regard to religious conversation among themselves, especially upon the dealings of God with their souls, and the workings of inward depravity. It is true that such conversation needs to be managed with prudence; but with prudence it may be managed. And when rightly conducted, the people of God have always found it a powerful means of growth in grace and comfort. We are told that, in ancient times, "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it: and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name."

Alas, how much are we losing of mutual edification, when we talk and talk, and talk of every thing but God, and the glorious gospel of Christ, and our immortal interests! The other thing intended under the title of sinful shame is the spirit of timidity and shrinking in regard to the visibility of our religion, and to the opposition which we are required to make to vice and impiety in the world. While we are forbidden to be vainly ostentatious in the service of God, we are commanded to be firm and steady. We are to seize every opportunity of making in-

iquity ashamed, and of giving honour to the laws of holiness. O if we had in constant exercise the zeal for God and for the salvation of sinners which we ought to feel, what abundance of good might we do, and what a striking evidence would it be to our own consciences, that the spirit of God was dwelling within us of a truth! When we are duly careful to make "our light shine before men," we may expect that they, "seeing our good works, will glorify our Father who is in Heaven; and we shall rejoice in knowing that he is our Father, and that we are the honoured instruments of promoting his glory.

I cannot close without bringing into view one more hindrance to communion with God; namely the prevailing, growing, raging thirst for riches. Is not this the besetting sin of our time and country? Do we not generally act as if we placed our heaven in the possession of wealth? What a host of anxious plannings, vexatious cares and restless activity does this groveling passion generate! How dreadfully do we see it absorb the faculties and affections of the soul, and turn them all away from God! "We cannot serve God and Mammon." It is impossible that the peace of God should dwell in a heart enslaved to the vile idolatry of gold. And supposing riches to grow in our hands; we are likely to sink into the abominable spirit of miserly hoarding, or to give the reins to profusion and luxurious indulgence.—Each of these courses, in a peculiar way indeed, but with equal certainty, tends to harden the heart, to grieve the good Spirit of God, to extinguish the sparks of Divine love, and to banish the exercise and the joys of genuine devotion. Let us hear the Apostle's solemn words upon the subject: "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." That God will rescue his own children from this tremendous labyrinth, and save them from utter destruction, I steadfastly believe; but he may be expected to do it in some method of

severe rebuke, the very apprehension of which is sufficient to make us tremble.

Every one of the mischiefs upon which I have touched, deserves an extensive treatise. But these cursory hints may be of some little use to those who read the Monitor with a sincere desire to be benefitted by its lessons.

PHILANDER.

CHRISTIAN MONITOR.

While turning over the pages of Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History the other day, the Editor's attention was, he scarcely knows how, attracted to the account which that very learned writer has given of the famous *George Calixtus*.

Calixtus was a Lutheran divine, who was born in 1586, and died in 1656 at the age of seventy. He was a man of distinguished abilities and merit; and, as the historian assures us, had few equals either in genius or learning.— This great man was made professor in the University of Helmstadt in the duchy of Brunswick, a school, which, from its foundation, had been remarkable for encouraging freedom of enquiry. Calixtus gave early intimations of a liberal spirit; expressed his dissatisfaction with the state of theology; and lamented, in a more particular manner, the divisions and factions that reigned among the servants and disciples of the same great master. He therefore turned his views to the salutary work of softening the animosities produced by these divisions, and showed the warmest desire, not so much of establishing a perfect harmony and concord between the jarring sects, which no human power seemed capable of effecting, as of extinguishing the hatred, and appeasing the resentment, which the contending parties discovered too much in their conduct towards each other. His colleagues did not seem at all averse to this pacific project. Neither Calixtus, however, nor his friends, escaped the opposition that it was natural to expect (I here use the very words of Mosheim) in the execution of such an unpopular, and comprehensive plan.— Although they had bound themselves by an oath to use their best and most zealous endeavours to heal the divisions

and terminate the contests that prevail among christians; they were warmly attacked by a host of writers, of various parties. Calixtus, conscious of his own powers, did not bear these attacks in silence. A warm controversy arose, and he, whose object had been to make peace among all protestant churches, soon discovered that the fierce spirits of every party had been exasperated against him. The protestants accused him of laying a scheme to bring them back to the church of Rome; while the Papists regarded him as the ablest of their antagonists in that age. Several "singular opinions" were also laid to the charge of this "great man, and were exaggerated and blackened, as the most innocent things generally are, when they pass through the medium of malignity and party spirit."

The controversy thus excited was kept up as long as Calixtus lived; and for a considerable time afterwards. So that even the memory of this extraordinary man was insulted in a very unworthy manner; and his friends were treated with invectives and bitter reproaches. Upon investigating the causes of these discreditable facts, it appears not that Calixtus was perfect, or free from error (for who among the sons of men can claim this character?) but that he required the various discordant sects of christians to relax in their high pretensions. He laid down this fundamental principle, that all christians held the essential doctrines of Christianity; and that of course the points on which they differed could not be of such importance as to divide the disciples of Jesus Christ in the manner in which different communions in that day were divided. And we may well suppose that having such vantage ground as this to stand on, he urged his plea with a clearness of evidence, and force of reasoning, in the highest degree offensive to those who were determined to support their own party in every thing. For it is a curious fact in the philosophy of the human mind, that when a man is resolved that he will not believe a proposition; in other words, when his deep-rooted prejudices are attacked, the more clearly you prove your point, the more you accumulate unanswerable arguments