

THE
BELIEVER'S PATHWAY.

VOLUME III.

1882.

W. SHAW, MAYBOLE, SCOTLAND.

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THE

Believer's Pathway.

No. 25.

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Vol. 3.

THE YEAR THAT IS PAST.

“**H**ITHERTO hath the Lord helped us” (1 Sam. vii. 12). Let us whom He hath saved praise His name. We have much to praise Him for—very much. We would not be as the nine (Luke xvii. 17) who never came back; we would be like the one who returned to give glory to God. “The Lord hath been mindful of us” (Ps. cxv. 12)—praise His name. “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits” (Ps. ciii. 2). God takes special pleasure in the gratitude of His people. He delights in the “sacrifice of praise”—“the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name” (Heb. xiii. 15); and we know that He has said, “Who-so offereth praise glorifieth Me”

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(Ps. l. 23). Then let us praise our God for the boundless love and grace with which He has beset our path; “Let us exalt His name together” (Ps. xxxiv. 3). And yet, while we praise Him, let us not forget to try our ways; for, it may be, we have to “*turn again* to the Lord” (Lam. iii. 40).

1881 has run its course. Silently, swiftly, it has glided into the past eternity. Its record is completed; its work is done. It has doubtless beheld the close of many a bright testimony for Christ; and no one will doubt that it has likewise seen the untimely end of many a fruitless branch. It behoves us, then, to be honest with ourselves as we thus stand on the threshold of another year. It will be profitable for each one to ask the question: How has it been with *my* soul in the year that is gone? Has it been

a year of growth? Do I find myself now to be more a separated one unto the Lord than when the year 1881 was ushered in? Do I experience a sweeter loneliness in the path of rejection with my Lord, than I did twelve months ago? Have the things of time and sense been losing their power to hold or to hinder? Have the great issues of eternity been gripping my soul as they never did before? If January 1881 found me with a desire for the perishing, does January 1882 find me travailing in birth for souls? Has it been not only a year's march nearer *home*, but a year's march nearer *God*? Am I now a pilgrim and a stranger, as I never found myself before? Is *His* approval dearer—*His* smile sweeter—*His* company more to be desired than when 1881 commenced to run its course? With many it shall be so. Who would dare to doubt it? The Lord has His faithful ones—hidden ones (Ps. lxxxiii. 3), it may be, in many ways. Yet the light of the world are they. Their feet are not weary:

their eye is not dim. Many a stumble has been theirs—many a trial—many a terrible encounter with the great enemy of souls. Yet they have *followed on to know the Lord* (Hos. vi. 3). “Faint, yet pursuing” (Jud. viii. 4), the desire of their soul has been that they might know *Him* (Phil. iii. 10). And they have not followed in vain: they have not desired in vain. The presence of Him, for whom they have counted all but loss, has cheered them on. One smile from Him has caused the desert to “blossom as the rose” (Isa. xxxv. 1). They have gone “from strength to strength” (Ps. lxxxiv. 7). “The secret of the Lord” has been with them. Through the silence of the desert place they have followed Him to hear His voice (Mark i. 36)—they have gone with Him to the mount to behold His glory (Mark ix. 2)—into the cold bleak world they have followed Him to proclaim the wonders of His despised, yet peerless name (3 John 7). A goodly band!—in ones, or twos, or threes, it may

be, yet a goodly company. With many shortcomings — much to mourn, and much to long for; still the dew of youth is theirs (Ps. cx. 3): the beauty of the Lord is upon them (Ps. xc. 17): the shout of a King is among them (Num. xxiii. 21). To Him alone be the glory. It fares well with their souls. They tarry not to sit down with the worldlings: they testify of *Him* (Ps. lxxi. 24): they press toward the mark (Phil. iii. 14). They seek not reward from men: they look not for the praise of their brethren: they wait for the Son from heaven (1 Thess. i. 10). *He* shall satisfy their every longing. *He* shall be their “exceeding great reward.”

How refreshing to contemplate such faithful ones! How strengthening to our faith to behold what the grace of our God can do! Yet there are those (how many, alas! who can tell?) whose testimony has been flickering—whose light has become darkness (Matt. vi. 23). Once they did run well (Gal. v. 7). In the joy and vigour of conversion's

early day, they would have dared and done almost anything for Christ. The hour of prayer was carefully set apart. No book then like our Father's Book. Where two or three were gathered to wait on Him, that was a hallowed spot. The world's song—the world's ways—the world's conversation, failed to allure. No company then like the company of those who love and follow Him. No story then like the story of “Christ Jesus, my Lord”—no themes like those that clustered round His name. But what a change there is now! “How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed” (Lam. iv. 1). The heart that once beat high in hope of His speedy returning, now careth little though my Lord delayeth His coming. Others now reign in that bosom where, once upon a time, Jesus was owned as Lord. The form may still be kept up; but the light and joy of *life* have passed away. How terribly sad! Yet such is the condition of many who once rejoiced in the Name that is above every

name. The hour of prayer has no attraction for them now. "The sincere milk of the word" (1 Pet. ii. 2) has been thrust aside for light and worthless literature. Secret prayer has got into a form, if even the form is there; and little beauty shines in Christ to draw their "carnal eye;" and who need wonder if they see as little beauty in His members? Alas, alas! for you, ye wanderers from the presence of our God. Of you it may well be said, in the words of the poet,

"Where are the dews that fed thee
On Etham's barren shore?
That fire from heaven that led thee
Now lights thy path no more."

Yet all is not lost. The love that found thee when in the far country is still "*His great love* wherewith He loved us" (Eph. ii. 4). The grace that saved thee while in the deep waters of conviction is still *exceeding abundant* (1 Tim. i. 14). Out of the darkness of Eden our God is bringing a brighter day than ever Adam saw. O the wonders of His grace! And out of the darkness that has enveloped *your*

path, the God of *all* grace can command the light to shine (2 Cor. iv. 6)—even a brighter light than you have ever known. Believest thou this? Then "return unto Me," saith the Lord, "for I have redeemed thee" (Isa. xlv. 22). With *grace reigning* (Rom. v. 21), no child of God need hopelessly sigh, "O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when His candle shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness" (Job xxix. 2, 3). The past can not be *undone*; but it can be *confessed* and *forsaken*. Then "let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord." O that this 1882 may be indeed a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord! O for each one to be alive to the eternal importance of being simply a surrendered one to God—a separated one for God! If 1881 has witnessed failure, let 1882 find us strong in the Lord—going on *with* God—going on *for* God, in the power of the Risen One; mortifying the deeds of the body;

and letting every spiritual Agag be hewn in pieces, that the heavenly light may shine through these earthly tabernacles. "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x. 37).

CHRISTIANITY IN PRIVATE LIFE.

NO doubt all departments of God's truth are needed to be brought before His people. Yet there is one department which we do well to keep often before us; and that is, truth that shall bear on our ways and on our walk—truth that will manifest what kind of tempers we have got, and bring to the light what kind of Christians we are in the workshop—truth that will search out our business transactions, and bear heavily on our relationships as fathers and mothers, on our behaviour as children, and on our faithfulness as servants. This is a department of truth very apt to be

overlooked; and yet, if the truth is never brought to bear on these things, what can we expect but a Christianity that is visible only in the gathering of the saints and on some special occasion? It is true that many of the Lord's people are opposed to the truth that bears on our crookedness and our worldliness. They don't want to be disturbed. They wish to hear "smooth things." But that is the very reason why truth should be proclaimed that would reveal the true state of matters. What good can result from making ourselves believe we are wonderfully consistent Christians, while there are lines of truth in the Bible which we do not want to hear, simply because they would reveal the nakedness of the land? This ought not so to be. The child of God is one who should be ready at all times to hear anything which God says in His Word. And if some brother opens up some plain practical truth about circumspect walking, let us rejoice. And if the truth follows us into the kitchen and the scullery to discover

if *there* we are a savour of Christ, let us rejoice. The simple truth of the matter is this, that it is the kitchen life—the “home” life—life in the workshop—in a word, what is called “*private life*”—it is such that is a true test of a Christian. Such is the only test by which the world judges of our Christianity. And our own relations test us in the same way. They must *see evidence* of conversion; and they are not unreasonable in this. They are entitled to see it. We say that our citizenship is in heaven: does our manner of life proclaim that we are strangers here? We profess to love the Lord: does our conversation concern Him and His kingdom? for you find that people are much given to talking of those they love, and delight to know all they can about them. We say we are following on to know the Lord. Then, is the Bible our favourite book in the house?—for the Scriptures are they which testify of *Him*. Does our care for each other—our self-denial in little things—manifest that we have the Spirit of Christ?

Is it clear from our lack of interest in the current gossip, and from our unmistakable interest in the things of God, that we are *not of the world* even as Christ was not of the world? Does our integrity in business transactions—our uprightness in little things—our going out—our coming in—does the whole tenor of our life plainly declare our heavenly calling, our country, and our home? There may, we admit, be a danger in dwelling too much on *evidences*; but we believe a far greater danger lies in neglecting them altogether. Let us test ourselves in the presence of God, and find out if we really are what we seem to be.

THE most useful work does not always bring us most to the front; but if, in humble work, we seek to “serve the Lord Christ,” He will bring it to the front in “that day.”

—:o:—

IF, by walking before God, we rise above the praise of men, we shall not be discouraged by their disapproval or blame.

THE DEMAND FOR A KING.

A NATION without a king—a people without a visible head! Such was Israel, God's ancient people, once upon a time. How odd they must have looked when compared with the nations around. Those nations had their kings; but Israel had no king—at least none whom the world could see. They owned "Him who is invisible." How helpless they must have appeared in the sight of the nations! Their condition, as a people without one visibly ruling over them, must have seemed nothing short of "foolishness" in the eyes of the uncircumcised. The faithful Israelite, no doubt, could point upward and say, "Our King, our Ruler, is yonder: *the Lord* reigns over us." Yet all this would be utterly beyond the comprehension of those who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. But Israel's eye was getting off the Lord; and, even after raising their

Ebenezer and saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (1 Sam. vii. 12), we see them in the very next chapter boldly demanding a king! *Hitherto* the Lord had helped them: *now* they were going to get some other one to help them. They did not exactly mean this: they would not have admitted it on any account. No; they would still look to the Lord all the same; *but*, in addition to that, they wanted a king. "Now," they said, "make us a king to judge us like the nations" (1 Sam. viii. 5). The anointed eye can easily perceive here that when Christians get away in soul from the Lord, there is at once a craving for something that will please the sight—a desire for an outward appearance of strength. When a company of believers get cold and carnal, there springs up a wish for something or some one to *lean upon*. The carnal eye soon wearies in looking at the things that are *not seen* and *eternal* (2 Cor. iv. 18). The flesh cannot wait upon God; nor can it understand how we are

to be ruled by one away in the heavens, who cannot be seen. In the history of the Church how painfully this has been verified. In the condition of things around how plainly it is exhibited! It may be asked, what connection can there be between Israel wanting a king, and the people of God now? There is a very striking connection; and, in these ancient records, there are very solemn lessons for us on whom the ends of the world are come. God's ancient people, Israel, were His chosen *earthly* people; and they had no king, and they had *no lack*. The Lord reigned over them, as Gideon once reminded them in a moment of their weakness (Jud. viii. 23). While they were content that the Lord should reign over them, all went well, although they must have appeared "a feeble folk" in the eyes of the nations around, and "not like other people at all." This is so far clear. Well, in the present day, God has a chosen *heavenly* people—that is ourselves, we who are saved; and, like Israel

of old, we are ruled by *One* whom the world *cannot see*. In other words, we have no visible head; and, praise His name, we have *no lack*. How similar is our condition to that of Israel of old! Indeed, the only difference seems to be that they were God's *earthly* people, while we are His *heavenly* people. We gather round One who is revealed only to faith. The carnal eye cannot see Him.* And thus we are often told: "But you have no head over you." Quite true, so far as a visible, or an "ordained," head is concerned. But we have a Head—even Him who is "Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body." Unto Him we gather—His name alone the rallying word—His person the attractive power—His Word our guide. Our coming together in such a manner, as an assembly of God's people, *must* appear "foolishness" in the eyes of the world. It *cannot* be otherwise. Scripture plainly says that "the natural man *receiveth not* the things of the Spirit of God, for they are *foolishness* unto him;

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neither can he know them, because they are *spiritually discerned*" (1 Cor. ii. 14). Now look at that company of believers gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to wait on Him, to worship Him. They are, it may be, bowed in silence before the Lord, waiting that the Spirit may distribute to each severally as *He* will (1 Cor. xii. 11). There is no chairman or president to "keep things in order." The company seems to be gathered round nobody. In the eyes of the worldlings the spectacle must be "weak and beggarly" in the extreme. But God has told us that in their eyes it shall be so. If it were *man's* order of things, man would like it; but because it is *God's* order of things, the flesh rebels against it. Such has ever been the case. Scripture and experience alike testify that God's order of things is not approved by the multitude. The cry of the people was, "Nay, but we will have a king." And the answer of the Lord was simply this: "They have rejected Me." It mattered not

how Israel might explain the matter, or justify themselves, the divine conclusion was this: "They have rejected *Me*."

Then, beloved, we need not be surprised if the "ways that be in Christ" seem strange in the eyes of the world, and even in the eyes of many who are the true seed. Be it ours to be faithful, that with undimmed eye we may set the Lord always before us, praising Him that although our position is one of seeming weakness in the sight of all around, yet our habitation is in the Rock, in whom is everlasting strength. The Lord would have us lean *only* on Him, whom having not seen we love. Thus we raise our Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." It is God who hath blessed us heretofore. To Him *alone* let us look to *bless us still*.

—:o:—

It is impossible for God to meet His saints in the way of fellowship, except in the path of obedience. When they are out of that path, He meets them with correction, in order to bring them into fellowship with Himself.

WHEN THEY SAW THE LORD.

“**T**HEN were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord” (John. xx. 20). This gives us a hint concerning that day when “we shall see Him as He is” (1 John iii. 2). I have no doubt that we, too, shall be glad when we see the Lord. His presence shall chase every shadow away. The disciples were glad when they saw Him; and yet that was but a foretaste of the joy that shall be theirs and ours when we shall see Him in resurrection glory; for who shall tell the infinite attractiveness of our Lord Jesus? Who shall declare the glories of His person? Rejoice all ye that know His name, and have put your trust in Him. “Himself” shall greet you on that happy morn. “And your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you” (John xvi. 22). Right glad we shall be, we need not fear, when we shall see the Lord.

“With what joy shall I behold Him,
Face to face my Saviour see.”

“OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH.”

THE obedience of the Perfect Servant was obedience “unto death” (Phil. ii. 8). And there is at least a sense in which our obedience is also to be “unto death.” In obeying my Lord, there are many things in which “self” would claim some “provision for the flesh” (Rom. xiii. 14). But no such claims are to be allowed for a moment. The *reckoning of death* (Rom. vi. 11) regulates the extent of my obedience. It is to be obedience “unto death”—a falling in heartily with the will of God, even although the result should be most withering to every claim of the flesh. When, in the power of the Spirit, I take my place where God has put me, as *dead with Christ*, the obedience unto death ceases to be the formidable thing which it seems to be. It is then I find that “His commandments are not grievous” (1 John v. 3); and it is then I understand something of the bles-

sedness of the man whose *delight* is in the law of the Lord (Ps. i. 2). But if I do not take my place as dead with Christ, I need not wonder if I cannot understand what it is to be "obedient unto death."

NOT BY MEASURE.

"GOD giveth not the Spirit by measure" (John iii. 34). Many have been accustomed to apply these words only to Christ, the reading in the authorised version being, "He giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." But the words "unto Him" are in italics, and should have been left out. In the revised version they *are* left out, the reading being, "He giveth not the Spirit by measure." So, beloved child of God, you see that these words are applicable to *you* as well as to Christ. Indeed, *in Him*, "all things are yours" (1 Cor. iii. 21). How good is the God we adore! How unsearchable are His riches!

TO OUR READERS.

WE have commenced the third year of the *Pathway*; and, should it please the Lord, we shall go on with it in His name. We are fully conscious how weak and imperfect has been our ministry in these pages. But, while laying no claim to be infallible, we have endeavoured to be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God, for "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." In spite of our plain speaking—and perhaps in spite of our shortcomings too—we have noted with joy that these pages have been sought after from many new quarters since the beginning of 1881. "Assuredly gathering" that this little service was "accepted of the saints," we still continue it; and, in order to have a little more room for the things "touching the King," we have slightly enlarged the paper. We have had many cheering tokens to encourage us—indeed, so many that we cannot do otherwise than go on in this little labour of love, seeking to help others as we ourselves have been helped of God, to whom be glory now and ever. Amen.

SCATTERING THE TRUTH.

We are anxious to bring the *Pathway* before as many of the Lord's people as we can; not that we desire "a circulation," but for the simple reason that if God has given us a message for His saints, we are naturally desirous that the saints should see it. Many have not yet seen the paper; and not a few, we believe, need only to see it, to wish to have it regularly. We should like this number well scattered among the Lord's people; and if you wish copies for that purpose, just let us know, as we have printed an extra supply for this month.

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THE


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HATH CHOSEN THEE.

NE night, as somewhat worn and weary, I threw myself into "the big chair," I found, close to my hand, a little almanac. "Ah," I said, "I wonder if there is anything here for me: I'll see what is the text for to-day." So, turning up the month and the day, I found these words: "*The Lord thy God hath chosen thee*" (Deut. vii. 6). With what living power these words came home to my heart! Had I not read them before? Yes, I had doubtless read them more than once since the day I was born of God. But it seemed as if I had never *heard* until that time that the Lord my God had *chosen me*. "Then I am a chosen one," I said; "praise His name: the Lord has

done it: it is all of God—it is all of grace." That single truth, carried home by the power of the Spirit, threw contempt on all my endeavours to get on better terms with God. I was *already* in His favour. He had *chosen me*. "Why," I said, "He is on my right hand, and on my left hand, and a wall of fire round about. Within the circle of His everlasting love, it is mine now to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Perhaps you say the passage refers to Israel. It does; but it is true in a far higher sense of the child of God. "Ye have not chosen Me," said our Lord, "but I have *chosen you*" (John xv. 16). Other Scriptures came into my memory: "I am the Lord your God, which have *separated you*" (Lev. xx. 24). "Ah," I said, "I am a *separated* one, as well as a *chosen* one; and

God has done it all. It is not a thing that is *to be* done. God has chosen me already: He has separated me already. It is now mine to praise Him that I am chosen, and simply to *remain* what He has made me—a separated one to Himself." In that hour I found that the Lord God had given unto my Lord "the tongue of the learned," that He "should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary" (Isa. l. 4). "The word in season" was to me like the cake which Elijah found beside him in the wilderness (1 Kings xix. 8): I have gone in the strength of it for many days. God has chosen and separated me. *In Christ* I have been chosen: *in Him* I have been separated. And, beloved fellow-believer, God has in like manner chosen *you*, and separated *you*. Have you ever considered it? Have you ever been struck with wonder at the grace which chose *you*—not on account of anything in you, else "grace is no more grace" (Rom. xi. 6). Israel had nothing to boast

of, for it is written, "The Lord did not set His love upon you nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people" (Deut. vii. 7). And we have nothing wherein to boast. The Lord hath chosen us.

But He hath chosen us for a purpose: note it well—*for a purpose*; and it is this: "That we should be *holy, and without blame before Him in love*" (Eph. i. 4). And, in order to effect this, what has the God of all grace done? He has *separated* us unto Himself. At one stroke, so to speak, God has done the *separating* as well as the *choosing*. And he has done it by *crucifixion*. The words He puts into your mouth, beloved, and into mine, are these: "*I am crucified with Christ*" (Gal. ii. 20). Again, it is not a thing that is to be done: it is not a process to be gone through. It is an accomplished fact. "*I am crucified with Christ.*" God tried the Adam nature in every way; and, finding in it "no good thing," it has been

condemned and executed. And now in the Cross we see *death to the Adam nature*. "Our old man *is crucified with Him*" (Rom. vi. 6). So the moment we believed on the Son and were born of God, that moment we were introduced into a new order of things entirely. That moment we became members of a new family—the heavenly family, and found ourselves in Christ, the last Adam, on the footing of sonship and nearness to God. Why? Because *in Christ*. And thus we find ourselves separated unto God by nothing less than *crucifixion with Christ!* What love shines forth in such a separation! May God in the power of the Holy Ghost give us to understand what it means—to see the issues that are involved. What more has a crucified man got to do with anything that is "of the world"—"the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life?" (1 John ii. 16). Can you conceive of a crucified man coming down from the Cross to enjoy the world for a little, and then go back to the Cross

again? Yet, if you are a child of God, you are a crucified man. To all the allurements of the evil one we can only say, "I am crucified with Christ." God has separated me to Himself; and such has been His great love that between the world and me He has put nothing less than "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14). The Cross stands between me and the world. Shall I trample over that Cross to get back to the weak and beggarly elements left far behind? How can I? How shall I trample over that barrier of grace to get back to the things from which God has once and for ever separated me? "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" (Rom. vi. 2). Has my God not chosen me?—has He not separated me? Praise His name, He has. Am I not crucified with Christ? Verily I am: God declares it. Then let me desire only to remain where He has put me. Chosen, and separated, and crucified; yea, and

dead and risen in Christ Jesus, to be a peculiar treasure unto my God!—to show forth the virtues of my Lord! What dignities and privileges are ours! How thorough and complete is the separation with which we have been separated! Shall we seek to make it less? Shall we attempt by our reasonings to make it out that there is no Cross between us and the world? Nay, rather shall we not praise our God for having hedged us in by His grace on every side? and shall we not seek by His grace to manifest in all our ways that we are “a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth?” (Deut. vii. 6). “And ye shall be holy unto Me; for I the Lord am holy, and *have severed* you from other people, that ye should be Mine” (Lev. xx. 26).

—:o:—

ONE cannot easily overwork, so long as spiritual joy fills the soul. You cannot well overheat a well-oiled axle. Working without power does the harm. Be filled with the Spirit, and hard work is easy.

ELECTING A MINISTER.

IS it right to elect a minister? and, if it is not right, how do we get ministers? These are questions that have exercised the minds of many; and we make no apology for bringing the light of God's truth to bear upon the subject. Whatever things our Father has written for our instruction have a concern for us; and not the least of these things is the truth concerning *them that are over us in the Lord* (1 Thess. v. 12). Is it, then, according to Scripture for us to elect one to be our “minister”? Now let us get rid of all preconceived notions; and let us calmly see if the current opinions on the subject will stand the light of Scripture. It is quite the same to us what the truth is about the matter. If Scripture says we are to elect one to be over us in the Lord, let it be done, and done thoroughly. But, if Scripture teaches otherwise, let us give a hearty “amen” to whatever the Lord says. The popular idea is that we should certainly elect a minister, and have it done by voting, much in the same way as a member of parliament is elected. Many of God's people have come to believe this is right,

simply because the multitude do it ; and you will find even children of God attempting to prove from Scripture that the election of the minister is God's order of things. We ask to be shown it in the Word, and we are pointed to the case of Matthias (Acts i. 26), and that of the seven "deacons" (Acts vi. 3). This is all the Scripture we have heard quoted to prove the election of a minister. Indeed, these are the two pillars on which the supposed doctrine rests.

As to the case of Matthias, it affords no ground whatever for electing one to be over us in the Lord. Matthias was not *over* the other eleven ; and it is noteworthy that, after the mention of his name here, we are not aware that it ever afterwards occurs in Scripture. The eleven did not *appoint* him. They simply cast lots, according to Jewish custom ; "and the lot fell upon Matthias ; and he was *numbered* with the eleven apostles." He was not "ordained." That word has no right to be in the passage at all. The revisers saw this clearly, and, in the revised version, it is dropped out, the reading being simply, "must one become a witness" (Acts i. 22). So we see that Matthias was only *a witness* ; he was only *numbered* with

the eleven ; and he was certainly *not over them in the Lord*. The election of a minister, therefore, utterly fails to be proved from this Scripture.

Let us pass on now to "the election of the deacons," as some call it, in Acts vi., although the word "deacon" does not occur in the whole chapter. Well, on carefully reading the passage over, no one can possibly see anything else there than what *is* there already ; and that is the selection of *seven* men to "serve tables"—to distribute the money which had been collected for the poor of the flock. There is nothing whatever there about *electing one* to minister the Word. Indeed there is a positive contrast shown between "the ministry of the Word" and "serving tables." "It is not pleasing" (revised version, margin) "that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word" (Acts vi. 2-4). This is an arrangement to which we cordially say "amen," because it is *in*

the Word. The passage before us proves the selection of certain individuals to distribute the money for the poor. The divine wisdom of this is apparent; for, in the serving of tables, the church must be satisfied as to those who distribute the church's money. But we entirely fail to see *the election of the minister* here. We see *seven* men looked out; but we can find no trace of *one* man elected. Moreover, the seven men were looked out to *serve tables*, a thing which the Lord puts into actual contrast with *the ministry of the Word.* The simple truth of the matter is, that *seven* men were chosen to attend to the poor; "and therefore," many say, "we have Scripture to elect *one* man to be over us in the Lord!" Can any one, calmly reading the passage, accept of such a conclusion? Impossible. There is not a word in the whole passage about the election of the minister—not a single word. Such election, then, finds no countenance whatever from the sixth of Acts; and we have seen that it is utterly unsupported by the first of Acts; and these two Scriptures are the strongholds of all who advocate the election of the minister.

But let all Scripture be searched,

and let such election be shown to us in the Word of God. Some may be startled when they are told that *there is not such a thing in Scripture.* Very well. Search and see. If there is such a thing in God's Word as the election of the minister, nothing will be easier than to point out where it is.* The practice of electing a minister finds great favour with the world. The world enjoys nothing better than a contested election, whether it be a political election or a religious election. The election of a minister is quite in the world's line of things; and no one is so eager in canvassing as the poor unconverted worldling. If the election of a minister was according to God's order of things, would the world be so fond of it? Nay, verily. The carnal mind is enmity against God. How, then, can an unconverted man

*"Can you help us to elect a minister, Mr. —?" said Dr. —. "No," I replied, "for there is not such a thing as the election of the minister in the Word of God." "Then," said the doctor, "you don't get *your* ministers in that way?" "No," I answered, "we get them in the same way as Israel got David to be their shepherd. The Lord gave David. David was not the one the people wanted. *Saul* was the people's man. *Eliab* was Samuel's man, but God rejected both. *David* was God's man, although the last man the people would have thought of." How slow many are to see that when we let the Lord provide for us, and when we receive thankfully what *He* gives, we have all things and abound!

have a liking for God's order of things? It is simply *impossible*. God's Word declares it. We are therefore not surprised that, in the election of the minister, you see men dead in sins—strangers to the new birth—getting enthusiastic over *their* man—the one who is to be *their* minister. But if that minister went to them and told them plainly of their state before God, and that they could *not* worship God because they are dead, they would turn round and say to him, "We don't want *you!*"* Nevertheless, children of God can hold close counsel with these unconverted men, as to getting their man in! Light and darkness have communion together. This is appalling. Might not such things tell every one

* Should these lines meet the eye of any unsaved friends, they will kindly remember that we simply state what is plainly revealed in God's Word concerning them. It would be entirely a mistaken kindness, on our part, to flatter them that they are what they are not. Being strangers to the new birth, they are totally unfit to worship God. They are dead in sins (Eph. ii. 1); and it is written, "The dead praise not the Lord" (Ps. cxv. 17). How dare we tell them they may act as members of God's family, when they have never been "*born from above*" into that family? We would testify thus to the dearest friend on earth, if unconverted to God. We have not a few dear unsaved friends; many most respectable, and even amiable; and we would not hurt their feelings needlessly. But we must tell them plainly that before they can send up a single note of praise to God, *they must be born the second time.*

who has been born of God, that the whole thing is of the world, and that the world loves its own? Beloved brethren, you who are in such systems of religion, why should your righteous souls be vexed, as many of you are vexed, in such matters? Are such things not sufficient to show you that you should not be there at all? But look at the matter simply in the light of God's truth, and see if the things we have spoken are according to that truth. We are affectionately desirous of you. The things we have spoken are spoken in loving faithfulness, because you are dear unto us, by whatsoever name you may permit yourselves to be called. We long to see you—we do not conceal it—we long to see you gathered out of every sect and denomination under the sun, and to behold you and ourselves gathered together around the risen though rejected Christ, that we may be one people and our name one. Why should it not be so? Has *God* divided us into denominations? Ah no. Is it not His will, and according

We may say, in passing, that it does not mend the matter for some person, such as a patron, to do the electing, while the sheep stand helplessly by and take any one whom *man* may provide for them. Such a system shuts out God as entirely as election by the people.

to His Word, that we should be together around our Lord Jesus? You admit that it is. Then why are we not together? Yea, rather let it be asked, why should we remain another week separated from each other? Why should you allow yourself to be bound to a system of religion by principles which will not stand the light of God's Word. Now, mark you, we believe in *the church*; but it is the church of *living* stones indwelt by the Holy Ghost. We believe in *ministers*; but it is in ministers of *God's choosing* and of *God's giving*. The Lord gives evangelists, pastors and teachers (Eph. iv. 11); and our part is simply to *receive* them, but not to *choose* them. We believe in *order*; but it must be order according to God's Word. And we believe that God's people should be *one*. We do not want to "pull down the churches," as the phrase goes. They will *go on to the end*; for the world must have its religion. But the world and its religion can get on capitally without us; and you know well they can have their own way in spite of the remnant of God's people scattered through them. But, apart from that, do you never reflect how you are helping these poor Christless souls

on in the awful delusion that they are worshipping God? You have fellowship with them—you hand them the bread and the cup; and you *know* they do not even profess to be *born again*! If you go up to them to have a little talk about your Lord Jesus, they cannot bear the subject. No. How could they? Then why help them on another day in the delusion that they are worshipping God, when the very Bible in their hand says their mind is enmity against God; and that their sacrifices are abomination unto Him? You say you cannot help them being there and sitting at the communion. That is only the sad truth; but you can help *yourself* being there. Surely such a plea will not avail to keep the members of Christ still rent asunder in this place? If *our* position is unscriptural, we only ask to be shown it. If God's Word declares we should be together *with you*, we are ready to go to you to-morrow, wherever that may be. We only ask to be shown it in the Word of God. But if the things we have spoken are according to God's Word, we beseech you let nothing deprive our risen Lord of the joy of seeing, in some little measure, an answer to that wonderful petition of His—"that

they all may be ONE," "that the world may believe." But it is an individual matter: the call of God is an individual call. Tarry not for others who may be waiting on circumstances. "What is that to thee, follow thou Me." Two or three gathered in *His* Name is a sufficient number to have Him in the midst. A thousand would have no more than "Himself." Thus gathered, according to His Word, we have the blessing; yea, we have the Blessor.*

CHURCH TRUTH.

WE have sometimes heard it said, "I don't concern myself about church matters, or about church truth." And we are sorry to say that it is looked

* The above article has no doubt a special local bearing. Yet it will be found to be "present truth" in almost every corner to which the *Pathway* travels. Thousands of the Lord's dear people are passing their days here bound by they know not what to mere worldly systems of religion. Young converts, too, are continually coming up, with but hazy ideas on the very subjects that may mould the whole channel of their future life here. In such circumstances we feel the crying need for no uncertain sound. As faithful stewards we endeavour to give this. For want of space we have done little more than touch the question, "How do we get ministers?" But, the Lord willing, this, and articles on kindred subjects which concern the Lord's people in these times, will duly appear.

upon by some as a sign of a higher spirituality, when we rise *above* paying attention to church truth. But we do not want to rise higher than God's Word, and thus be wise "above that which is written." Paul was one who concerned himself very much with church truth and church affairs; and yet no one can say that *his* spirituality was of an inferior order. He took a remarkable interest in the affairs of the Church at Corinth, for instance. Nor would it have been a sign of a higher spirituality had he refused to be identified with such believers, and left them to shift for themselves on the plea that he did not concern himself with church truth. But it was not so with Paul. And it is something wonderful that in 1 Cor., 14th chapter—a chapter which deals so entirely with church truth—the apostle, as if with prophetic eye, seems to have foreseen the rise of a spirituality that would make light of church truth; for he takes up the question of "spirituality," and boldly says: "If any man think

himself to be a prophet, or *spiritual*, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (ver. 37). And what were the things he was writing to them? In that very chapter he was giving them a picture of the church "come together into one place." He is showing how there is liberty for the Holy Ghost to speak through whomsoever *He* will. In the same epistle he is speaking of the Lord's Supper—discipline in the church—the evil of divisions—glorying in men—holiness of life—walking in love, &c. Then Paul says to those who think themselves to be spiritual: "Acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." This is surely convincing to any mind that is willing to bend to the Word of God. We confess we view with concern the growing tendency to drift away from the truth. And as this tendency increases, there grows with it a fleshly compassion for the things which God's Word declares to be evil—the same compassion

that paralyzed the arm of Saul, and called "good" the things which God had condemned (1 Sam. xv. 9). From this may the Lord deliver us. Whether it be "separation truth" or "practical truth," as the terms go—whether it be "church truth," or "truth that strikes at the root of our crooked ways"—let us *rejoice in the truth*. We may find a more comfortable path than the path which is according to truth. We may find Christian associations with which it will be more "respectable" to be connected than with a few weak saints gathered simply in the name of the Lord Jesus. But may He forbid we should be found comfortable in any other path than *His* path. And if His path has its trials and discomforts, and even its "church troubles," we know we have God with us in the troubles. Thus we would go on, walking *in the truth*, and seeking, with *a little strength*, to *keep His Word* and *not to deny His name*.

—:o:—

"WHOM having not seen, ye love."

IN THE WAY.

“**I** BEING *in the way*, the Lord led me” (Gen. xxiv. 27). When we are “in the way,” we may always depend on the Lord leading us. And His way is “the right way” (Psa. cvii. 7). It is “the way of righteousness” (2 Peter ii. 21), and “the way of truth” (Psa. cxix. 30). It is “the way where light dwelleth” (Job xxxviii. 19), and “the good way” (Jer. vi. 16), although the way which some call heresy (Acts xxiv. 14). It is “the way of holiness” (Isa. xxxv. 8), and “the way of understanding” (Prov. ix. 6). In short, it is *the way* (Jer. xlii. 3). Therefore, let us “hate every false way” (Psa. cxix. 128), and commit our way unto the Lord (Psa. xxxvii. 5); for what have we to do in the way of Egypt, or in the way of Assyria? (Jer. ii. 18). Let us wait on the Lord, and keep His way (Psa. xxxvii. 34), and we shall find that He is the Lord which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters. Yea, saith He, I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen (Isa. xliii. 16-20). “The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way” (Psa. xxv. 9).

NOT LONELY.

“**Y**OU must be lonely here, Mrs. —,” I said, as I entered her humble dwelling; “you are all by yourself now, you see.” “O no, sir,” she said, “*Jesus is here*, and He’s fine company.” We talked, during the little time at my disposal, about the things pertaining to the Kingdom; and I left, feeling I had been in high quarters that day. The world calls her poor; but she is a daughter of the King.

NEW SERIES OF LITTLE BOOKS.

THE two little books, “In the Desert with God” and “This do in remembrance of Me,” have been out of print for some little time, owing to the special demand for them. We are glad, however, to say that our friends, “The Publishing Office, 40 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow,” have kindly reprinted them. At same time they have added other two little books, viz., “The Fulness of God” and “The whole Word of God.” The price (as before) is 4d. per dozen, or 2/ per 100, post free.

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THIRSTING AFTER GOD.

“**B**LESSED are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled” (Matt. v. 6). It is a sure sign of life, and even of growth, when, among the Lord’s people, there is a hungering and thirsting after God. The dead do not hunger and thirst after Him. You do not hear an unconverted one coming up and saying, “I tell you, brother, we must have more of God: suppose we get down on our knees and tell Him about things, and have just a real blessing.” That would be quite out of the world’s line of things. But it is an evidence that we know David’s Lord, when, like David, we find ourselves saying, “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God”

(Psa. xlii. 1). To find ourselves in such a condition is in itself a blessing; for we know we shall be filled—yea abundantly satisfied—with the fatness of His house (Psa. xxxvi. 8). For whatever tokens we observe of this soul-thirst for God, let us praise Him who has stirred us up thus to call upon His name. We would not slight the riches of His grace by asking what merely goes by the name of “a blessing,” which too often means a happy meeting to-day, while next day we are as crooked and wilful and selfish as ever. No. We want far more than that. We must have something better than “a little reviving in our bondage” (Ezra ix. 8), which the great adversary would persuade us is all we can expect down here. We must not be content with anything less than *what God has provided for us*. And what

has He provided for us? All the fulness that is in His Son Jesus Christ our Lord—a fulness, be it noted, which is *for us*. The God of all grace has declared it. “Of His fulness have all we received” (John i. 16). But it is the pleasure of our God that we should be *filled*. Did you ever ponder that word, *filled*? The vessel may be small, or it may be large. But, if it is filled, one thing is clear: there is room for nothing more. O, but the adversary does not like this. It leaves nothing for him! He would fain have kept the flocks and herds in Egypt; but the Lord said, “There shall not *a hoof* be left behind” (Exod. x. 26).

Filled! How like the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! His grace would leave nothing for the enemy to work upon. Filled with Himself. The mere professor does not like this. Such a one can go with you a certain length, but not a step further. Let him have a certain amount of the world or the flesh, and he will give a certain amount of attention to the things

of eternity. But to be filled with the power of the Holy Ghost is further than he has ever reckoned upon; and, like the young man in Matt. xix. 22, he goes away sorrowful, for he has great possessions; but they are not *up yonder* where Christ is.

And the worldly-minded believer does not care about being “filled.” Ah! no. It leaves room for nothing. It sweeps the fleshly floor as if with fire from heaven: it burns up everything. It leaves no room for the worldly conversation—no room for the gossip of the neighbourhood—no room for foolish talking and jesting—no room for that jocular way of speaking of God’s work—no room for that light way of quoting His Word—no room for keeping unconverted company—no room for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. But why enumerate? No room for the thousand and one things which God declares are *not* of the Father but *of the world*. “Ah,” say many, “too narrow a path for me. Why,

you leave me with nothing." Nay, my brother. You are left with Christ, and His unsearchable riches.

But surely there are those on whose ear that word "filled" shall fall with a different cadence. Surely there are many such. These are thirsty ones—longing ones. They long to launch out into a deeper deep than they have experienced heretofore. They feel the leaden weight of the atmosphere around. They perceive in themselves a tendency to drift with the current. The days are evil, and the time is short. How shall they impart new life into the little circles in which their lot is cast? How shall they inspire with fresh ardour the fainting ones? The answer is ready to hand: *by being themselves filled with the Holy Ghost.* Is it not so, beloved? *Filled!* That meets our case: does it not? Our Father would not have us do with less. The question then that remains is simply this: Are *we* content to do with less? Are we satisfied to go on from day to day, and week to

week, *not filled?* Can it be that we are not even hungering and thirsting after God? If such be the case, it is high time to awake out of sleep: it is high time to cry out *unto* God, that He may cause us to cry out *for* God. What avails it if His power is not energising us, and making manifest in us a savour of Christ in whatever spot we dwell? Let us get out of the usual line of things, if but for a moment, to stand still and enquire, "Is the power of the Lord with us?" Are we filled with His fulness? or are we filled with some other thing? Whereabouts are we? Such are profitable questions, though sometimes uncomfortable ones. The path of those who find their all in Christ may be called a narrow path. Be it so. Faith calls it the wide domain of the fulness of God. While we praise God for blessing in days past, and a desire awakened in the hearts of many, let us call upon Him, as with one voice, to disturb the spiritual slumber that prevails.—

"Awake soul-thirst for Thee."

REFRESHING TIMES.



LORD, in mighty power come down
 Thy favour'd heritage upon :
 Break in upon the sleep of death ;
 Arouse by Thine Almighty breath
 Each slumb'ring one.

O Lord our God, make haste, we cry ;
 Endue with power from on high :
 Thy saints awaken by Thy Word,
 And let Thy voice again be heard
 Ere this our day be done.

It is not small things we would crave—
 It is a mighty tidal wave
 Of Thine, own Spirit's power,
 We seek of Thee, O God of grace ;
 Then here, within this very place,
 Begin this very hour.

We hear them tell of times gone by—
 Of happy days—of cloudless sky ;
 And bright, they say, Thy candle shone
 Thine own dear ones, O Lord, upon.

But ah ! the once bright gold is dim ;
 And many a heart that once in Him,
 The God-exalted One,
 Found treasures that no tongue may tell,
 Now sees in Thee, Immanuel,
 But little of that beauty rare
 That made Thy love beyond compare—
 That once the heart had won !

And many, Lord, who are Thine own,
 Their birth-right place have scarcely known :
 All dear to Thee, and yet they pine,
 Sever'd by laws that ne'er were Thine :
 In vain, alas ! where worldlings meet,
 By dim tradition's torch they seek
 The man-rejected One !

Yes, Lord, the darkness deepens fast ;
 Time's little hour will soon be past ;
 E'en now Thy power we fain would see—
 Power that shall set thy pris'ners free,
 A mighty praising band,
 Filled by Thyself, to live—to shine—
 To witness of Thy grace divine—
 In paths unknown to earthly fame
 To spread a savour of Thy name—
 Adown this weary land.

Then, Lord, in mighty power come down
 To vict'ry great Thy saints among ;
 Hast Thou not brighter days in store
 Than ever we have seen of yore ?
 And let us, Lord, to prove Thee true,
 Bring empty vessels not a few,
 Just to be filled by Thee.
 O send a Pentecostal time—
 The praise—the glory all be Thine ;
 Yea, by the Spirit of our God,
 Come in refreshing, like a flood—
 'Tis such we long to see.

MAYBOLE, 13th February, 1882.

HOW DO WE GET MINISTERS?

WE could have said a great deal more last month on the unscriptural nature of the current ideas on this subject; but space permitted us only to select a few prominent points, which a dear brother, who "does not see with us," frankly admitted to be "startling facts." This is so far encouraging; while it is also encouraging to know of our remarks on the whole question being taken in good part. It is no easy matter to write on such controverted subjects without offending some one. But we try to avoid hurting the feelings of any one. We trust we have written, and shall write, on such subjects in a way which we might call the "more excellent way" (1 Cor. xii. 31). No doubt some dear brethren may consider the more excellent way would be never to mind these subjects at all. But they will kindly bear with us when we venture to think otherwise. It is not a mere handful of God's people that are concerned in this question of ministry. An enormous number of the saints, scattered through the whole world, are affected by it. If the election of the minister is right, it

cannot be wrong to look into the matter, so that the Lord's people may see the Scriptural authority which there is for the same; while, if such election, and "the ministerial office" altogether, is unsupported by Scripture, then the sooner the Lord's people know it the better. But we must now consider how we get ministers. The answer to this is very simple: *God gives them*; and our part is simply to receive them (Eph. iv. 11). The unsaved often stumble at the simplicity of God's Word, when told that God *gives* eternal life, and they have simply to *receive* it. But God's people stumble in the same way at the simplicity of His Word in many things. Taking the generally understood meaning of the word "minister" to be a shepherd or pastor of God's flock, we find the election of the minister to be (as some one has said) nothing less than *the sheep choosing the shepherd*—an unheard of thing, truly. Yet this is the very thing that goes on around. There is no getting past such a conclusion. But the Lord knows far better what we need than we do ourselves; and "the Lord shall give that which is good" (Psa. lxxxv. 12). He gave apostles. Now every one admits that we have simply to *receive*

apostles : we cannot elect them. But the same verse which tells us that God gave apostles also says, He gave evangelists, pastors, and teachers. So if you have simply to receive the one, you have simply to receive the others. But let us look at a little picture, in which God's plan of things is observed. Yonder, for instance, is a company of believers gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus. Among them there are, say, three or four brethren in whose heart God has put a care for the flock. These three or four are to be seen visiting the flock, feeding, nursing, exhorting. God has given them the *shepherd heart*; and they are doing *shepherd work*. Can any one fail to see that such are God-given shepherds? The colleges, it may be, are ignorant of them, and the presbyteries would fail to acknowledge them; but, as touching such pastors, who shall deny that their works bear witness of them? (John v. 36). God has given us marks whereby we are to know them that are over us in the Lord; and *His shepherds are known by their work*, as it is written: "Know them which *labour among you*, and are over you in the Lord" (1 Thess. v. 12); and again, "Submit yourselves, for they *watch for your*

souls" (Heb. xiii. 17). Could anything be more convincing to show how we are to know God's shepherds? He never says, "Know them whom you have appointed, who were chosen to be ministers"—not a word of that kind. God deals in realities—not with titles and positions of our creating. His shepherds are easily known—not by a title to their name, nor by their peculiar dress, nor because they were chosen by the people, but simply because their shepherd character is evident from their labours among the saints.* The Lord may give many shepherds, or He may give few; yea, He may try our faith, as He did Abraham's (see Gen. xii. 10), that we may have our eye on Himself alone. But better to be found

* While we thus speak, we do not wish to wound any one who may find his description only too faithfully depicted here. We believe that among clergymen there are to be found some who are God-given shepherds—men of God, who spend and are spent for Him. Our love goes out toward all such. But, be it noted, *God* made them shepherds. They are not shepherds because of certain years of learning, or because they were ordained. No. They are shepherds *in spite of* all the forms that have surrounded them, and man's appointments could not make them anything more or less than God had made them. Yet we cannot but mourn to see these dear brethren upholding distinctions of clergy and laity, which the Lord never made in His Church. We mourn to see these godly men alluring by their very devotedness, to systems of religion, to which we find nothing whatever to correspond in the Word of God; and from which *shepherd* as well as *sheep* should alike depart.

in confessed weakness keeping His Word than, in merely affected strength, to be able to say, "That is our minister—the one whom we chose." The flesh ever desires a fair show, and to have an imposing outward appearance of power—something which will be pleasing in the eye of the world. But if we are acting according to God's Word, we will not find it so. As Christ is as a root out of a dry ground to the carnal eye, so also are "the ways that be in Christ." But the whole record of Scripture is directly opposed to the choosing of shepherds; and the wonderful thing is that so many of God's people do not see it. There was Moses for instance. God gave him. The people were never asked what they thought of him. And when the people cried, "Let us make a captain," they did not want "this Moses," but some other one; and it was in order that they might *return into Egypt!* (Num. xiv. 4). Look at Gideon, of a *poor* family in Manasseh, and the *least* in his father's house (Jud. vi. 15). Would the people ever have thought of electing *him*? Yet he was the very one whom God chose and fitted as the leader of Israel at that period. Look at David—and surely all will see in him a type of

the true shepherd. Had there been an election in Israel at that time, would they have chosen David? Nay. The lad with the few sheep in the wilderness could not have compared with the warlike Saul—from his shoulders and upward higher than any of the people (1 Sam. ix. 2). Even David's own brethren rejected him, as was the case with Joseph. Yet the youngest son of Jesse was the chosen of God!—the shepherd whom the Lord provided for Israel. Then just look at King Ahab's four hundred prophets; and we know they pleased him well. But the one whom *God* gave (Micaiah) was rejected; and, because he testified for God, he was sent to prison! (2 Chron. xviii. 26). But pass on to New Testament times. Look at Paul. Hear him say, "All they which are in Asia be turned away from me" (2 Tim. i. 15). Had there been an election there at that time, "all they which are in Asia" would have said with one voice, "We do not want Paul." Yet the Lord gave Paul; and could they have chosen a better shepherd? Surely nothing further is needed to show how thoroughly opposed to Scripture is the election of the minister. So, beloved, let us just act out what we find in God's Word. And,

if we do so, we shall be found gathered to the one Supreme Name of our Lord Jesus. And it will not be long till we find out who are God's shepherds. As a dear brother said, "Praise God, I know who are over me in the Lord: I know who are after me when I go astray, and who warn, and comfort, and exhort me: I have no difficulty in knowing them." That is how the Lord says we are to know them. It may be argued that any one may *say* he is a pastor. Quite true. But God does not command us to honour them who *say* they are pastors. The saints are never called upon to acknowledge those who merely *profess* to be shepherds. It is those who *labour among you—who watch for your souls—who have spoken unto you the Word of God*—that we are to know as over us in the Lord. God's shepherds are to be esteemed very highly in love *for their work's sake*—note that, FOR THEIR WORK'S SAKE (1 Thess. v. 13). This makes the matter extremely simple. And if certain brethren, fitted of God, are going out and in among the saints, building up and guiding the flock, God says, "*Esteem them very highly in love.*" We may be told that these men were never ordained. Ordained by whom? we

ask. By man? We admit it. They were not ordained by man. The Lord *gave* them. It may be said that this looks very like ordaining one's self. Very well. If such is God's order of things, why should we grumble? We would say, however, that it looks very like doing what God qualifies and constrains one to do. Take the house of Stephanas for instance (1 Cor. xvi. 15). They addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints. The word here rendered *addicted* is the same word as is rendered *ordained* in Rom. xiii. 1. It may be asked why was it not rendered *ordained* here? Simply because it would "open the door" for ordaining one's self to the ministry of the saints. But if the Lord has opened the door, why should His people not know that it is open? The Revisers seemingly saw that something was needed; and they render the passage, "have *set* themselves." Now what does the Lord say respecting the house of Stephanas who thus *set* themselves, or *ordained* themselves, to the ministry, without any one ordaining them? He says, "Submit yourselves unto such."

We have thus endeavoured briefly to touch upon a few more of the outstanding points which concern us

as companies (when shall we say *as a company?*) of the Lord's people. And now, beloved brethren, we commend you to God and to the Word of His grace—not to God and to confessions of faith, or to what you have been accustomed to believe; but simply to God and to the Word of His grace (Acts xx. 32). And "whatsoever He saith unto you, do it" (John ii. 5).

HONESTY IN SMALL THINGS.

"JOHN, you might fetch me up some of these big nails with you at dinner-time." John was a joiner; and it was meant that he should put some of *his employer's nails* in his pocket, and bring them up. But John was a child of God, and had been taught out of God's Word to "steal no more." Although many a one would not call *that* stealing, yet it was quite clear to John that he would be taking what was *not his own*. At dinner-time John produced the nails, which were declared to be the very thing that was wanted. "But of course," said John, "I got these in Mr. So-and-so's *the ironmonger's* and *paid for them*." But this was not what had been intended, and all the thanks John got

was, "*What a simple fellow you are!*" Yes, John was "simple concerning evil," as all God's people ought to be. Beware of drawing your pen through the word "steal," and writing "take," because it is a *small thing*, which the world calls "neither here nor there." Taking a "small thing" which is not our own, is "stealing." Faithfulness in that which is *little* was plainly taught by the Lord Himself. He called the servant a *good* servant, to whom He said, "Thou a has been faithful in a *very* little; have thou authority over ten cities" (Luke xix. 17). When you see a man faithful in little things, you can trust him to any extent. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much" (Luke xvi. 10). This reminds us of a believer who was first aroused to concern about *separation*, in rather a strange way. He was in a public work where much mahogany wood was used; and every night, just before the work closed, he was astonished to see not only the world but professing Christians filling their pockets with little blocks of the wood: a thing which they would never have attempted had their master been standing by. The

brother referred to saw that a separation of some kind was urgently needed. This caused him to think; and, one step after another, the Lord led him, until he could praise God for the separating power of the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. What reproach is often brought on that name by doing mean things for the sake of a few paltry pence! But no matter what the sum involved, let us, as servants, be delivered from every thing that will not stand the light of an earthly master's eye; and, if we are walking before our heavenly Master, and seeking to serve Him, it shall be so.

TO KNOW HIM.

“**T**HAT I may know Him” (Phil. iii. 10). Paul wanted to know the Lord Jesus. But surely he knew Him well? Yes, he knew Him well. And yet he longed to *know Him*. Paul wanted evermore to plunge into the depths of that love which *passeth knowledge*, that he might be filled unto the fulness of God (Eph. iii. 19). But Paul wanted to know Him,

and the power of His resurrection—not a dead, fruitless knowledge, but the realised power of resurrection life in the Risen One. And Paul must know Him, too, in *the fellowship of His sufferings*. How beautiful! Paul would not evade the sufferings. Do we seek to know Him *and* the power of His resurrection? Do we rejoice to know Him *and* the fellowship of His sufferings? Many, who profess to know Christ, would prefer no suffering for His sake; just to get through comfortably to the glory—no cross to bear—no reproach for His name—no scorn for being identified with the rejected One! Surely such have never even had one plunge into the depths of His love, else, like Paul, they would count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord!

—:o:—

WE ought not to wish for deliverance from trial, until the trial has done its work. Shall the gold be taken out of the furnace before the dross has been consumed?

THE WORLD'S BOAT.

JONAH i. 3 lets us see Jonah in *the world's boat*; and "he paid the fare thereof." If we take a sail in the world's boat it will cost us something. We shall have to pay *the fare thereof*. Lot had a long sail in it; but at what a cost! Jehoshaphat, too, had a turn in it, and paid dearly for it: he could not escape paying "the fare thereof." Peter warmed himself at the world's fire, and thrice denied his Lord. The result in all these cases is very humbling. In the case of Jonah, he first *hides himself* from God; then he *falls asleep*; and, while there is a clear opportunity for speaking to anxious and awakened souls on deck, he remains fast asleep in the hold. How sad! And how many perish while we sleep! Poor Jonah had risen to flee from the Lord to Tarshish; but found his feet could not carry him quick enough away. So the devil had a boat ready and waiting for him at Joppa (see, for compari-

son, Peter's visitors at this same place, Acts x). If we want to get away from the Lord, there is little fear but Satan will place many a ready means within our reach. We live in trying times. May we not be ignorant of Satan's devices. Let us be as anxious to discover the secret of the power of Christ to overcome, as were the Philistines to discover the secret of Samson's strength. And while we cry for power, let it be for power first of all to know our own weakness; as a brother one time prayed: "O Lord, for power just to be nothing."

NO CHANGE OF COMPANY.

A SAINT, when about to depart to be with Christ, was heard to exclaim, "Blessed be God, though I change my place, I shall not change my company; for I have walked with God while living, and now I go to rest with God."

—:o:—

WHEN you have discovered sin to be sin, cast it out.

PRAYING FOR US.

WE note the encouraging remarks of various correspondents. One brother says, "By the help of God I have been holding up your hands, and mean to do so." This is refreshing. We are only too conscious of how much we need the prayers of the Lord's people. Paul felt this; and it is noteworthy that more than once he asks the prayers of the saints. See Eph. vi. 18: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; *and for me, that utterance may be given unto me,*" &c.

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JEHOSHAPHAT IN HIS EARLY DAYS.

PERHAPS you will scarcely find any Old Testament narrative more deeply instructive than the one that opens to our view when Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, began to reign (2 Chron., 17th chap). We find in him a lively picture of the young convert all aglow with love to Christ, alive to the dangers of the way, and trembling lest in anything the Spirit should be grieved, or the Name of the Lord dishonoured. Jehoshaphat "strengthened himself against Israel," then in apostacy from God; "and the Lord was with Jehoshaphat" (ver. 3). Precious testimony! The Lord was with him. Knowing this, we cease to wonder at his prosperity. How could he do otherwise than prosper,

seeing the Lord was with him? And he went steadily, boldly on for God. "He walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim; but sought to the Lord God of his father, and walked in His commandments, and not after the doings of Israel." It is carefully noted what he did *not* do, as well as what he *did* do. When the Lord is with us, there is grace to say "No," when "No" is the answer the Lord would have us give. Jehoshaphat said "No" to Baal, and refused to walk after the doings of Israel; reminding us of Moses, who refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter (Heb. xi. 24); of Joseph, who would not be enticed (Gen. xxxix. 9); and of David, who saw the hand of the great adversary even in the well-meant counsels of a beloved friend (2 Sam. xvi. 10).

What a death we find around us of this boldness in standing clear out for God. The world's ways and fashions get an alarming amount of reverence, even from those who profess to be "not of the world" even as Christ is not of the world. Is it not written that we are not to be conformed to the world, but transformed? (Rom. xii. 2). Do we not profess to be dead to the world, yea and buried, and resurrection men and women in Christ Jesus? Then what have we to do with its weak and beggarly elements? We may be reckoned peculiar, or even narrow-minded. But, nevertheless, let us have grace to say "No" to whatever is not of God. Friends may be offended: yea we may find not peace but a sword. But if we have that godly fear about us that characterised the early days of Jehoshaphat, we will resist the devil, through whomsoever he may come.

Then the one who is wary, like Noah (Heb. xi. 7, margin), and encourages his heart in the ways of the Lord, like Jehoshaphat (2

Chron. xvii. 6, margin), will not be much troubled with worldly-minded believers trying to lead him away. The Jehoshaphats are marked men in the Church. If you are one who "takes sides" with God in everything, you are soon known; and, instead of courting your favour, the worldly-minded quickly discover that they need not try *you* to join them in any of their devices for killing time and "enjoying themselves" on the border of Egypt, if not in it altogether. It is the "border-land" Christian who is always in doubt about things, and wondering if there is any harm in this, and if it would be right to go to such a place. If we live on the borders—that is, if we are so like the world that it would be hard to tell whether we are born-again people or not—we need not be surprised if we are in darkness about many things. The secret of the Lord is only with them that fear Him. If we are *following the Lord*, our dwelling-place will be far removed from the border-land; and we shall find, as it is written,

that "he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John viii. 12).

And we read that "the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat." When the Lord is with a man, many see it, and fear, and trust in the Lord (Psa. xl. 3); and when a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him (Prov. xvi. 7). If the Lord is with us, many a Felix shall tremble, as was the case when Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, testified for God (Acts xxiv. 25). As with Israel entering the land of Canaan, the hearts of the people around shall faint (Josh. ii. 9). Fear and trembling, more or less, shall take hold of the unsaved with whom we come in contact. Why? For the simple reason that *God is with us*. When such is the case, does not our whole manner of life ring, as it were, one word in the ears of the lost ones? and that word is *Eternity!* What a sweet

savour of Christ is spread around when God is with us! And just as

The ships from the balmly isles,
Where the spicy breezes blow,
Betray by the fragrance they spread around
From whence they have come, tho' perchance
they're found
On shores of ice and snow;

so does that believer, dwelling in the presence of God, betray by the fragrance he spreads around, from whence he has come—even from the mountain side, the secret place, the presence of Him whose Name is as ointment poured forth. Even thus may it be with each one who reads these lines. Though others aspire to great things, and many seek their own, let our aspiration be that there may be a savour about us as of "a field which the Lord hath blessed;" that it may be true of us as of Jehoshaphat in the early days of his reign—" *The Lord was with him.*"

—:o:—

"O, HOW sweet it is to want my former sweetness! It is now my rejoicing to be without my former joys; for now I see there is a heaven in the way to heaven."

THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE.

WE daresay many simple believers in the Lord Jesus have been at a loss to understand what is meant by the "clergy" and the "laity." These two terms show that God's people are supposed to be divided into *two* classes. The one class is called the clergy, and the other class is called the laity. The clergy are those who go through a certain course of learning, and are then "ordained" to be ministers or clergymen. The laity consists of all the rest of the church. Now here is a distinction which is to be carefully noted; for upon that distinction a great deal depends. The question that arises here is simply this: Is there such a distinction in the Word of God? Does the New Testament reveal two classes in the church—a higher class called the clergy, and an inferior class called the laity? If such is the teaching of Scripture, then the whole matter is clear. But it is remarkable that Scripture says nothing whatever about the church being divided into these two classes. We turn from epistle to epistle, but we search in vain. Where, in God's Word, do we

discover the class of men called the clergy, set apart to conduct the service and worship of God, and distinguished by a special title, and even a special dress. Now we do not speak slightly of any one, be he saint or sinner. We have only one object in view: the spread of the truth—in this case, truth which we believe calculated to set God's people free from trammels of man's making, but which, alas, many of the Lord's redeemed imagine in their simplicity to be the commandments of God! We would, therefore, ask: Where, in the whole Word of God, do we find the clergy? "Thus saith the Church," will not do; nor, "Thus have we been accustomed to believe." It must be, "*Thus saith the Lord.*" It is, therefore, clear that if the two classes, clergy and laity, cannot be found in Scripture, then God's people are under no obligation to recognise a separate order called "clergy." We gladly recognise a saint as a saint—an evangelist as an evangelist—a pastor as a pastor, although, like Paul, he may be often found at his tent-making or some other trade. But we dare not recognise distinctions which God has never made; and one of these is that of the *clergy* and the *laity*.

The order of the clergy has been attempted to be proved from the peculiar character of the tribe of Levi. Levi, or the priesthood, it is said, is a type of the clergy. But this statement will not stand the light of Scripture; for the priesthood, under the old dispensation, is a distinct type of every believer under the new; as we find it in Peter's first epistle (chap. ii.), "Ye also . . . are built up . . . an *holy priesthood*" (ver. 5). To whom do these words refer? To the clergy? Verily, no; but to *all* God's children. Indeed it is *newborn babes* (ver. 2) who are told that they are an holy priesthood. Then, in the same chapter, it is written, "Ye are . . . a royal priesthood" (ver. 9). These words are addressed to *you which believe* (ver. 7). It is thus put beyond all doubt that the priesthood of believers includes *every* child of God. What surprises us is that attempts should be made to blind God's people to their true calling and privileges as priests unto God. Paul, on the contrary, prayed that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened that they might know what is the hope of His calling, and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints (Eph. i. 18). Yes, beloved

reader, redeemed by the blood of Christ, you are a priest unto God. You need no man between you and your God to do the worship, or lead the worship, or offer the sacrifice of praise for you. You need no saint, however eminent, through whom to approach the Father. There is one Mediator between God and men—the Man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. ii. 5). Our great High Priest is passed into the heavens. By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name (Heb. xiii. 15).

But, in looking through the epistles in the New Testament, one cannot fail to be struck by observing that there is no reference whatever to the clergyman or minister. If there was such a thing as the one-man system—if there was such a person as the clergyman, why do we not find Paul addressing him, or referring to him in some way? We know this will be startling to some. But let the matter be calmly weighed, or rather let God's Word be calmly searched, and see if these things be not so. Paul writes "to *the saints* which are at Ephesus" (Eph. i. 1); and "to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the bishops and

deacons" (Phil. i. 1). But there is not a word about the minister. Then we find him writing "to the saints and faithful brethren" which are at Colosse (Col. i. 2); and to the Church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father (1 Thess. i. 1). But, wherever we turn, we look in vain for the "one man" set apart to be the clergyman; and this for the simple reason that in the whole of God's Word no such person is ever recognised.*

Another noteworthy point is the invariable use of the plural number in speaking of ministering ones. We are never told to know *him* that is over us in the Lord. It is always *them* that are over you—obey *them*—

* The angel of the church in Rev. ii. and iii. is held by some to be the clergyman. But we do not see why this should stumble any one; for a symbolic name in a symbolic book cannot render void the clear teaching of other Scripture, about which there is no doubt whatever. If the angel of the church means the minister, why do we not find any trace of him in the whole domain of Scripture? A brother, anxiously seeking after truth, asked us if "the angel" in Revelation did not mean the minister. "Very well," we said, "suppose it does; who would get a letter addressed to the angel of the church at M— here?" As there would evidently have been considerable competition for the ownership of the letter, our brother saw and candidly admitted that his idea was untenable. It is significant regarding this point that a gifted brother, as well as an able scholar, although numbered with the clergy, points out "*the entire absence of any proof that ministers of the Christian Church were ever so called.*"

salute *them*—for *they* watch, &c. If we inquired who was the minister at Corinth, it would be found a hard question, for there were many ministering ones there. It is true that so many gifted brethren were causing some confusion, till Paul instructed them in the way of the Lord. But the apostle did not restore order by saying they were all to be quiet except one, who would do the whole service. No. He took care to say to them, "Ye may all prophecy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted" (1 Cor. xiv. 31). Then in the church which was at Antioch there were certain *prophets* and *teachers*; but no word of the minister. Paul sent for the *elders* of Ephesus, and Peter exhorts the *elders*. In all these Scriptures there is not the slightest reference to *the clergyman*, nor yet to *the elder*. Even Peter modestly calls himself "*an elder*" (1 Peter v. 1).

But time would fail us to bring forward scripture showing the unscriptural nature of "the ministerial office." The two orders of clergy and laity in the church is an idea utterly foreign to the Word of God; and the painful thing is that undoubted children of God should be found to *keep up* and countenance

these distinctions. The world has its upper classes and lower classes, and so on. But in God's family it is not so. They are all Kings' sons and daughters, praise His name! And as worshippers He hath made us—every one of us His children—“priests unto God.”

We may now close at this time with a little word to our beloved brethren among the clergy. We may be reckoned bold in so doing; but we would not be uncourteous. Moreover, we write remembering all the while that there are some among clergymen whom we esteem highly in love, undoubted God-given ministers, and brethren in whom you cannot fail to perceive a sweet savour of Christ. If, then, we have spoken in accordance with the Word of God, is it not clear that you should disown these unscriptural distinctions? How can you by your peculiar dress affect a superior sanctity or “set-apartness,” when it may be there are those in your congregation at whose feet you might sit; and yet if *they* were to appear in *your* costume it would be called presumption. And how can you for a moment allow yourself to be called “The *Reverend*”—a word which occurs only once in Scripture, and then applied only to the thrice-

holy Name of the LORD? There, for instance, is plain brother —, who sits under you, and is more separated unto God it may be, and more in the secret counsels of the Most High than you are; and if that brother were to put “Reverend” to his name, he would be told he had no right to it! Ah, my brother, who gave *you* the right to it? You see plainly that such things will not stand the light of God's Word; and is not that the reason we are told never to mention them? Why should you not refuse that title, as a “prince among preachers” did, saying that “reverend sinner” did not sound well, for, like Paul, he was only a sinner saved by grace? And why should you not repudiate those traditional distinctions that have for so long blinded the eyes of God's people to their high and holy calling, and gendered to a spiritual bondage, from which we long to see His saints set free. Suffer the word, although through one who makes his boast only in the Lord, and who is privileged to reckon himself less than the least of all saints. But to all our dear brethren, whether clergymen or laymen, as the terms go, we would affectionately commend these few remarks. As we have obtained mercy of the Lord

to be faithful, we have delivered our message. We speak as unto wise men; judge ye what we say. If we have spoken the words of truth and soberness, then may you see it to be your privilege to forsake what is not of God; like Moses, who forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible (Heb. xi. 27). We are convinced it needs only the light of God's Word to be let in on the darkness around; and the light of that Word, as the beams of the rising sun, shall dispel the deadening mists of tradition. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free;" and "if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John viii. 32, 36). May it be ours ever to be able to say concerning our path: "This is the path which the Word of the Lord hath enjoined me to tread, and the thing which the Lord hath commanded to be done."

THY WORD HID.

"THY Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (Psa. cxix. 11).

1. *What* have I hid?—*Thy Word,*
2. *Where* have I hid it?—*In mine heart.*
3. *Why* have I hid it?—*That I might not sin against Thee.*

WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK.

IF we only half realised what power is on our side, we would not be faint-hearted. I have been helped by looking at what *man* at his best can do, and then looking at what *our God* can do. "What is thy request?" said Ahasuerus to Esther, "and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom" (Esth. vii. 2). Then we see that Herod's promise to the daughter of Herodias extended only to the half of his kingdom (Mark vi. 23). These two kings may be fairly taken as representatives of *man's* power; and we see that their *power* to give is limited to their kingdom, while their willingness is still further restricted to the *half* of that kingdom. How different with our God! No limit with Him. We may limit Him, as we often do, by our ways and our unbelief. But he puts no limit to our asking, and makes no reserve in His promises. "*Whatsoever* ye shall ask the Father *in My name*, He will give it you" (Jno. xvi. 23). "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom.

viii. 32). "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," &c. (Eph. iii. 20). No limit: no restriction here. No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly (Ps. lxxxiv. 11). This is beautifully illustrated in the case of Solomon (type of the coming King). In 1st Kings x. 13, we read, "And King Solomon gave unto the Queen of Sheba *all her desire, whatsoever she asked.*" But this was not all: it was only "beside that which Solomon gave her of his *Royal Bounty.*" O what encouragement we have to ask of God! His Word is full of promise of blessing. When we allow His Word to search us, and discover unto us our deep needs (Heb. iv. 12), that same Word directs us where to go to get these needs satisfied.—(*Extract from a letter.*)

TWO EVILS.

"My people have committed two evils; they have

1st. Forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and

2nd, Hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. ii. 13).

"Know, therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God" (Jer. ii. 19).

RAISETH THE DEAD.

"**W**E had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead" (2 Cor. i. 9). What a beautiful little hint we have in these words, "*which raiseth the dead!*" Our trust in God is not to stop short of *resurrection.* Abraham's faith was "resurrection faith," if we may so speak. He accounted that God was able to raise Isaac even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure (Heb. xi. 19). Let us remember this in going to the Lord about unsaved friends, or concerning the gospel work. The God with whom we have to do is not God who improves the dead, or reforms the dead, but God who *raiseth* the dead, praise to His name! And He is faithful that promised.

—:o:—

"WHY should I tire myself to gather drops of honey from so many dying flowers, when I can satisfy myself with streams of living sweetness in the living Christ?"

WHERE DWELLEST THOU?

“**W**HERE dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour” (John i. 38, 39). Ever thus, Lord, we would abide with Thee. As these two disciples abode with Thee that day, so we would abide with Thee, during the whole of time’s little day. It may be with some of us, the *tenth hour*—we may be in the “eventide” of life, although life’s sun may seem to be but rising. But known to Thee are all Thy works. Our times are in Thy hand; and who shall tell but that some of Thy dear ones, young in years, whose morn we would say is breaking, are near—ah, how near—the end of the journey! Their sun is sweeping down the evening sky of life; and soon their light for Thee down here shall shine no more! Fain would we ask of Thee, “Is it I?” But we may not know; and it is well. Yet, Lord, I would ever

abide with Thee; for it is ever eventide. I would live as if the morning and the mid-day hour were past; and knowing the time is short, I would abide with Thee this “little while.” I would not be awakened by the “mighty trump” from the sleep of worldliness, or the passing dream of earthly delight. I would not be ashamed before Thee at thy coming. Then let my longing desire be that I may abide with Thee. Dark around may be the night; yet I know it shall be light wherever Thou dost dwell. I would find myself saying like Ruth, “Entreat me not to leave Thee, or to return from following after Thee; for whither Thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: Thy people shall be my people, and Thy God my God.”

—:o:—

“THOUGH God hath translated me into the kingdom of life, yet He hath left the *Canaanite* in the land. God would have my faith exercised; therefore *Goliath* still shows himself in the field, so that I might make out to him in the name of the Lord. I will, therefore, unbuckle *Saul’s* armour, humble mine own abilities, and betake me to the strength of Christ.”—(Old Author).

HEARING AND DOING.

YOU will be allowed to *hold* any amount of truth, and still remain (it may be) an esteemed member of an unscriptural system of religion. The mere *holding* of the truth will not interfere with your getting along smoothly. But whenever you *obey* the truth, the case is entirely altered. You then find out what it is to be reproached for the *Name of Christ*. Truth *obeyed* is really truth *bought*; but mere holding of truth can be done at very little cost. There is, in this day, a great searching for truth, simply to store it up as a part of "the things we believe." The result, in such cases, can only be something like what followed upon storing up the manna (Ex. xvi. 20). "If ye know these things, happy are ye *if ye do them*" (John xiii. 17). The wise man, who builds his house on the rock, is one who heareth these sayings of mine *and doeth them* (Matt. vii. 24). If we search for truth, let it be for this purpose, that *we may be searched by it* (Heb.

iv. 12); for the Word of God is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It is not a man who merely *knows* the laws of the land that is reckoned a good citizen; but one who *keeps* these laws. And so, in the things of God, we are to be *doers* of the Word and not hearers only, else we shall deceive our own selves (James i. 22). Thus may the Lord have to say of us, not only "I *have given* them Thy word" (John xvii. 14); but "they *have kept* Thy word" (John xvii. 6).

"OUR FAITH."

LET us who are the Lord's people get right away from *our faith to God Himself*. When we are asking great things of God, we are more apt to be taken up with our faith than with the boundless resources of the God with whom we have to do. "They looked *unto Him*, and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed" (Psa. xxxiv. 5). God-honouring faith is neither taken up with itself nor with the circumstances around. It is simply, "*God is able*." (See Dan. iii. 17; 2 Cor. ix. 8; Eph. iii. 20; Heb. vii. 25, &c).

IN DUE TIME.

We cannot go over every line of truth in a single number; but we have not a few lines in store, and, should it please the Lord, they will duly appear. We mention this as several friends have been enquiring if we are going to say anything on *this* subject; while others would like to see something on *that* subject, and so on. So we can only say, "In due time, if the Lord will."

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THE GREATEST SERVICE.

AN aged saint once said that the greatest service one can render to the Church is to *walk with God*; and another has said, When you cry to God for revival, let it be for revival *first of all in your own soul*. These two witnesses agree. The first accords with that Scripture, "*Abide in Me*" (John xv. 4)—the fruit-bearing coming in as the fruit of the abiding. The second witness accords with that Scripture, "Restore unto *me* the joy of Thy salvation . . . then will I teach transgressors Thy ways," &c. (Psalm li. 12, 13). We thus see the vast importance of an individual walk with God, and of ever possessing the joy of God's salvation in one's *own soul*. We also see this, that the most "unnoticed" believer has it in his

power to be a *great power for God in the Church*. We fear this is to a great extent lost sight of. Saints have got accustomed to lean on each other, and especially on those who are counted "mighty men" among us. The result is that many might truly say, "My expectation is from man," instead of saying, "My expectation is from the Lord." And not a few dear saints are content that it should be so. They fancy if they are as their brethren are, that they are doing well. But, my beloved reader, *God wants you for Himself*. The course of everything around you is tending *downward*. Ease in Zion is prevailing. Conformity to the world has got so common now that, if you don't conform to it, you are looked upon coldly. Many of God's children find far more enjoyment in the newspaper

than in the Word of God. The Bible does not seem to be so well "thumbed" as it was wont to be. The appetite for prayer has waned. The path of communion with God is a path which one cannot help feeling is trodden by the few—the very few. How then, my brother, or my sister, does it fare with your soul and mine? Are we alive to the situation? We are here in the midst of a world lying in the wicked one. The ungodly are around us on every hand. They see not Jesus of Nazareth now. But is it not written, "Ye are the light of the world?" Wonderful truth: *they are to see Christ in His members!*—they are to see Christ in you and me. And it is solemn to think that perhaps this is all of Christ that some of the poor unsaved ones will ever see, till they see Him on the great white throne. But the saints of God are around us, too, on every hand, few in number though they may be. What impression are we leaving upon them? Let no one say, "What service can I render to my

brethren?" You cannot stand on a platform, it may be, and give a twenty minutes' address. But, my brother, you can be *heart and soul for God*. It is your privilege to *walk with Him*. *That* is not beyond your reach, although the platform may be. The Lord has given only "some" to be *teachers*; but He intends us all to be *walkers*—walkers with Himself. Let us get away from the idea that we can serve God only when we are standing before an audience, whether of saints or sinners. Thus to serve is a great work truly. But we must not forget that "to every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ." The obscure believer, who thinks he is "nobody," may be a power in the Church that he little dreams of. How? you ask. We reply, Simply by being a surrendered one to God. Such a one wrestles with God and prevails. He pleads with God within the veil, and turns the tide of affairs, while short-sighted believers even at the helm, fancy

their policy has kept all things right. Those wrestling ones within the veil are the Abraham's and Mordecai's, reminding us of a great work of God in a place which, when traced up, was found (so far as could be seen) to be the result of the fervent prayers of a poor bed-ridden saint. So let us take courage; and, in crying unto the Lord for revival, let us not forget to ask for revival "first of all in my own soul." When our own soul is not right with God, that is the very time when Satan would have us greatly concerned about other people and other things, like Judas who murmured at so much money being spent on the precious ointment, simply because he had no heart for Christ. Let our great concern be: How is my own soul? Is revival going on *there*? How is my appetite for the Book of books—God's Word? Then there is the prayer meeting. Have I a growing desire for it, and an increased longing for being alone with God? Let us be honest before God in this great matter.

It is reality He desires—truth in the inward parts. If such be the aim of our life, the Church shall be served, and God shall be glorified; and although our name may not be handed down as that of a mighty man in the Church, it shall be true of us that we served our generation, and did the work which the Lord gave us to do.

STRANGE PEOPLE.

“THESE are strange people. They have got some very peculiar notions. They don't trouble themselves about political elections and such-like. They take no part whatever in these things—strange people.” The world sometimes says this about some of the Lord's people. But it must be borne in mind that we are not peculiar in such things *by choice*, or because it is a *notion* we have taken. We have no choice in the matter. The reason of our peculiarity in such things is that we take our instructions *from the Word of God*. It is not because we have made up our minds to be peculiar. No. We simply seek to be guided by what God says; and, if we act out what we find in His Word, it need not be a matter for wonder if the world (and, perhaps, more than the world) thinks us “strange people.”

DOWN TO THE WORLD.

WE cannot warm ourselves at the fire which burned yesterday; and neither will the communion of bygone times suffice us for to-day. Yesterday's manna will not meet our present need: there must be a daily supply. The devotedness of Jehoshaphat's early days was no guarantee that he would continue steadfast. There was, it is true, no "needs-be" for his departing from the Lord. Yet he did depart. Lifted up, no doubt, by his wonderful prosperity, and presuming on bygone victories, he seems to have come to the conclusion that there was no need to keep so strict a watch as he had been wont to do. Was he not Jehoshaphat? Had he not "waxed great exceedingly?" (2 Chron. xvii. 12). All true: yet there was none the less need for him to feel his dependence on an ever present God. 2 Chron. xviii. begins a *second* chapter in the life of Jehoshaphat. And, sad to tell, many of the Lord's dear ones, who

run well like Jehoshaphat for year (verse 2), have a second—a dark chapter in their history. May we so read these Old Testament records that we may ever "abide in Him," and find that by the words of His lips we have kept us from the paths of the destroyer (Psalm xvii. 4).

"Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab" (ver. 1). Ahab was king of Israel; and 1 Kings xxi. 25 tells us that "there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord." In early days Jehoshaphat had strengthened himself against Israel. Yet now he joins affinity with Israel's king! How often the same thing has been witnessed in the history of the Church. With the new-born joy of sins forgiven, the young believer strengthens himself against the world. He sees that his company is to be the company of the redeemed. He keeps far away from temptation, and has a wholesome dread of sin. But, as time rolls

on, he begins to think it will not do to be so particular; and, following in the path of the multitude, he joins affinity with the very thing he had formerly seen to be not of God! This is to be met with every day. But let it be clearly understood that this blindness is the fruit of departure from God. Carnal believers tell us it is advancing in the truth. God's Word says it is going backwards.

And it was *Jehoshaphat* who joined affinity. The inspired penman does not lay the blame on Ahab. No. *Jehoshaphat came down* from his eminence before Ahab made any proposal to him. This is deeply instructive. We speak of a believer, or ourselves, being *led away* by the world. We are apt to lay the whole blame on the world. But, before the believer can be led away by the world, he must first have *joined affinity with the world in his heart*. Peter was following the Lord "afar off," else the words of the maid would not have drawn out the denial of his Lord (Luke xxii. 56). Outward

departure from God is simply the outcome of an *inward* departure which has likely been going on for a long time. *Jehoshaphat* was in the toils and he knew it not. He was on that "incline plane" which leads down to Egypt; and there was no escaping the woe pronounced on those who go down thither. "God's mill may grind slow, but it grinds small." And just as sure as God's children have God for their Father, so sure will that Father take His children in hand, sooner or later, if they depart from Him. If we will not judge ourselves, God will do the judging for us (see 1 Cor. xi. 31). But better far to be taught in the sunshine of His presence, than to learn in bitterness under His chastening hand.

HOW TO WALK.

- Walk *in the Spirit* (Gal. v. 16).
- Walk *in truth* (3 John 4).
- Walk *in love* (Eph. v. 2).
- Walk *in the light* (1 John i. 7).
- Walk *by faith* (2 Cor. v. 7).
- Walk *circumspectly* (Eph. v. 15).
- Walk *honestly* (Rom. xiii. 13).

MY PLACE IN THE BODY.

I WAS asked up to Mr —'s to have a "bite of dinner." I expected, in his well-ordered house, that I would be shown the very seat on which I was to sit; and it turned out just as I expected. "You will please sit *there*," I was told; and I at once sat down. There were higher seats there, and lower ones; but I just sat down on the one that was pointed out to me by *the head of the house*. On pondering the matter, trivial as it may seem, I could not help observing to myself what a striking illustration this was of the Church, and of my place in the body. As head of his own house, Mr — told me my place, and pointed out the very chair on which I was to sit. But my "mind's eye" ran me far beyond my friend, even unto Christ, who is Son over His own house, whose house are we, &c. (Heb. iii. 6). And there and then, perhaps with power unknown before, I saw how each one of His members had a place in the body—a seat in the house; and that it was for me to find out the seat provided by the Lord for me, and to take it.

Now there are very hazy ideas in the minds of many concerning this

thing; and this is especially the case when believers are newly set free from the bondage of human systems of religion, and come out to the Lord Himself. These dear saints often fancy they have found the place where every one does as he likes, and where one brother is as good as another. In the joy of newly-found freedom, this may be somewhat excusable; nevertheless where there is patient and godly care exercised, each one will soon find that the Lord has "a chair" provided for each, and the anointed ear will hear Him say, "You are to sit *there*." In short, when we discover from God's Word that a one-man ministry is unscriptural, we at the same time cannot fail to see that an *every-man* ministry, or an *any-man* ministry, is likewise unscriptural. We are undoubtedly all alike as worshippers; and, as members one of another, we all have a service to perform; for by love we are all to serve one another (Gal. v. 13), we are to bear one another's burdens (Gal. vi. 2), and consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works (Heb. x. 24). Indeed there are many things in the way of service which we are all to do. But when it comes to a question of guiding the flock, or ministering the Word of God, we find

at once that we are *not* all alike. There is a beautiful variety in the body of Christ, which many have sadly failed to see. Some (we may say the many) have gone to the extreme of a one-man ministry, bringing the members of the body all to a dead level, and exalting one member to do everything in the way of ministry, while all the rest of the body remains silent.* God hath set the members in the body as it hath pleased Him. Surely, therefore, any one can see that a vast amount of Christ-given ministry is *lost to the Church* by the one-man system. The gifts of the ascended Lord are actually suppressed in order to allow one man to do all the "ministry." At the same time there are those who would fain run to the opposite extreme—an any-man ministry; thereby causing many members to be out of their place in the body, and wearying the saints with ministry which never came down from the ascended Lord. We

* The Holy Ghost is thus limited to one channel. He is not allowed to speak through any godly or gifted brethren who may be there. The Lord is limited to the one man. Such a one may be a child of God, or he may not. He may be a gifted brother, or he may not. He may be "in the Spirit," or he may not. But, gifted or not, in the Spirit or not, yea, converted or not, he must preach! We do not know that God could be more effectually shut out than by such a system of things.

will be delivered from both these evils by simply giving attendance to "what is written." There is a beautiful diversity in the body; for, although there are many members, yet all members have not the same office (Rom. xii. 4). Are all teachers? (1 Cor. xii. 29). All are not teachers. When Christ ascended, He gave gifts—"some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some pastors and teachers" (Ephes. iv. 11). Then we read of those who are the guides (Heb. xiii. 7, margin); who are over you in the Lord (1 Thes. v. 12). And at once we see a wonderful diversity in the body. The Lord has scattered the gifts as it hath seemed good unto Him. And so we find there are some whom He has fitted to guide the flock; for indeed it is evident that if all were guides, there would be no flock left to guide. If all were shepherds, where were the sheep? Then the Lord has specially qualified some as teachers. Some again are gifted to preach the gospel to the world, while others find their place in some service connected with the church, and so on. And while those specially qualified ones are serving in the fear of God, what are we, the flock, to think of it? We are to esteem them very highly in love

for their work's sake. And what is to be our attitude towards those shepherding ones who are watching for our souls, as those that must give an account? We are to know them (1 Thes. v. 12), to obey them, and to submit ourselves (Heb. xiii. 17). This may sound strange in the ears of some. If so, it is *Scripture* which is strange, for we have quoted the exact words.* The matter seems very simple. God says to the over-seeing brethren, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God" (Acts xx. 28). Then God says to the flock, "Submit yourselves unto such" (1 Cor. xvi. 16). And wherever there is a godly caring for and feeding of the flock, we are encouraged to look for a godly submission. Thus, you

* Be it noted that no overseer or minister of Christ is entitled to *demand* submission to his word. In corrupt systems of religion you will find this outward show of authority. But such is a very different thing from the submission which *God* enjoins upon the flock towards those who are over them in the Lord. It is a spiritual matter; and the God-given overseer, walking before God, will be the last to claim any such authority. Indeed, when he finds insubjection, it will be to him an occasion for self-examination, and whatever conclusion he arrives at, it will be clear to his mind that "the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle to all, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (2 Tim. ii. 24, 25).

see that, in the body, there are some to take care of the flock, while the greater number need to be taken care of. There are some to teach; some to preach the gospel, and so on. And now the question we come to is this: Have we found our place in the body? Have we discovered the corner we are to fill?—the work which the Lord has given us do? It is most important that we should find out what is the place in the body the Lord would have us fill. Great mistakes have been made here; and many believers have lived and died without finding out their true place in the body. The loss sustained by the church in this way cannot well be estimated; but it must be enormous. When a believer takes a place in the church which he is not qualified for, two evils are the result. He does not fill the place, and he keeps the right man out of the place. Some would aspire to be among the leading brethren, fancying that readiness of speech and worldly sagacity is all that is needed. Others would fain be preachers of the gospel, who have never travailed in birth over a single soul. The reason of such things is that these dear brethren have not the secret of the Lord with them. Like Absalom, they would be reigning; and, like Saul,

they would fain keep their position even after they are rejected. How then are you to know your place in the body? You will find it out *in the presence of God*. If you are somewhat in doubt, then *take a low place*. You cannot make a great mistake by doing that. Many dear saints never give the Lord an opportunity to say "come up higher." They sit down at once in a high seat, and never leave any room for promotion. They seem to fancy that things could not go on without them, when the truth is, if they would just slip into the low place, the Lord's anointed ones, like David, would come in from the desert, and Israel would have a good time. And when a brother is in a prominent place and manifestly the Lord's anointed one for that place, let us not grudge him the grace and the gift that is upon him; but let us hold up his hands, praising God that thus it hath seemed good in His sight. Let each one of us find out where God would have us to be in the body. And, when we find that place, let us take it, even although we should have to *come down*, and virtually confess, "I have made a mistake."

—:o:—

"Where there is any work with Christ, there will always be war with sin."

BY GRACE ALONE.

"**T**HERE is one thing at any rate," said a dear brother to me, "that I can praise the Lord He has delivered me from, and that is a bad temper, for I *had* one, but His grace has been sufficient." I was surprised; for the dear brother was of such a meek disposition, that I fancied he had *always* had a good temper. But I was mistaken. *By grace*, and grace alone, he was what he was. He was just a living sample of what the grace of God can do. But we often hinder that grace by excusing ourselves, instead of condemning ourselves. When we lose our temper, Satan would persuade us that it is just "our way;" and truly it is *our* way, for it is not one of the ways of Christ. The simple truth is that to lose our temper is one of the ways of the flesh, call it by any other name you please; and if we would sit in judgment on our carnal ways instead of excusing them, we would find an all-sufficiency in that grace which is "exceeding abundant" for all our need.

WITH HIM.

IT is useless for us to wish for more *of* God, unless there be a corresponding desire to be more *with* God. It is the hand of the diligent that maketh rich. We may have a desire after the promised One as the Jews had, and yet not move a step out of our way to see Him (see Matt. ii. 5). The proof of love is seen in what love will do; and love delights to be *with* the loved one. It is so with the absent One—our Lord Jesus. *He* will not be satisfied until *He* has His loved ones where *He* is. "I will that they also whom thou hast given Me, be *with Me where I am*, that they may behold my glory" (John xvii. 24). He must have us with Himself, where *He* is. Love cannot be satisfied with less. And, beloved, shall we be satisfied with less? Is there a desire in the heart of a child of God to be more with the Lord Jesus—more with Him down here—more with Him in the closet—in the secret place? If there is, it will soon be manifest that

such a one is enjoying *more of the Lord*: for beholding as in a glass His glory, we are transformed into the same image. Shew me the man who is much alone with his God, and you behold one refreshed by heavenly dew, though all around be dry and barren. He perceives no beauty in this scene of ruin and desolation wrought by sin. His pulse beats not in unison with the worldling. He is "a stranger here." Such a one has found his all in God; and to him the "solitary place"—the "stolen visit" to the throne—is more congenial than the hum of so-called Christian conversation, or the attractiveness of entertaining company. Yet like Elijah, he testifies for his God, though the Ahabs care not for him; for he who loves to be alone with God is not a silent one in Israel. Let this be our aspiration—that we may *know Him*, that we may please *Him*, whom having not seen we love.

"Alone with Thee, O Master, where
The light of earthly glory dies;
Misunderstood by all I dare
To do what Thine own heart will prize."

FOR THE LORD'S PEOPLE.

IT is almost needless for us to state that this monthly paper is intended for *the Lord's people*. It is not intended for the unsaved, but for Christians; and, when we say Christians, we mean *real* Christians—born-again men and women. We find no Scripture for the idea that a person may be a Christian *all his days*, or that in some mysterious way he finds himself in God's family, and does not know very well how he got there. The great event of a life-time—conversion unto God—is too momentous an event to have such uncertainty connected with it. We believe that if any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creation (2 Cor. v. 17, margin); and it is for those who are "in the new creation" that these pages are intended. Seeing then that the natural man, who is in the *old* creation, perceiveth not in the things of the Spirit of God, the unconverted cannot understand the truths of God's Word which appear in these pages. Indeed, it might be instructive to many *saints* to observe the things connected with religion which the unconverted are *fond of*; and then to sit down and ask the question, "Is this thing of God, seeing the world is so fond of it?"

LAZINESS AND CONVERSION.

A LAZY Christian is a contradiction of terms. Laziness in a professed follower of Christ is one of the worst "signs." The world is content to look down on a person given to indolent habits; and if the indolent person happens to be one who says he is converted, we can easily understand that his profession has very little weight with the ungodly. The true follower of Christ is one who works both hard and hearty at his daily work, whatever it may be. Conversion has cured him of laziness, if he was previously addicted to that vice; and he is now redeeming the time, instead of wasting it. If we are not faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to our trust the true riches? (Luke xvi. 11). In our "daily work" in the factory, or workshop, we serve the Lord Christ. We are to do it *heartily*, as unto the Lord; and surely a hearty service is the very opposite of a lazy service.

—:o:—

"LORD lift up the light of Thy countenance in my horizon, so shall time be the morning, and eternity the noon of glory in my soul."

THE TRUTH IN SIMPLICITY.

In this little paper we do not profess to go into very deep things, or to give learned and exhaustive commentaries on Scripture. We highly esteem those whose ability lies in that direction. But all we aim at in these pages is to provide "food convenient" for very simple believers—to open up truth for the times, calculated to reach the heart, and presented in such a way that it may leave no doubt as to what is meant. If this is being attained in any little measure, it is the Lord's doing, *to whom* be glory. Amen.

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DECLINE IN THE PRAYER MEETING.

THE prayer meeting has been well called the "pulse" of the Lord's work. Find out what life there is in the prayer meeting, and you will have a wonderfully correct idea of what life there is among the saints in that quarter. If we want to know whereabouts we are as a company of believers, all that is needed is to ask the question, "Is the prayer meeting flourishing?" The prayer meeting, we know, is not "popular." It never has been popular, and never will be, simply because there is so little about it to attract worldly-minded believers. Attempts have been made to make the prayer meeting attractive by always having some gifted speaker there to deliver an address. But, even from these

quarters, there comes the sad confession that, if it was not for the address, the believers would not turn out! Indeed, the prayer meeting has fallen upon evil times in this "cloudy and dark day" (Ezek. xxxiv. 12). You will get saints to go almost anywhere, except to the prayer meeting. The great difficulty seems now to be to get believers to *pray*. We know it is possible to pray although you are not at the prayer meeting. But, at the same time, if you are one given to secret prayer, you will have all the greater desire to meet with your brethren for *collective prayer*. The terrible lack of appetite for the prayer meeting is surely enough to cause some of us to stand still and ask what is the cause of this? Many saints have got so accustomed to it, that a prayer meeting of ten, out of a

gathering of seventy, does not seem out of the way in their eyes. Others again look on the prayer meeting as *only the prayer meeting*; and their faces are never to be seen there for months at a time; while the worst of it all is, that they do not seem at all troubled about it. Now, we believe in going right down to the root of a matter, and finding out the cause of it, and then calling it by its right name. And, when we sit down to consider the meagre attendances at the prayer meetings in almost every quarter, we come to the conclusion that something is wrong. *Spiritual declension is going on.* The believer who has no heart for the prayer meeting is certainly not in a prosperous condition. Is it not written that "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another"? (Mal. iii. 16). Is it not written that where two or three are gathered in the Name of the Lord, *He* is in the midst? (Matt. xviii. 20). Is there not a special promise if even "*two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall*

ask"? (Matt. xviii. 19). Are we not enjoined *not* to forsake the assembling of ourselves together? (Heb. x. 25). From these and kindred scriptures is it not clearly a divine arrangement that we should come together for prayer? And, when the Lord's people *do* come together for prayer, why are *we* not there? Let the question be answered candidly? The most common excuse is, "I haven't time—I am so busy." Quite possible, dear brother, *by a time* that may happen. But there is such a thing as *planning* your time. Do you sit down and *plan* and *arrange* so as to manage the prayer meeting? If so, it is clear you are at the prayer meeting *in spirit*; and, if you are not there in body, it is not your fault. But if the absentees were giving a straightforward answer, we fear the most of them would say, like a dear brother we know, "The truth is, I have got into a cold state, and I have not the desire for the prayer meeting that I should have." This is honest. There is little hope of

a man who conceals his disease. But there *is* hope of a brother who candidly admits why he is not with the two or three calling on the name of the Lord. The simple truth is that the lack of heart for the prayer meeting betrays a lack of heart for *Him* who is there in the midst. What other conclusion can be come to? Do not our highest spiritual instincts teach us to come together to call on the name of the Lord? Is not the prayer meeting abundantly established by Scriptural precept and example? Then, if we are enjoying the Lord in the closet, shall we not desire to enjoy Him at the prayer meeting? We need not doubt it for a moment. But that is the root of the matter—*enjoying the Lord in the closet. That is* where the declension has commenced. A gospel incident tells of an unsaved young man who was asked to shut himself up in his room for a quarter of an hour alone with God. But he could not bear to be so long “alone with God.” Yet one cannot doubt that there

are many believers who would find, and do find, it about as irksome to be shut up for a quarter of an hour alone with their heavenly Father. To such believers the prayer meeting may prove an attraction, if there is sufficient attraction about it *for them*—namely, a chairman's address and attractive singing, with everything well arranged, and none of those trying “silences” while waiting in the presence of God. But, beloved, we need none of these attractions. The Lord Jesus is there—the despised and rejected One. *He* is the attraction. Faith sees Him in the midst: faith hears His voice: faith perceives His goings forth. It matters not who is at the meeting, or who is not there, while He is there, to meet whom we have come. Some brother may have a word which he has got from the Lord, or there may not be any “word.” But it matters not to us—the Master is there. There may be very few there; but *He* is there, and we are satisfied. And did we ever seek His face in

vain? Ah, no! We have proved the truth of the little hymn which says

“And oft escaped the tempter's snare,
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer.”

Beloved, let us value the prayer meeting. If our desire for it is waxing faint, let us take the matter into the secret place before God and ask Him to put us right with Himself. We feel assured that many saints are missing untold blessing, by neglecting this coming together to wait on God; while we are no less assured that many fainting ones have renewed their strength, and mounted up with wings as eagles, through meeting with their God at the hour of prayer. Fain would we have it so dear to us that we could say,

“Fain would I linger here,
Hour of prayer so sweet;
Perfect love, expelling fear—
Thus at His feet
I wait—I wait:
Fain would I linger here.”

—:o:—

THERE are many attractions which will draw people to a meeting; but there is only one attractive power to draw people to Christ; and that is, *Christ lifted up.*

PURPOSE OF HEART.

“**W**ITH purpose of heart” (Acts xi. 23). This is what we want—a holy determination to cleave unto the Lord. It is to be feared that many of us are finding a false refuge in waiting for God to do everything. But God will do nothing for us that He tells us to do ourselves. He cannot do the sinner's *believing* for him. And it is the same with a great many things after we have believed, among which is this cleaving unto the Lord with purpose of heart. An old writer has said that “God's biddings are enablings;” that is, He never asks you to do a thing without enabling you by His grace to do it. No doubt Barnabas knew this when he exhorted the believers of Antioch “that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.” This is what the Lord requires of us—*purpose of heart*—a clear, definite, determined purpose to be for God—to follow Him—to please Him, no matter what the cost, or what the consequences. Purpose of heart, brethren, purpose of heart is what we want. And God is able to make all grace abound.

THE BEAUTY OF CHRIST.

I HAVE been beholding the beauty of Christ in His members. Some of His dear ones seem to be ever drinking of the spiritual Rock that follows them; and they are already bearing the image of the heavenly (1 Cor. xv. 49). How fair they are! It may be the world reckons them plain—very plain: yea, it may be that, “no earthly beauty shines in them to draw the carnal eye.” Their’s is “the beauty of the Lord.” Their faces shine, although, like Moses, they know it not. Some of them may not be great in the church; yet, in spirit, I sit at their feet. In observing that meek and quiet spirit—the heavenly calm which surrounds their way, I feel myself judged and rebuked—more so than by the most impassioned eloquence. O, the eloquence of that quiet testimony for God! Who shall measure its mighty results? Ever about their Father’s business—ever bearing about in their body the dying of the Lord Jesus. How

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oft such humble light-bearers have refreshed my spirit, although they knew it not! And when I am thus transported with these little beams from the great Sun of Righteousness, I wonder what it will be when mine eyes shall see the King. If I already behold such beauty in His members, what a sight awaits me when I shall see Himself! Cheer up, ye fainting ones: these eyes shall see the King in His beauty. You need not doubt that He shall be the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. Has he not said, “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you”? (John xvi. 22). And so shall we ever be with the Lord.

REJOICE EVERMORE.

I CANNOT but feel that, when I am not rejoicing in the Lord, I am as really disobeying Him as if I were to break a plain command. “Rejoice in the Lord,” and “Lie not one to another,” were both given by inspiration of God.

FIRST SCATTERED, THEN GATHERED.

A DEAR brother one time said that some of the truth which we bring up is calculated to *scatter* the Christians among whom his lot is cast. And immediately we said to ourselves, "Well if the Lord's people among whom *our* lot is cast would be scattered by proclaiming certain truths, the sooner we are scattered the better." At the same time we were certain of this, that if we have been gathered together according to God's truth, then the proclamation of that truth could not scatter us. This is easily seen. If the Christians, who are with our dear brother, have been gathered together by the Holy Ghost, surely they do not need to fear that God's Word would scatter them. If, however, they have come together merely by some human arrangement, and not in accordance with the Word of God, it need not be surprising if that Word would scatter them—only, however, to gather them together in accordance with that Word. What shall we say then to our dear brother and his brethren? We have simply to say, "Let there be room among you for a

whole Bible, and let it be open. Do not be afraid of anything that is written therein. Esteem all God's precepts concerning all things to be right. If the proclamation of certain truths *scatters* you, praise God for it. But be assured of this, that His Word will not leave you "scattered." He who scatters shall gather; but it will be *in accordance with His Word*. We are only seeking the wealth of God's people (Esth. x. 3), in saying these things; and our prayer is that they may be one. It is a sad position for God's children to be in, when certain portions of God's Word must not be read or expounded, else the result would be a scattering. If such were to be the result in our case, would it not be clear that the Lord had not gathered us? as it is written (Isa. liv. 15), "They shall surely gather together; but not by Me." As those who desire to be well-pleasing unto God, it surely becomes each one of us to ask the question, "Has the Holy Ghost gathered me into the company of Christians where I am? Have I been gathered there according to God's Word?" If such be the case, the Word of God can only bind me *more closely* to the Risen One, and to those gathered to Himself.

IS IT OF GOD?

IF you go into a work or undertaking which will not stand the light of God's Word, you often discover your mistake by the *failure* of that work. And thus it happens that believers go on for a long time in a wrong course, until the collapse of the work shows them that it had not been of God at all. But all this sad experience might have been avoided, if such believers had tested the work by Scripture *before they commenced*. If our intended work will bear the light of God's Word, we then go into it heartily and with a good conscience, knowing that God is with us. But if we have no "Thus saith the Lord" to inspire our zeal, a fear which gendereth to bondage comes over us, and our joy in the work ebbs and flows just in proportion to the success which may attend our efforts. At length experience teaches us we are on the wrong track—a thing however which we might have learned from God's Word at the first, and so saved ourselves much disappointment, not to speak of time lost for eternity. How much work there is, professedly for God, which is undertaken under some sudden impulse, without taking counsel at the

mouth of the Lord. By so acting, we are as a railway passenger who, when half-way on his journey, begins to enquire if he is in the right train, and for the first time consults the railway guide-book! But we who are the Lord's people have a guide-book; and, if we are using it as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, we shall make sure that all our undertakings are according to His Word. We may find a great deal of work to do which is according to man's wisdom, or according to other people's ideas. But if we would have joy in our work—successful or unsuccessful, whether they hear or whether they forbear—we must be clear as to this, that our work is *of God*. Thus we shall please the Lord now and rejoice in the day of Christ; not doing things which we have devised out of our own heart—not doing our own will, but the will of Him that sent us, that, like the Master, we may be able in some measure to say, "I do always those things that please Him."

—:o:—

WE do not glorify God so much by what we *do* as what we *are*.

THE sense that we are nothing makes us glad to forget ourselves; and then it is that Christ becomes everything to the soul.

FLESHLY ARGUMENT.

LET us beware of losing time and ruffling our own spirits by ungracious discussions with the world or with fellow-believers. "Foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes" (2 Tim. ii. 23). Beware of arguing with the cold, calculating worldly man, who so enjoys to "trap" the young believer with some piece of carnal reasoning. Whenever you begin to fight the world with the world's weapons, you need not be surprised if you suffer loss in the encounter. But you will get any number of professing born-again people who fight with carnal weapons. They delight in argument. If they fall in with a young believer, they give him a "cut" about something, and try in a sarcastic way to disturb him with some foolish and unlearned question. *Avoid such people.* You will easily know them by the spirit they are of, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Be thankful for all who seek "in the spirit of meekness" to help you,

not with their own carnal reasoning, but with, "Thus saith the Lord." But be also thankful that God has commanded you to avoid those disorderly people, and their soul-withering discussions. There may be profitable discussion—that is, a godly reasoning out of the Scriptures; and, if it is with a single eye and *in the meek and quiet spirit*, God will be glorified. But the servant of God must not *strive*. It was written of Christ, "He shall not strive." "As He is, so are we."

EXALT CHRIST.

HE must increase, but I must decrease." Such was John the Baptist's testimony. He was content to become less and less, so being Christ was exalted. He hid behind Christ. That is where all God's people should hide. John preached people off himself. He pointed them to Christ. It was as if he had said, "Don't look at me: behold *Him*—the Lamb of God." This is the preaching we want—preaching that will exalt Christ—preaching in which the preacher shall be lost sight of, and the Lord alone exalted.

TO WORSHIP HIM.

IF any one desires to know the meaning of *worship*, he has simply to go to the second chapter of Matthew. We read there of "wise men" (or magii), who had come from the east to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship Him." How did they worship Him? Did they go to *get*? or did they go to *give*? They went to *give*. When they were come into the house, we read that they "fell down and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh" (ver. 11). Such is a picture of worship. The general idea seems to be that worship consists in sitting and hearing some address, or in getting from the Lord in some way or other. But it is neither. It is not our getting, but our *giving*—giving to the Lord the adoration of hearts which He Himself has filled. From what bondage and

dissatisfaction we are delivered, when we know this. That we *are* blessed in thus seeking to worship Him we joyfully admit, for the Lord never allows us to be losers in seeking His face. But, nevertheless, we go to give unto Him—to worship Him. And thus it is that we are never disappointed, although no "gifted" speakers may be there.

NO WILL BUT GOD'S.

PAYSON said, "O what a blessed thing it is to lose one's will! Since I have lost my will, I have found happiness. There can be no such thing as disappointment to me, for I have no desire but that God's will may be accomplished."

EVERYTHING IN GOD.

ONE of the Lord's people, who had been rich, was asked how he could bear his reduced state so happily; to which he replied, "When I was rich, I had God in everything; and now, that I am poor, I have everything in God."

WHERE ARE THEY ALL?

A GREAT preacher is here; and what a number of believers turn out! From every corner they have come. "What a fine lot of Christians!" one feels inclined to say. But tarry for a little. A day or two elapses, and you drop unexpectedly into the prayer meeting. You look around, and you wonder where all the believers have gone. A few old sisters and a brother or two comprise all that are present! You ask what is the matter; and you are told that of course it is "only the prayer meeting." But, if the great preacher had been there, a large company of saints would have been there too. That is to say, believers run when some great man is to be there; but if it is simply to meet the King of kings and Lord of lords, how few feel constrained to go! Could there be a more conclusive evidence of the lukewarmness as well as the itching ears of these last days? We do not grudge the servant of Christ a goodly attendance of the saints. But why should the servant excel the Master? And why should we so easily find time to hear some gifted brother, while it is so hard to come together to wait *only on the Lord?*

ALTOGETHER LOVELY.

WHEN describing a believer's good qualities, a "but" is almost sure to come in, unless there be that love which thinketh no evil, and delighteth not in these "buts." The believer in question is described as a very nice brother and so on, *but* there is this little crookedness about him. It matters not who it is, there is always a "but"—a little draw-back of some kind. And we suppose such is true of us all. But this just causes me to think of Him who is "altogether lovely." No "buts" come in while describing *His* beauties, or gazing on the glories of His person. There is no crookedness—no drawback—nothing to repel—nothing to awaken distrust. In Him we find One in whom our souls can rest. The prince of this world came, but found nothing in Him. He was holy, harmless, undefiled. In Him our souls repose. By faith we behold Him, the spotless—perfect One. Such is our great High Priest; and we are *in Him*—accepted *in Him*—the *righteousness of God in Him*; and He is now appearing in the presence of God for us" (Heb. ix. 24).

GATHERED.

IT is true that we *meet* in the name of the Lord. But there is something more than a mere *meeting* together. We are *gathered*. That is the Scriptural word. "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name," &c. (Matt. xviii. 20). And we are gathered by the Holy Ghost—by Him who gathers the outcasts of Israel (Isa. lvi. 8). And the Holy Ghost gathers us *unto Christ*, for "unto Him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. xlix. 10). This shows the divine simplicity of our gathering together unto Him. So, beloved, let us hold fast what we have already: that our God gathers us by the Holy Ghost unto the name and person of the Lord Jesus Christ—the One whom He delighteth to honour. Satan or the world would gather us to different names. But God never does this. The wolf "*scattereth the sheep*" (Jno. x. 12), dividing them into various bodies, each owning a different name. But God *gathers* His sheep.

HE THAT HATH FRIENDS.

"A MAN that hath friends must show himself friendly" (Prov. xviii. 24). We are apt to think that "he that hath friends must expect friendly actions done to him." But such is not the case. We have no right to expect our brethren to show themselves friendly. And it is this expectation of friendliness from others that causes a deal of disappointment to some dear Christians. The only right I have in the matter is to show myself friendly. *That* is what I have a right to do: *that* is the thing which the Lord tells me I "must" do. Acting on the Scriptural precept, I am never disappointed in finding a lack of friendliness toward me, seeing I am nowhere told to expect it. And, in showing ourselves friendly, we realise the truth of that Scripture which says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 35).

—:o:—

"When my heart is filled with Christ, I have no heart or eye for the trash of the world."

BACK NUMBERS FOR THIS YEAR.

OUR back numbers for this year have been so much run upon that we have had to break on our reserve supply for binding, which, happily, is large. You can, therefore, have numbers for any or every month of the present year; and, if desired, you can have complete sets from January onwards. Judging from the demand we have had for complete sets for the present year, we have no doubt that this arrangement will commend itself to many.

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We generally put a single copy of the *Evangelist* into monthly parcels containing the *Pathway* only, as the subscriber who gets the packet may perhaps like to see the little gospel paper, although not ordering it for distribution. This accounts for the appearance of the single *Evangelist* in many of the parcels.

We are still responding to all the letters we have received desiring a sample packet of our monthly papers to bring before the saints. If you wish any for this purpose, please send to us for a free sample parcel, saying at same time how many you would require.

Orders for one copy monthly get the same attention as orders for fifty monthly.

ADDRESSES.

In sending orders, kindly let your *address* be plainly written, and say if Mr., Mrs., or Miss.

Please note this, as we have considerable "deciphering" to make out addresses, and sometimes fail to do so after all.

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WILLIAM SHAW, Maybole, Scotland.

THE Believer's Pathway.

No. 31.

JULY, 1882.

Vol. 3.

THE WEARING OF GOLD.

THIS is a subject which is very seldom brought up. There would seem to be a kind of understanding that it is one of those subjects which are best left untouched, seeing there is, among the Lord's people, so much diversity of opinion about it; or, at least, so much diversity of *practice*. No doubt, in believers' meetings, it has been felt a delicate matter to read and expound 1 Peter iii. 3, while some brother with a gold chain was sitting on your one hand, and on the other some sister with gold appendages. And, in speaking on the gold question, we must confess to a feeling akin to that of the kindly physician, who naturally shrinks from the performance of a painful but needed operation. Nevertheless, we must

call attention to the subject. It may be thought that we should not concern ourselves about outward adorning. But we find that our heavenly Father has concerned Himself about it, and given specific instructions on the subject; and that is sufficient warrant for our opening up this particular line of truth. Moreover, many of the Lord's dear ones are concerned in the matter, although, we are sorry to say, not in the way the Lord would have them concerned. No doubt much of this is due to defective teaching, or no teaching at all; for in this, as in many things, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea iv. 6).

The "sisters" being the weaker vessels, and more liable to be ensnared by the love of adornment, are specially addressed as to the wearing of gold. In 1st Peter iii. 3

we read, "Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." Then, in 1st Timothy ii. 9, we read, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array. And how any sister, knowing that such scriptures exist, can wear jewellery about her person, is something we cannot well understand. My dear sister, your Lord has commanded you not to be adorned with such things; and, if you are indulging in them, do you not see that you are walking in every-day disobedience to Him whom you call your Lord and Master? You do not mean to do that, perhaps; but you cannot fail to see that such is the case. But it may be you are like some dear sisters we have known, who "never

thought of it," and who "never had it pointed out to them." We remember one: she is now with the Lord—called away in the fair morning of life. She was one who "trembled at the Word" (Isa. lxvi. 2); and, as we pointed out to her that jewellery was forbidden by the Word of the Lord, we almost trembled too—knowing how eager she was to do whatever the mouth of the Lord hath spoken. She saw it in a moment; and, from that hour, she wore jewellery no more. The Lord had said it: that was enough for her; and she joyfully resigned what her Lord had forbidden her to wear. She did not attempt to justify herself by reasonings, nor by explaining away what the Word of the Lord had spoken. Hers was a joyful acquiescence; and the absence of the jewellery did certainly seem to be more in keeping with that meek and quiet spirit which was so soon to find its rest in Him whom her soul loved. She had "never seen it before." It may be that you, too, have never observed

it in the Word. But, now that your attention is drawn to it, there is only one course open for you, and that is to "put off" your jewellery from this time henceforth—not because we say it, for we do not say it; but *the Lord* says it; and the same Lord who said, "Do not steal," has also said you are not to wear "gold, or pearls, or costly array."

But supposing the wearing of gold had not been so plainly "named out" and forbidden in the Word of God, there is abundance of scripture to guide the Lord's children in the matter. And this leads us to consider the wearing of gold by the *brothers* as well as by the sisters. We remember only one case of a brother taking refuge in the circumstance that it is the *women* who are forbidden to wear gold. He considered, as he was not one of the women, that he was therefore entitled to wear a gold chain. But the whole tenor of Scripture is against such a conclusion. Moreover, Scripture says that

women are to have the ornament of "a meek and quiet spirit;" and who will say that the men are entitled to have a different spirit? But a few considerations will, we think, convince any one who desires to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men (Acts xxiv. 16).

1. God says, "Be not conformed to this world" (Rom. xii. 2). Gold chains and jewellery are emphatically *of the world*; and the world loves its own. (Hence we cannot expect any one *not born again* to see anything wrong in these things).

2. When we ask, What does a gold chain mean? we get no answer. It is simply to make a little display before the world or our brethren. Is this not loving the praise of men? It may be said the chain is to hold my watch; but a halfpenny band would hold it quite as well.

3. There is no *necessity* whatever to wear gold, and there is no necessity for any jewellery whatever.

4. If you wear gold you completely prevent yourself expounding any passage of Scripture relating to

the wearing of gold; for how can you speak to any sister about her ear-rings, while you wear gold on your person?

5. You are called to be *an example* of the believers. If you wear gold, you cause other believers (sisters included) to stumble over you. Could you conceive of Paul standing up with *a gold chain on*, and saying, "Be ye *followers of me*;" "The things which ye have *seen* in me, *do*"? (1 Cor. iv. 16; Phil. iv. 9).

6. If you wear gold, you tempt other believers to imitate you, whether they can *afford it* or not.

7. But why should you wear gold although you can afford it? Are you not a steward of God? A certain man was one time accused unto his master that he "had *wasted* his goods" (Luke xvi. 1).

8. Is it not wasting the Lord's goods when we take His money and hang it in gold upon our persons? How shall we answer the Lord when He asks what we did with that money? Are there no poor members of Christ?—no

heathen millions crying for the bread of life?—no faithful servants of Christ to be ministered unto? Surely then we have not a farthing to expend on gold for our persons.

We now leave this matter with our brothers and sisters scattered over the world. It is not so small a matter as some may imagine. The amount of money spent on outward display by professed children of God is, we believe, enormous. To look round us at some meetings of believers, and see ear-rings, brooches, chains, and rings, &c., one almost fancies he is back at some dazzling worldly concert; and we ask ourselves the question, "Is this the people that are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world? Is this the 'pilgrim band in a stranger land' who have their *treasure in heaven*, and are counting *all things* but *loss* for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord?" Then why these trinkets?—why these adornments to make a display, albeit we may be told they have a use? If Israel of old, God's earthly people, could

yield up their gold appendages to make a golden calf, shall we, His heavenly people, refuse to lay aside our adornments to please Him, to whom we are called to *yield ourselves* as those that are alive from the dead? The Lord give us to rise above what the world will think, and even what our brethren will think. And, instead of going as *near* to the world's ways and customs as we decently can, let us observe that godly expediency which will avoid even the appearance of evil, knowing there are so many believers to whom a very little example in the wrong direction will prove the excuse for going a long way further. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

—:o:—

"O! blessed be that soul that never prays, hears, or receives, but carries Christ to all, enjoys Christ in all, and brings Christ from all."

WILLING AND OBEDIENT.

IF ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isa. i. 19). Note the conditions: "willing" and "obedient." We would have "the good of the land" without being willing or obedient; but the Lord has placed the conditions first. We may profess to be *willing* to do what the Lord says. But the profession is not enough. There must be the actual obedience. Hence, "willing" and "obedient" are joined together. Then comes "the good of the land." It is impossible for a disobedient believer to be *enjoying* the blessings of the heavenly places. But, "the meek shall eat and be satisfied" (Ps. xxii. 26); even such as "remember His commandments *to do them*" (Ps. ciii. 18).

—:o:—

"GODLY sorrow, like weeping Mary, seeks *Christ*."

LET us begin by searching ourselves if we would be profitable reprovers of others.

IS IT OBEDIENCE?

IF I am walking in disobedience to the Lord in *one* thing, I have no right to believe that I am obeying Him in *any* thing. The Lord tells me to do a particular thing. It may be a little thing, or a great thing: it matters not. But it does not *suit me* to do it, and so it remains undone. But there are other things which the Lord tells me to do; and I do them. But *why* do I do them? Simply because it *suits me* to do them. *Such is no obedience at all.* A vast amount of what goes by the name of obedience is really nothing else than doing the things that please ourselves. It is altogether a question of *motive*. What is *my motive* for doing this thing? That is the point, and reaches to the root of the matter. When I was a little boy, I readily obeyed the command to get the fire-wood ready, because handling the axe was a pleasant recreation; but when I was told to be off to the sawmill for a barrowful of wood, that was "dull

work," and I rebelled at once. Now, if I had been in subjection to parental authority, I would have been just as eager to do the one thing as the other. I daresay, when getting the fire-wood ready, I looked *very like* an obedient boy; but whenever I was told to go to the sawmill, my self-pleasing was soon made manifest. And thus it is in our Christian experience. If our will is brought into subjection to God's will, we delight in doing what He says, simply because He says it—because it will please Him. "Even Christ pleased not Himself" (Rom. xv. 3). He came to do *the will of the Father* (Heb. x. 7). If we are "obedient children" (1 Peter i. 14) we will not sit down to consider: "Will this please me?—will this suit me?" No. The question will be, "Will this please the Lord? Is it the thing He has commanded?" If so, then let it be my joy, even although it be "dull work," or something that will even bring reproach for the name of Christ.

Now of the things which we have

spoken, this is the sum : It may be there is a particular precept of God's Word which you have not obeyed yet. You know that the Lord has commanded it to be done ; and no doubt you feel uncomfortable when that particular truth is proclaimed from God's Word. I do not say what it is. It may be one out of many things which might be named. But you know you have not given attendance to that precept. The question therefore which comes up here is this : Are you giving attendance to *any* of the Lord's precepts ? Don't be amazed at the question. You say there are many precepts which you obey. But what is your *motive* for obeying them ? "To please the Lord," you reply. But if it is really to please the Lord, would you not be as eager to please Him, in obeying *that* precept which you are neglecting ? Why don't you give attendance to *it* ? Does not that one precept, knowingly neglected, show that you obey the Lord only in so far as it is *convenient* ? We would not cause you

needless pain in speaking thus. But it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful ; and we would keep nothing back that is profitable. Beloved reader, test the character of your obedience. Take time to sit down and consider your motives. If you are knowingly neglecting some precept of God's Word, do not flatter yourself that you are "obeying the Word of the Lord." The *precept neglected* is the measure of your obedience, just as the strength of a chain is the strength of its weakest link.

TIME-SERVING.

THE Lord deliver us from that time-serving spirit which stands by, waiting to see what is going *to take* with the people before taking any definite step. Whether a thing *takes* or not, let us boldly do what God has said ; and then we will be able to say, I did this because the Lord commanded it, and not because others were doing it.

—:o:—

"I will therefore serve my God in all things ; myself in nothing."

"LORD, make me holy as well as happy, that I may love as well to glorify Thee as to be glorified of Thee."

“NONE OTHER NAME.”

NEW associations and bonds of union are springing up on every hand; and the more imposing the name, the greater the popularity of the movement. Sometimes it is a certain “band;” sometimes a certain “army.” But the noteworthy point is this, that people will have anything but the simple name of *Christ*. The word “Christ” has got too plain now-a-days; and the society of *Christians* which God has formed is not considered up to the times. Hence it is that whenever some man stands up to rally a company around him on some principle which he has *devised out of his own heart*, hundreds run to him at once and “join.” The thing becomes popular. Why? Because it is suited to the popular taste, be it the popular taste in believer or in unbeliever. When you search God’s Word for one of these popular systems, you do not find it there at all! Beloved, let us prove all things by the Word of God. If there ever was a time when this was more than ever needed, it is now. If you attempt to get up some new society—some new brotherhood or fellowship—among God’s people, it will be hailed with delight, even

although you have God’s children and the children of the Wicked One as joint members! Such things, we say, are hailed with delight. But let a faithful servant of God stand up and point out from God’s Word *His* society of *the Church* of the first-born; that Christ is the all sufficient rallying Word; and that the Holy Ghost gathers only unto Him—let some faithful servant proclaim these truths, and they are *not* hailed with delight. On the contrary, they raise a storm of opposition, the reason of which is simply this, that they are *the truths of God’s Word*. As it was with Christ, so is it with the Word of Christ. Was *He* despised and rejected of men? So is His Word. Did *He* ever become “popular,” even with His own brethren? Need it then be surprising if the great truths of His Word share the same rejection? The union of a few feeble saints to the alone Name of the Lord Jesus may be looked on as a very poor affair. But it is entirely a question of what does *God* think of it? Is this the brotherhood revealed in His Word? Is this *God’s* principle of gathering His saints together? Then we need *not* care although current opinion declare “there is no beauty in that way of things that we

should desire it." As Christ is, so are we in this world (1 John iv. 17). Was *He* despised and rejected of men? (Isa. liii. 3). So are we. Let us be content to be as our Master; and let us not be allured out of the path of rejection by any of the imposing schemes going on around us. We are already "joined" unto the Lord (1 Cor. vi. 17); we are already members of Christ (1 Cor. vi. 15): why should we run away and join any of the world's religious or reformation schemes? The name of Christ has been named upon us: why should we join ourselves to any other? The Holy Ghost has gathered us to the rejected Christ: how *can* we gather ourselves to any other name? Is not that Name above every name (Phil. ii. 9), despised though it be? Beware, then, "lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after *the tradition of men*, after *the rudiments of the world*, and not after Christ" (Col. ii. 8).

—:o:—

To know any one's mind you need to "keep company" with that one. And to know God's mind, we need to keep company with Him. This is not only the secret of power, but it is the secret of whatever light we have on God's truth.

6

SHORT PRAYERS.

“**A**ND Elisha prayed and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes that He may see” (2 Kings vi. 17). Elisha came to the point at once. He asked God for what he wanted, and then he stopped. This might give us a hint in the way of praying—especially *public* prayer, for we never met with one who required a hint to shorten his *private* prayer. But, in praying along with our brethren, we should just do what Elisha did: *ask the Lord for what we want and then stop*. Long, dreary, general prayers for everything, have no countenance from the Word of God; and the only effect they seem to have is to make believers drowsy. It has been remarked that the prayers recorded in Scripture are all short; and when long prayers are referred to in God's Word, it is certainly not in the way of commendation (Matt xxiii. 14). If we are led by the Spirit, it will be in accordance with the Word; and our prayers will bear some sort of resemblance to the prayers recorded in Scripture. Look at Asa's prayer for instance (2 Chron. xiv. 11). A single verse takes it all in. Then there is Paul's prayer concerning the Ephesian believers

(Eph. iii. 14). Some dear brethren seem to think that a prayer is not a prayer unless they pray for everything you could think of. If you were to go up to one of such dear brethren, after a long general prayer, and say, "What was that you were praying for?" he could not tell you! He had been asking the Lord for so many things, that he really could not remember the half of what he had been asking. We all know that this is the case, although it should not be. In such circumstances, how can the brother "watch" for the answer—or rather the many answers—to his prayer? But the remedy is simple. It is just to cry to God for whatever things you are burdened about. It may be only one thing or two things. Very well. Ask God for that one thing, or these two things. Tell the Lord what you want, and then stop, as Elisha did. But do not pretend to be burdened about a thing, if you are not burdened at all about it. A little honesty in this matter, and a little plain dealing with God when we come together, would drive the formality out of many a prayer meeting. Then younger brethren would feel constrained to put in their requests too; and, from every corner of the prayer meeting, you would

hear short pointed prayers going up to God, yea, and moving "the arm that moves the universe." And a word here to you, younger brethren. Don't be afraid to cry out to the Lord in the prayer meeting. In earthly families, when the little children begin to speak, it is a source of joy to the whole family. And so it is in the Church. Older brethren are greatly refreshed when this brother and that brother begin to open their mouths in the prayer meeting. You have the same boldness as they have to enter into the holiest. So do not make any excuses. "Open thy mouth wide," says the Lord, "and I will fill it" (Psa. lxxxii. 10). But let none of us forget that we are to lift up holy hands (1 Tim. ii. 8). It is only then that prayer can be with a good conscience, and that we can comply with the injunction to *pray in the Holy Ghost* (Jude 20).

WONDERFUL LOVE.

WHAT wonderful love—this love of Christ. Many waters cannot quench it. Time cannot impair it. Eternity will be too short to measure it. Happy they who have come under its constraining power; who have heard, with the ear of faith, these blessed words, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love."

FAIRER THAN THE CHILDREN OF MEN.

WHEN walking in the light, this is our opinion of Christ: "Thou art fairer than the children of men" (Ps. xlv. 2). When walking in darkness, our opinion is altogether different: "There is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isa. liii. 2). The worldling sees no beauty in Christ; and, if we live like the worldling, we shall have the worldling's opinion of Christ. This is why so many have so little heart for Christ. In spirit they are dwelling among the Egyptians; and you know that the pillar, which was light to God's people, was only darkness to Pharaoh's hosts" (Ex. xiv. 20). To such believers the name of "Jesus Christ my Lord" has no sweetness. They are walking in darkness, and know not whither they go, because darkness has blinded their eyes. In heart, if not by lip, they are saying, "We desire not the knowledge of Thy ways." But, walking in the light

of His countenance, how fair is Christ! The children of men cannot compare with Him. His yoke is easy; His burden is light; His commandments are not grievous; His name is an ointment poured forth. My Lord and my God, I would follow Thee whithersoever thou goest. I would ever have Thy beauty before me; and thus shall Thy beauty be ever upon me. I would at all times be able to say, "Thou art fairer than the children of men." As Thy delights were with the sons of men, so would my delight be in Thee. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee" (Ps. lxxiii 25).

"MORE LIGHT, LORD, MORE LIGHT."

Two of the Lord's people were praying together. The path seemed difficult for one of them at least, and he was crying, "More light, Lord, more light," when the voice of the other sounded in his ear: "But are you obeying the Lord according to the light you have got?" This question rather troubled him, for he afterwards confessed he was *not* using the light he had already got.

OUR friends will kindly look over our not replying in detail to their various congratulatory letters as to the *Pathway*. Suffice it to say, we note with joy all the communications we receive, indicating that our labour is not in vain in the Lord. Seeing it has seemed good unto Him to give, through these pages, a word in season unto weary ones, let us ascribe glory unto God, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift.

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THE
Believer's Pathway.

No. 32.

AUGUST, 1882.

Vol. 3.

THE SUBJECT OF
CONVERSATION.

IF you want to know what is in a man's heart, all you have to do is to observe what he talks most about, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. xii. 34). And if we the Lord's people are not very sure how our souls are getting on, we have simply to cast a backward glance over the past few days or weeks, and ask the question, "What have I been talking about?—what have been the subjects of my conversation?" And immediately we discover whether our *hearts* have been occupied with the absent One, and the things pertaining to His kingdom. Of the Lord Jesus it is written that, after His resurrection, He was seen of them forty days, and *speaking of the things*

pertaining to the kingdom of God (Acts i. 3). Such was the theme of *His* conversation during these forty days of His resurrection life on earth; and such is to be the theme of *our* conversation as resurrection ones in Him. *Is it* the theme of our conversation, when we fall in with one another and have a little chat? Now it is not good to make excuses in these matters. People are never ashamed to talk about those they love. If the mind is set on things above, where Christ is, our speech will very soon "bewray" us. The stranger in a strange land casts a wistful eye toward that distant home where loved ones long to greet him; and no theme to him so sweet as home and dear ones there. Need it then be wonderful that we, who have been born from above, and called with a heavenly

calling, should cast a wistful eye to that day when our absent Lord shall take unto Himself His great power and reign? What more natural than that our conversation should be of the things pertaining to His kingdom? The two disciples who went down to Emmaus were speaking of the crucified One. Their hearts were occupied with Him, and, as a natural consequence, their tongues were occupied with Him too. "And it came to pass that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them . . . and He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another?" (Luke xxiv. 17). They were not the least taken aback at the question. They were ready in a moment to say what they had been speaking about. That was a very simple occurrence, no doubt. But let us apply it to ourselves. We are making a call, or somebody is calling on us. The conversation is going on briskly; but if the Lord's voice

were to be heard, or His Word read, which says, "*What communications are these that ye have one to another?*"—would we be ready to reply, "We are speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God?" We need not conceal the fact that, in many little knots of Christians, such a question would be found a very trying one. Why? Because the subject of conversation was current news—current fashions—stories about other believers, or, perhaps, what the newspapers were saying. Now this ought not so to be. We have our earthly work and duties to attend to; but these will be none the less, but all the more faithfully attended to if our citizenship is really felt to be in heaven. Was not the Master a carpenter (Mark vi. 3)? and Paul a tent-maker (Acts xviii. 3)? Yet was not the One ever about His Father's business? while the latter could say, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." We cannot conceive of our Lord sitting down to discuss

the fortunes of the Roman Empire. Neither can we suppose that Paul would waste his time in hearing or talking about politics. Indeed, he determined to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Like the Lord Himself, he was ever speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And nothing less than this is the standard for us who profess to have died with Christ. He has left us an example that we should follow his footsteps. The argument may be brought up that to confine our conversation to the things of the kingdom would be dreary work. Quite true, if we are of those who are *at ease in Zion*. But if we are "following on" to know the Lord, we find that in His presence there is "fulness of joy." The two who went down to Emmaus did not find it dreary work speaking of Him whom their soul loved, and of the things of His kingdom. On the contrary, we hear the one saying to the other, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He

opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke xxiv. 32). We are told by the Word of the Lord to let no corrupt communication proceed out of our mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace (Eph. iv. 29). If this scripture were duly pondered, it would be the death-blow to a vast amount of unedifying conversation among us. "Will this that I am about to say be to the use of edifying? Will it minister grace?" If not, it will surely be better for me to be silent, even at the risk of being thought dull or uncommunicative. How apt we are to forget that "in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise" (Prov. x. 19). But the various excuses brought up to justify worldly conversation only serve to show the pressing need there is for the *heart* to be right with God. Out of it are the issues of life (Prov. iv. 23). In vain we shall labour to turn the current of our words, if the current of our thoughts—yea of our lives—be not in

harmony with the mind of Christ. If we would be delivered from the soul-withering effect of profitless conversation, we must begin in the inner court of our own hearts. Thus shall we learn to have our speech always with grace seasoned with salt (Col. iv. 6), and be swifter to hear than to speak (Jas. i. 19). But if our hearts are inditing a good matter touching the King, we shall not be altogether silent witnesses. Our tongue, as it is written, shall be "the pen of a ready writer;" and in some little measure we shall be able to say, "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary" (Isa. l. 4).

—:o:—

A CURE for argument and strife about questions not to edification, is to get hid in God's pavilion. "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man; Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues" (Psa. xxxi. 20).

THANKFULNESS.

THE Lord asked, "Where are the nine?" He had cured ten lepers, and only one had returned to give glory to God (Luke xvii. 17). He remarked their ingratitude. How often the same thing is to be found in us. We ask the Lord to deliver us in some little matter, and we scarcely remember to thank Him! We are surrounded by His mercies—His goodness follows us. Yet we often receive it as if we were *entitled* to it. "Unthankful, unholy," are marks of the dark apostate days. Let us take heed to the injunction, "Be ye thankful." "In everything give thanks." Acknowledge the Lord in *all* thy ways. He takes note of the thankful spirit. Praise glorifies Him. Be not forgetful of His benefits. A broken and contrite spirit sees the Lord's hand in everything, and thanks Him for anything. His mercies are new every morning. O Lord, we would receive everything as from Thy hand, and still be praising Thee.

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS.

“**ORDINATION,**” or “The laying on of hands,” is a subject which seems to keep not a few of God’s people bound hand and foot. Indeed, with some it may be said to be the only link that binds them to their denomination. Their impressions concerning the matter are very hazy and indistinct. The only thing they seem clear about is this, that it would be a very serious thing to do away with “ordaining.” In short, they hold “the laying on of hands” in a kind of reverential awe. This, however, arises purely from their religious upbringing. But we are brought up to believe many things which we have afterwards to throw aside, when we find such things to be opposed to the teaching of Scripture. We believe, and we think we have shown plainly in these pages, that there is abundance of scripture to guide the child of God out of all the sects and denominations, even although “ordination” remained an unexplained mystery. Yet we will pause to look into the matter in the light of Scripture. The passage which is considered so hard to get over is in 1 Tim. iv. 14—“Neglect not the gift that is in thee,

which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” Now, when we turn to 2 Tim. i. 6, we find Paul saying to Timothy, “Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of *my hands.*” We thus see that the gift was communicated to Timothy by prophecy, by the laying on of *Paul’s* hands. The gift was not communicated by the hands of the presbytery. They were simply associated with Paul in the act. The presbytery—that is, the elder brethren—had come together for the occasion. Thus, Paul is the prominent figure in the whole proceeding; and we have seen that it was by his hands the gift was imparted. It is contended by some, that the ordination of Timothy is the example for the church now. But a special gift was communicated at his ordination. What gift is communicated in the ordaining of a pastor in these days? There is none. How signally Timothy’s case fails as an example. Acts xiii. 3 may be pointed to as another example of laying on of hands, although no gift was communicated. True, it is an example of laying on of hands, but, *not of ordaining.* In that case, as you can easily see, the laying on of hands was simply an

expression of fellowship with two who were starting on a special mission. The two were, Barnabas and Paul, and the laying on of hands could not mean ordination in their case as they had been recognised ministers of Christ long before ; and no one will say that these brethren at Antioch ordained Paul the apostle! We thus see how little there really is in the plea for laying on of hands, in the way of ordaining. We admit that we see Paul ordaining by the laying on of hands : but, where is the church authorized to do that? Some say they have ordaining because it is *in the book*. But we have as good a right to ordain *apostles*, for they too are *in the book*. The question is simply this : where is the church's authority for ordaining? We are told that Timothy and Titus ordained elders. They did ; but it was as divinely commissioned by Paul. The church was never invested with that power. Nor were any special body of men ever set apart to do the ordaining. I asked a brother, a clergyman, where the men who ordained him got their authority to ordain him. "If some of us Christians here," I said, "laid our hands on one of our number and ordained him to be a minister, you would say we

had *no right* to do so. Where did the men who ordained you, get *their* right?" The question was felt to be awkward, simply because no body of men on earth have power to ordain. Another brother said that Timothy was to commit certain things to faithful men who would be able to *ordain* others also (2 Tim. ii. 2). But I had to point out that the passage does not say that. It reads, "Who shall be able to *teach* others also"—a very different thing. It is noteworthy that *ordaining* is always mentioned in connection with *elders*. There is *no such thing* in Scripture as the ordination of a *pastor*. This was evidently felt to be a difficulty in the denominations ; but it was got over by calling the pastor a *teaching elder*. By changing his name, they have managed to preserve ordination, which seemingly must be preserved at any cost.

It may now be asked how we get ministers, if we don't ordain them. We reply (as we have said before in these pages), the Lord gives pastors, teachers, overseers, &c., as it pleases Him, and we thankfully receive what He gives. He has given us marks whereby we may know them whom He has gifted and sent—those who watch for our souls ; who have spoken

unto us the Word of God, and so on. But we are *never* told to obey them who have been ordained or set apart by man. God deals in realities. His ministers are known in this, that they *do the work of His ministers*, in responsibility to God alone. The gifts of the ascended Lord are not difficult to recognise; and it is the simple duty of God's people to acknowledge all such, and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake; for whoso rejects the gift, rejects the Giver. Ordaining, or laying on of hands by man, is thus seen to be a mere assumption of power. It does not communicate a gift, as in Timothy's case. Then, when we ask those who ordain, "By what authority" they do these things, we find they have no authority whatever. We have also seen that no pastor was ever "ordained" under any circumstances. Moreover, a minister of Christ, is a minister of Christ apart from, and in spite of man's ordination altogether. Man can neither make nor meddle in the matter. Man may have a ceremony, and a laying on of hands, and declare him a duly ordained minister of Christ. But he was a minister of Christ before men laid their hands on him at all; and man's ceremony


added nothing whatever to the gift of the ascended Lord. But it is a well-known fact, that thousands are "ordained" who have never been converted to God. It may well be asked, What does *ordaining* do for them? It cannot impart life to their dead souls. They still remain what they were—servants of the devil, capable of doing nothing but serve him. This may be considered strong language. Well, weigh the matter calmly. If they are not servants of the devil, *what are they?* The laying on of hands cannot change that heart which is enmity against God. The unconverted clergyman is simply what he was before, with this added, that he is now a so-called "minister," and by virtue of his official position, he has many souls under his care. But one shudders to think of the terrible spectacle—souls professedly led and fed by one who has never been born again, leaving before us the unanswerable question, "How can one lead souls to God while his mind is enmity against God?" Yet the unconverted clergyman is pointed to as an "ordained" man; and the remark is made that "the Lord put him in the pulpit"! Could there be a grosser caricature of God's Word? Yet, this is only the natural outcome

of the system of "ordaining" practised in these days. We are not surprised that the world is pleased with it. The strange thing is, that the Lord's people have not seen through the matter long ago.

We would now close by pointing out the contrast between man's order of things, and God's order. God ordains Paul: Paul commissions Titus: and then Titus ordains elders in the churches of Crete. The thing, you see, commenced with God, and *came down* from Him. *The sheep were never consulted at all.* Such is God's order. But in man's order of things, the sheep (and often the worlding) are the very first people who are consulted; and it is left to them to say what kind of pastors or overseers they would like! Man's system, you see, begins with man, and would fain rise upward to God. Man takes the place of the chooser, while he should take that of the humble receiver. Thus, man's way is generally God's way turned upside down.

But we must now close, trusting we have been enabled so to speak on this subject, as to deliver some honest seeker after truth. We commend all such to *God*, and to *the Word of His grace*.

CURIOSITY.

URIOSITY is not one of the Christian virtues. By curiosity we mean anxiety to pry into other people's affairs, and eagerness to know all that is going on. It is noteworthy that the Lord Jesus *never satisfied mere curiosity*. If one of the world asks the question, "Are there few that be saved?"—the answer is, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate" (Luke xiii. 24). If it is an apostle whose curiosity is aroused, the result is the same. Peter is anxious to know how it will fare with John; and the question is asked, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Here, again, the Lord will not satisfy mere curiosity. The answer is simply, "What is that to thee? Follow *thou* Me" (John xxi. 22). The worldling makes himself busy about other people's affairs; but the Christian, who is taught of God, has brought all his desires into the one channel—"that I may know Him" (Phil. iii. 10). There may be things which the glory of God demands our looking into; but there is a vast amount of inquisitiveness among Christians—asking news and giving news—which is not at all for God's glory nor to edification.

AT LAZARUS' GRAVE.

(John xi).

WE see Him there, at once the Man of Sorrows and the mighty God—the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. What tender sympathies awoke these tears! Truly, “we have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” We hear the standers-by saying, “Behold how He loved him!” Love immeasurable was there. But there also was *power* as boundless, as that love was deep. Death had been in that family; and the fondly-loved brother had already seen corruption. He was now past all human hope. But the Prince of Life was there—“the mighty God.” His voice is heard; “Lazarus, come forth.” And in a moment death yielded up its charge, and the grave was robbed of victory. What avails infinite love, if it be not joined with infinite power? But *our Saviour* is He whose love passeth knowledge, while His power knows no limit. He is mighty to save.

TO HIM SHALL BE GIVEN.

WHOSOEVER hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have” (Luke viii. 18). This passage may be applied in many ways. You can apply it to our coming together. “To him that hath a desire for the meeting, shall more desire be given.” “To him that hath time for the prayer meeting, shall more time be given; and from him that ‘hath not time,’ shall be taken away even the time which he seemeth to have.” In short, to him who hath a heart for Christ, shall more be given; and so on.. Let us value our privileges, and *use* what God has given us, else He will take it away. He allows nothing to waste. The servant who made no use of his one talent had it taken from him and given to him who had ten talents. Grace and opportunities are alike given us *to use*.

—:o:—

“I never go from Thee, but with Thee.”

HIS WORD—HIS NAME— HIMSELF.

IN Isa. xxvi. 8 we read, "Yea, in the way of Thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for Thee; the desire of our soul is to Thy name, and to the remembrance of Thee." There are three things there, and they beautifully illustrate how "the New Testament lies hid in the Old." First: Waiting for the Lord *in the way of His judgments*; that is, *according to His Word*. What does *the Word* say? That must always be the first thing. God always honours His Word: let us honour it too. Second: The desire of our soul is to *His name*. No sooner do we begin to delight in God's Word than there springs up a desire to *the Name of Christ*. We then realise the attractive power and the all-sufficiency of that Name. Third: *The remembrance of Him*. This is what comes next. We would *remember Him* in all our ways, and in accordance with His Word we rejoice to come together to *break bread in remembrance of Him*. So there are the three things: According to His Word—Desire to His Name—Remembrance of Himself.

HONEST TRADES.

(Titus iii. 14. margin).

WE are called to glorify God in our earthly calling. Paul glorified God in making tents. Paul made them "as to the Lord, and not to men" (Eph. vi. 7). It was a calling in which he could abide *with God* (1 Cor. vii. 24). Paul could go to the Lord about it, and ask Him what he thought of this and that and the other thing. Do we thus take counsel at the mouth of the Lord concerning our earthly business or occupation? If we cannot abide in it *with God*, let us give it up at once. If we are so doubtful about it that we cannot lay it before God and ask His opinion on this point and that other point, there is something seriously wrong. Let us bring it into the light without delay, and ask the question, "O, Lord, is this an honest trade?—is it one that shall glorify Thee?"

—:o:—

"IF you are in communion with Christ, you will readily detect what is not of Him."

ALWAYS ABOUNDING.

(1 Cor. xv. 58).

IT is Saturday afternoon; and Brother ——, a young brother, has just been in for 150 leaflets for the unsaved. He told me he had got burdened about a village seven miles distant; and he was on his way thither to “deliver his soul” in his own humble way—house-to-house visitation, handing in a tract, and putting in a word as there was opportunity. Dear brother! The Lord bless him. He works from six to six, except on Saturdays, and was even not so well this week; yet he has fourteen miles of travel before him to-night, for there is no railway to that village. He goes alone; and yet he is not alone—(you understand me). He is one of the quiet, faithful ones, whose desire is in some little way to be a witness for his absent Lord in the midst of a world that lieth in the wicked one. The Lord send many such.

CORRESPONDENCE.

AS was to be expected, the article on the wearing of gold brought us in a number of letters; and it was very refreshing for us to see such hearty approval of the article, for, with but few exceptions, our remarks were hailed with joy. Correspondents seem to be almost of the one opinion—viz., that there is *no need whatever* for jewellery. One brother, however, asks where we are to draw the line as to adorning. We reply that it may not be easy to draw *the* line in everything; but it is easy to draw *a* line in many things. So, where you can draw *a* line, draw it.

Some contend that if wearing of gold is forbidden, so is putting on of apparel. But 1 Tim. ii. 9 shows it to refer to “*costly array*.”

Others lay all the stress on the *adorning*, and seem to think that we may wear gold and pearls and costly array, *provided* we do not put them on for adornment! But this is surely a dangerous way of expounding Scripture. Let us avoid the appearance of what is not right. Let us avoid things that are even doubtful.

The “Prodigal son” (Luke xv.) is sometimes referred to as an *example* for wearing a ring. But the drapery of a parable of Eastern life cannot be taken as our guide in such matters. If so, we need not wonder that some professing Christians who *dance* should point to the “Prodigal son” as *their* example for dancing; for, in the parable, “music and dancing” are mentioned as well as the ring.

The only other mention of the ring, which we are aware of, in the New Testament, is in James ii. 2: “If there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring in goodly apparel.” Any one can see, however, that this is not by any means given as an example for us to follow.

A letter is just in from a sister saying she believes the article appeared in answer to prayer.

A SISTER in the Lord—one who seems to have been chosen in the furnace of affliction—says, she has put us on her *praying list*. The knowledge of this is refreshment in itself. We are more and more feeling the need of being remembered by the Lord's people at the Throne. We would again say, "Brethren, pray for us." Let our hands be held up, lest Amalek prevail.

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"THE HIGHER LIFE."

FOR several years a movement has been going on which is generally known as the "Higher Life Movement." It had its origin in some of the Lord's people coming together to seek for enduement with power from on high. Those who thus came together testified to such wonderful blessing having been received, that fellow-believers were stirred up to make the inquiry: "If this blessing is a blessing, why should I not have it too?" The result was that other and larger meetings (or "Conventions") were held, until these have taken the shape of a regular series of meetings, from time to time, attended by Christians of all denominations. The movement was at first called the "higher life movement;" but, as this was

found to be not exactly a Scriptural phrase, it has gradually been done away with, at least by those more closely connected with the movement; and now these meetings are known simply as "meetings for the promotion of spiritual life," and such like. The distinctive doctrines, early identified with the holiness movement, were the soul-liberating truths of *our standing in the risen Christ*. It was shown that we are *complete in Him*—that the old Adam nature has been condemned as worthless and incurably bad, and that every believer in Jesus is in *the new creation*; that judgment on account of sin had *already* passed over us *in Christ*; that we have died *in Him*, been buried *with Him*, are risen *with Him*, and seated *with Him* in the heavenlies; and that the very life of the Son of God is *our*

power to walk *in Him*, as a holy and separated people unto Himself, above all people that are on the earth. It is not surprising that such truths had an emancipating effect; and that of many saints it might be truly said that scales fell from their eyes as they beheld the things that were freely given to them of God. Now, no true follower of Christ can fail to rejoice in seeing—in however small a degree—a revival of forgotten or neglected truth. No doubt the great emancipating truths of the holiness movement are truths with which many of us have been long familiar. Indeed great numbers of the Lord's people, who were never at any "conventions," have for years rejoiced in these great truths, and lived in the power of them too. And how can we do otherwise than rejoice in seeing these precious doctrines revived, although not exactly in the way we could wish. The discovery may lead to a further discovery. These dear believers have been led to see their standing in the *risen Christ*,

and that all fulness is theirs in Him. "The Word of God says it." They appeal to the Word. Now, may it not be that their next step will be to see their *identity* with the *rejected Christ*, and our gathering together unto Him outside the camp? If the Word of God is all-sufficient in the one case, it is all-sufficient in the other. At any rate let us hail with joy every token of increased reverence for the Word of God—let us rejoice in seeing among His people any desire, however feeble, for "a closer walk," even although we may not feel called by the Word of God to join affinity with all or any who may say, "Come and let us have a meeting." The truth is, the holiness movement has been carried on with this understanding, that nothing must be said about *Church* truth. That is, the divisions among God's people must not be referred to. Baptism and Breaking of Bread must not be brought up, while on no account would it do to mention that crying evil—sitting at the Communion Table with

the avowedly unconverted, thereby making them believe they are worshippers, while God says, "Have *no fellowship* with the unfruitful works of darkness;" "What communion hath light with darkness?" &c. (Eph. v. 11; 2 Cor. vi. 14). It is thus clear that, with the best intentions, the movement has not been accompanied with an open Bible. God never makes it a condition of blessing, that we are to put two leaves of His Book together, and keep back certain truths lying between them. We humbly believe that our position in the *risen Christ inside the veil* is no less important than our identity with the *rejected Christ outside the camp*. In the holiness movement, it seems to have been forgotten that obedience to the revealed will of God is as needful in one department of truth as another, and that true holiness and true obedience are inseparably linked together. This concealment of certain truths (however good the motives for so doing) has doubtless hindered many from

having fellowship in this effort for leading God's people on to a higher and a holier life. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty—a part of which liberty will surely be to open God's Word wherever His Spirit leads, and "preach Jesus," whether it be as the risen One and our place in the heavenlies, or as the rejected One, and our gathering together unto Him.*

Certain "conventions" were found very refreshing—so many Christians all together, and every denominational name forgotten—it was "so blessed." So far, good. But whenever the convention was over, every denominational name was brought back to remembrance. Perhaps five brethren went up from this place to the convention, and found it blessed to be together. But on getting back to their own town they divided off into five denominations. Now, if at the convention the Lord caused them

* It is noteworthy that, in our Lord's first ministry in Nazareth, as recorded by Luke (iv. 29), the attempt to cast Him over the brow of the hill was caused by His opening up Scriptures which His audience did not wish to hear.

to forget all names of division, who brought these names back to remembrance? Did God separate these five brethren? Nay. Why then did they *not continue to be* together? The explanation seems to be that if, at the convention, the oneness of all believers had been proclaimed—the name and person of Christ the centre of our gathering together—no name to be owned but His—and His Word alone to be our guide: if, we say, such truths had been proclaimed and obeyed, the result would have been that, when certain leading clergymen got home from the convention, they would not have found a *living* soul in their congregations. Why? Because all the *living* ones would be found *together*, no one seen in the midst but Christ, and all enjoying the blessedness of the convention, seven days in every week.

We now come to ask the question: How does this holiness movement affect those of us who own no name but the Name of Christ—who have come out unto Himself? An old Latin proverb

says, "Learn from an enemy." Much more then should we learn from our friends, although they may not see with us in many things. Now, some dear brethren seem somewhat alarmed when this subject of "holiness" is brought up. But we confess what alarms us is the growing worldliness among saints. So far as we are able to judge of the spiritual condition of things around us, we would say there is a very urgent call for Holy-Ghost-living. The simple truth is this—*it is the power of God we need*. As we have heard it said, "Whether there be a *higher* life or not, it is certain there is plenty of *lower* life." But the Word of God will furnish us with the form of sound words, and that is "*the life*" also of Jesus made manifest in these mortal bodies (2 Cor. iv. 11). And we do not need to conceal any of God's Word. We carry an open Bible with us into this great subject of holiness unto the Lord. Why should not such a subject engross our attention? We do not say there is any necessity to go to

a particular spot to "renew our espousals," or "consecrate ourselves" anew unto the Lord. Under our own "vine and fig-tree" we can meet with God. In the gatherings of His saints, why should there not be an unceasing time of blessing?—the Lord our God felt to be dwelling among us, and the shout of a King ever heard within our borders? We do not need to sacrifice a single particle of the truth which God has already taught us from His Word. That which we have already, let us hold fast till He come. In the way of His judgments let us wait for Him (Isa. xxvi. 8). Let us seek Him, as the hart panting after the water brooks (Ps. xlii. 1). While avoiding mere sentimentality on the one hand, and a mere system of doctrine on the other, let us seek unto *the Lord*, with the holy resolve that if, on this side of the glory, there is a path of power and blessing hitherto unknown to us—*by the grace of God that path shall be ours.*

:o:—

"LORD, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble" (Psa. x. 17).

NOTHING TO TELL.

UNCONVERTED preachers never tell their conversion. That is a settled point. You never hear them say, "I am saved, praise God," or, "I was converted at such a time." You never hear them speak of the time *before they were born again*. Now, if a preacher is a saved man, you will hear him making reference to his conversion every now and again. We could mention some well-known preachers, who tell their conversion nearly everywhere they go. We know that Paul told his conversion often. But with the unconverted preacher it is entirely different. He keeps clear of the subject. He cannot tell anything about his conversion, for the simple reason that he has got *nothing to tell*. This is the case, alas, with thousands of preachers in these days; and we are not surprised that the world loves its own. But when, like Paul, a preacher has "found mercy," he can stand up with holy boldness and say, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul" (Psa. lxvi. 16).

EXCEPT THEY BE AGREED.

IT is very sad to see a child of God keeping company with the unconverted in any way; but when we see a converted young man keeping company with an unconverted young woman, or a young sister receiving the addresses of a young man of the world, it is an evil which may well be called a calamity. In such circumstances we feel disposed to ask, How can such a thing be? Indeed in the Word of God we find a similar question. It is in Amos iii. 3: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" It is clear they cannot. Therefore they must be agreed. We thus have the melancholy spectacle of a child of God and a child of wrath agreed. Terrible! People do not walk together except they are agreed. How that young sister must have come down from her excellency before she could be agreed with that young man whose heart—however amiable he may be—is enmity against God! But a single

reference to the Word of God would have shown that we are to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. v. 11). What communion hath light with darkness? What fellowship can the *dead* have with the *living*? Just think of that dear sister who is "not of the world" even as Christ is not of the world. She is a member of His body, and professes to wait for her absent Lord to take her out of a doomed world to be for ever with Himself. And yet she receives the attentions of one who is dead in sins, and concerning whom God says, Have no fellowship with such a person. How *can* you walk together? Are *you* agreed with an enemy of Christ? Surely never. But that dear sister cannot have been testifying for her absent Lord, else the unconverted young man would not have dared to join himself to her. There must have been something about her to draw his carnal eye. If a sister is walking with God, and testifying for Christ, would that unconverted

young man fancy *she* was suitable company for *him*? You could not conceive of such a thing. Nor would a sister, walking thus with God, receive for a moment the attentions of a worldling, be he ever so polished and agreeable. God's Word declares such a thing to be impossible: they *cannot* walk together, for they are *not agreed*. And when, in the Church, we see one beginning to find congenial company in the unconverted, it is for us to know that such a one has grievously departed in soul from the Lord; and it is for us to humble ourselves before God, saying, "We have sinned;"* and seeking to restore such an one in the spirit of meekness. But while doing this, let us not forget to go to the "Head of the House" about it. The Lord He is God. Is anything too hard for Him? If

* See Joshua vii. 11, where the Lord says, "*Israel* hath sinned," although seemingly Achan alone had been the transgressor. It is a healthy sign of our spiritual state, if, when one member suffers we all suffer, and when one member sins, we take the matter home to ourselves, and ask, in the presence of God, if *we* are not indirectly to blame through our own careless walking, or lack of godly care and vigilance.

we are groaning over the evil in His House, let us not think that *He* is unconcerned about it. Nay, rather it is *His* concern which has become ours as members of His body.

The plea is sometimes made: "But I believe the young man will be converted." Vain refuge! Expecting God to step in and convert the young man, that *you may have what God has forbidden!* Such would indeed be sinning that grace may abound, and doing evil that good may come (Rom. iii. 8). God *may* convert in such a case, as He may convert any one. But who shall dare with unholy boldness thus to presume on the grace of our God? "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," is a scripture that directly applies to the child of God. And thus it happens that Satan will sometimes get the young man to *profess* conversion, that the young sister may be brought within the toils, and reap according to her sowing. In one case, in which it was our solemn duty to testify what God

had said, we left the sister with these words: "You are sowing the wind, and you shall reap the whirlwind" (Hosea viii. 7)—words which have been only too sorrowfully fulfilled. But if it be a brother who would seek the companionship of some young woman of the world, the case is in nowise different. Concerning God's ancient people it was considered a "great evil" and transgressing against God (Neh. xiii. 27) for the holy seed to mingle themselves with the people of the land (Ezra ix. 2). And it is surely no less an evil and a transgression for the holy seed—His heavenly family—to mingle themselves with those who know not God, and who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. i. 8). "Be ye separate, saith the Lord." How can we do this great evil, and sin against God?

—:o:—

"As the body needs its meal-times, so must you sit down at your heavenly Father's Word, until He has satisfied your mouth with good things, and renewed your strength like the eagle's."

"IN THE LORD."

SCRIPTURE enjoins that marriage must be "in the Lord" (1 Cor. vii. 39). Now this expression "in the Lord" has greater significance than if it had simply said, "in Christ." When dealing with "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," the change, even of a word, means something. All God's people are *in Christ* as to their standing; and yet how many there are who fail to give Him His place as *Lord*. "No condemnation to them which are *in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. viii. 1) is true of *all* God's people. "In Christ" points to our standing; but "in the Lord" refers to our subjection to Christ *as our Lord*. It is thus clear that to marry *in Christ* (though, so far, good) may be quite a different thing from marrying *in the Lord*. Thus, if a young sister, separated to the name and person of our Lord Jesus Christ, were to marry a Christian who is a member of the State Church, or some such unscriptural fellowship, the union would be unhappy in the extreme, although a union *in Christ*. Hence the importance, first of all, of giving heed to the Scriptural injunction, "*Be of the same mind in the Lord*" (Phil. iv. 2).

UNCONVERTED PREACHERS.

SHOULD a child of God go to hear an unconverted man preach? But the question should rather be: "*How can a child of God go to hear an unconverted man preach?*" A great living preacher is reported to have said, "If you go once to hear an unconverted man preach, it is an infliction; and if you go twice it is a crime." Some of the Lord's people seem to be rather in darkness on this point. But, with an open Bible before us, the question is one not at all difficult to solve. How can an unconverted man tell others of a salvation which he has never known himself? To ask if such a one *could* preach Christ is the same as to ask, "Shall the dead arise and praise Thee?" (Ps. lxxxviii. 10). We do not find in God's Word that any unconverted man was ever called by the Holy Spirit to preach Christ. The Lord is not "in a strait" that He should go down among the unconverted to get *them* to carry the tidings of

salvation. It is remarkable how Christ closed the mouths of the devils, when they said they knew Him (see Mark i. 25, 34; Luke iv. 35, 41). "Hold thy peace," He said to them. He would have no testimony from devils; and He wants no testimony from the unconverted. Some will argue on behalf of unconverted preachers that they have been *appointed*. But *who* appointed them? Was it the Holy Ghost? Nay, verily. Then their appointment counts for nothing. Of them the Lord says, "*I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied*" (Jer. xxiii. 21). Just think of a child of God sitting down to be fed and built up and edified by *a dead man!* And just think of poor blind sinners being "*pointed to Christ*" by a servant of the devil! That is exactly what it comes to. You can make it neither more nor less. The Lord has said, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. xv. 14). That is conclusive. As to God's people following a

blind guide, the Lord Himself says of His sheep, "a stranger, will they not follow, but will *flee from him*, for they *know not the voice* of strangers" (Jno. x. 5). That passage settles the question sometimes asked, "But how are you to know if a preacher is converted?" Christ says His sheep will *not* follow a stranger, for they *know not a stranger's voice*: they will *flee from him*.

SHALL NOT ALL SLEEP.

HOW often we have heard it said that "it is appointed unto *all* men once to die." We used to think this was in the Bible. But, on looking up the passage, we found that the word "all" is not in it. The passage is simply, "It is appointed unto men once to die." The absence of the little word "all" makes a great difference. Indeed it is elsewhere stated, "We shall *not* all sleep"—that is, we shall not all die; "but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an

eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, *and we shall be changed*" (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52). It is thus clear from God's Word that when the Lord Jesus shall come, there will be a great number of God's people who shall never see death. We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall be *caught up*. If it should be our lot to be alive when He comes, what a sudden transition there will be! In the twinkling of an eye these bodies of our humiliation shall be fashioned like unto His glorious body (Phil. iii. 21); "for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Cor. xv. 53).

"WE must not expect to get compliments for trying to live near to God. We shall often be laughed at and looked upon with coldness; but we must not regard that. We must remember that Christ was hated of the world; and if we so live as to stir up no opposition at all from the world, how can the Spirit of Christ be in us?"

WRONG AT EVERY POINT.

BY going to hear an unconverted preacher, we are wrong at every point. We help the poor man on in the delusion that he is serving Christ; we cause our brethren to believe the same thing; and we help the unsaved into the ditch by patronising a dead man's preaching; while in the whole matter we dishonour God. Mordecai refused to make his obeisance to Haman (Esth. iii. 5). He knew that Haman was not one of the true seed, but a descendant of Agag the Amalekite, whose hand was against the throne of the Lord (Ex. xvii. 16, margin). Mordecai refused to do Haman reverence. At first it seemed as if this faithfulness would cost him his life; but God delivered him out of the hand of the enemy, and exalted him in due time. Let us be imitators of Mordecai's faith. "Them that honour Me, I will honour."

—:o:—
 "By the words of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer" (Psa. xvii. 4).

BE THOU FAITHFUL.

IT is not lawful for thee to have her" (Matt. xiv. 4). These words were spoken by John the Baptist; and, for saying them, he had his head cut off. This is an example of how faithful testimony for God is sometimes treated. Paul had to ask the Galatians, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. iv. 16). Micaiah was consigned to prison, with bread of affliction and water of affliction, because he told the wicked Ahab what would be the result of his expedition to Ramoth-gilead (2 Chron. xviii. 26). But, "whether they will hear or whether they will forbear," God's remembrancers are not to keep silence. Even as a matter of policy, they who speak smooth things to please people, will reap only bitterness in the end; but "he that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue" (Prov. xxviii. 23).

—:o:—
 "WHENEVER worldliness comes in, in any shape, whether it be love of money or love of pleasure, you cease to be faithful to Christ, and are trying to serve both God and mammon."

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DONE IN GOD'S WAY.

IT may be quite right to do a thing; but the thing must be done in God's way. In Old Testament history, this is perhaps nowhere more strikingly illustrated than in the account of the expedition to Ramoth-gilead (2 Chron. xviii). Jehoshaphat, king of Judah—which we may call the faithful remnant—had gone down and “joined affinity” with the wicked Ahab, king of Israel, then in apostasy from God. At that time there was a city of Israel, called Ramoth-gilead, in the hands of the Syrians. In order to get it out of their hands, Ahab proposed to Jehoshaphat that they should go up to Ramoth-gilead and recover what was lawfully theirs. “And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead

is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria? And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-gilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses” (1 Kings xxii. 3, 4). Alas, for Jehoshaphat! He was getting deeper and deeper into the toils. One false step was leading on to another. Once upon a time he had strengthened himself against Israel (2 Chron. xvii. 1); but now he is feasting with them (2 Chron. xviii. 2), and has just pledged his word to go up with Ahab to the battle, no doubt persuading himself all the while that it was “the battle of the Lord.” How clearly the wiles of the devil are seen in Ahab's proposal to attack Ramoth-gilead! Let it be carefully noted.

that Jehoshaphat was not invited to join in open wickedness; he was asked to help in a "*good cause*"—a thing which nobody could say anything against. Was not Ramoth-gilead a city of Israel? Was it not *right* that it should be taken out of the hands of the Syrians? The undertaking was a laudable one, surely. What objection could Jehoshaphat make to it? None; for the thing itself seemed to be a right thing. How often, when backsliding sets in, do we see this exemplified in the history of individual believers. The world soon finds work for us whenever we get "cold." So long as we are on fire for God, the world does not ask our help. But, when we begin to follow the Lord afar off, the world has some "Ramoth-gilead" ready to be attacked. And in all likelihood it is something there is no harm in at all—some reformation scheme perhaps, or some benevolent idea for improving the race—in a word, anything by which Satan would seek to fill that terrible void ever to be found in the heart

of one who has departed from the living God. And thus the erring child of God goes on, yoked with the worldling, and constantly telling you "it is a good cause;" until, like Jehoshaphat, he is rudely awakened to see that God's work (if it be God's work) must be done by *God's people* and in *God's way*. "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. vi. 14). "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. xv. 22). Although "Ramoth-gilead" should never be taken, let God be honoured, let His word be obeyed. It was quite a right thing, for instance, that the Ark of God should be brought up from Kirjath-jearim (1 Chron. xiii). But it had to be brought up *in God's way*, according to "the due order." The opinion seemed to prevail that it did not matter *how* the Ark was brought up, *so being it was brought up*. The Word of the Lord was not consulted in the matter at all. We read that they carried the Ark of God in a new cart, and that the

oxen stumbled, and that the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and He smote him, because he put his hand to the Ark. But the cause of all this lay in the fact that *neither cart nor oxen* should have been there—the Ark should have been *borne upon the shoulders of living priests*, “as Moses commanded, *according to the Word of the Lord*” (1 Chron. xv. 15). When this was done, all went well; and the Lord helped the Levites (1 Chron. xv. 26). In this manner it becomes us to do “the work of the Lord.” We may be told that it does not matter who does the Lord’s work, and that it is of little consequence with whom we are associated in doing it. We may be told that it matters not what methods we employ, so being we gain our end; and that a good cause will justify us in using questionable means. But we are not so taught in the Word. If the Ark is to be brought up—if Ramoth-gilead is to be attacked—let us see first of all what the Lord says about it. We may be called very

particular, or even narrow-minded; but we can afford to wait until the day shall declare every man’s work of what sort it is.

We have no doubt that the Scriptures we have referred to shall have a deep significance for those who wish to be guided in all things by the Word. Very much so-called “work for the Lord” is carried on in a way that seems to us to have no sanction whatever from the Word of God. People devise plans out of their own heart, reminding us of the days when in Israel every man did that which was right in his own eyes (Judges xvii. 6). And, in every case, these plans are such as commend themselves to the world—plans that flatter the world, and make it believe it is not so bad a world after all. But the question is: “Where are such devices in the Word?” *We* are not left to do that which is right in our own eyes. Indwelt by the Holy Ghost—the Word of God in our hand—we are not left to walk in darkness, nor to be drifted about by every popular current. The

people that know their God shall be strong, and do exploits (Dan. xi. 32); and they that know their God have learned to order their steps in His Word (Psa. cxix. 133). The fire of that Word shall one day test our work. Let us be testing it even now, lest it may have to be said unto us: "Who hath required this at your hand?" Our work, as servants of God, may be right and even desirable in itself; but we have to see that it is conducted according to the lines laid down in God's Word; else we shall run in vain, and find out, perhaps too late, that a man is "*not crowned, except he strive lawfully.*"

THE LORD GAVE HIM ONE.

"HE would not take the Lord's cross; and so the Lord gave him one." Such was the somewhat quaint remark of an aged brother, concerning one who had fallen from a position of eminence in the vineyard. If we are truly the Lord's, and yet refuse to take up His cross and follow Him, we may be sure we will not be without crosses.

"ALWAY WITH GRACE."

"**G**RACE is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever" (Psa. xlv. 2). This is true, first of all, of Christ. But it is also true of His members. Grace was poured into His lips; and grace ever flowed from His lips. Is it so with us? Grace has been poured into our lips. Is grace ever going out from us, be it unto our brethren, or towards the poor world that lieth in the wicked one? Such is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us. Do men wonder at the gracious words that proceed out of our mouth? You know that our speech is to be alway with grace seasoned with salt (Col. iv. 6). This is the dispensation in which grace reigns; and the grace of our Lord is "exceeding abundant" (1 Tim. i. 14). Passing strange, then, would it be if those who are saved by grace (Eph. ii. 8), and stand in grace (1 Pet. v. 12), should not grow in grace (2 Pet. iii. 18), and manifest, in some degree, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

AS HE WALKED.

“**B**EHOLD the Lamb of God.” This expression occurs twice in the first chapter of John. In verse 29, we behold Christ as “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” In verse 36, John looked upon Him as He walked, and said, “Behold the Lamb of God.” We have thus, as it were, two looks at the Lord Jesus. As heavy-laden sinners, we beheld Him taking away our sins. We heard Him say, “Look unto Me and be ye saved.” We looked and were saved. But that is not all. We still look—it is a life-long look—at “Jesus as He walked.” Ah, this is just what we need—to behold Jesus as He walked. What beauties unfold themselves to love’s enraptured gaze, as we trace the footsteps of the perfect One! What a wonderful life! He who sat on “the throne of the universe,” to stoop so low, to humble Himself, and take upon Him the form of a servant—to become so poor that

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He had nowhere to lay His head—to find it hard to get even a drink of water while, wearied with His journey, He sat on Sychar’s well! Amazing condescension! What “grace and beauty shone” in all that life below. What contempt it pours upon our pride to behold Him as He walked; ever spending and being spent; ever about His Father’s business; and at length stooping so low, even to the death of the cross, for “the joy that was set before Him.” Evermore we would behold Him, and wonder and adore. Is He not fairer than the children of men? Is He not altogether lovely?

EXCEEDING ABUNDANTLY.

O WHAT fulness there is in God? “Able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. iii. 20). Had it said, “Able to do *above* all that we ask,” &c., we would have said it was precious. But it is *abundantly above*, yea *exceeding abundantly above*. Can we ask too much? No. He can do exceeding abundantly above all our asking. “If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John xv. 7).

OUR HEAD IS IN HEAVEN.

A WELL-KNOWN and esteemed preacher has seen fit to say something about the "Plymouth Brethren." He admits that they are "a large body with much influence,"* and that they have "strong arms and legs too;" but, he says, they have "no head." He then compares them to "the fox in the fable, which lost its tail in a trap, and afterwards went about disturbing the minds of other foxes, recommending them all to go without tails." It is to be regretted that a widely-esteemed brother should use such a comparison in speaking of his brethren, and that he should publish the

* We were not aware that "the Brethren" (so-called) were a people of much influence. Perhaps it is only a generous admission on the part of our brother. But, if they are really influential, they had better be on their watch-tower. If the influence is that which attends a godly and separated walk, it is well. But if we be what is called "an influential body," we had better see that we are living godly in Christ Jesus; for of such it is written, they shall suffer persecution (2 Tim. iii. 12)—quite a different thing from becoming influential! When the Church departed from the Lord and His Word, it was then it became an influential body; for the world loves its own. But faithful testimony on our part will not cause us to be ranked as "influential." In Paul's day, the Lord's faithful ones were reckoned "the off-scouring of all things" (1 Cor. iv. 13); and such will still be the case wherever there is faithful testimony for God. The faithful and true Witness (Rev. xix. 11) was "despised and rejected of men" (Isa. liii. 3).

same in a largely circulated paper. We suppose, however, that such things are only to be expected; and we would not have referred to the subject at all, were it not that many young and uninstructed believers are liable to be carried away by the utterances of a great preacher, simply because he is a great preacher; for it is the smaller number now that are like the Bereans who "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts xvii. 11). It pains us when even one of "these little ones" is caused to stumble; and when the stumbling is occasioned by some one high in the Church, it is doubly needful that the trumpet give no uncertain sound. We may say here that we have never been able to fall in with the "Plymouth Brethren." We do not know any Christians who call themselves by such a name. But we know of not a few who *get* that name. The reason they get it seems to be that they are a people who have no "clergymen" over them; they own no gathering name but the Name of Christ; and they take no names but the names *He* has given them; and "Plymouth Brethren" is not one of these names. If you ask what they are, they will tell you they are "Christians" (Acts xi. 26; 1 Pet.

iv. 16); and that the Lord is not ashamed to call them brethren (Heb. ii. 11). If you ask what denomination they belong to, they will tell you they belong to the Church of God (1 Cor. i. 2)—the general assembly and church of the first-born ones, who are written in heaven (Heb. xii. 23). Now, the denominations do not care about this. They say: "You must have a name to distinguish you." If you do not take a name, they will give you one. And thus it comes that not a few of the Lord's people have been "nick-named" "Plymouth Brethren," simply because, in accordance with Scripture, they refuse to take a denominational name, which is contrary to Scripture. Are we wrong in so doing? We say "we," because the same rule applies to us—we refuse to acknowledge a "clergy" in the church, for the simple reason that we do not find such a thing in the Word of God. We recognise no centre of gathering but our Lord Jesus Christ—no rallying word but His Name. Scripture says that God hath given Him a name which is above every name. That is enough for us. It is thus clear that we are included in the people who are said to have no head. But *have* we not a head? Indeed we have.

Our Head is in heaven. That is the explanation of the whole matter. God hath given Christ to be the *Head* over all things to the church, which is His body (Eph. i. 22, 23). No doubt, it is easy to point to us and say, "See, these people have no head: where is their head?" And truly you will search in vain for our head, if you search for one chosen and ordained to take charge of our spiritual affairs. If you ask, where is our head, we point upwards and say, He is there—entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us (Heb. ix. 24).

In the days when Israel was without a king, the nations around could point to God's people and say, "See; there is a people without a king!" But did Israel lose anything because they had not a king who was visible to the nations? *The Lord* reigned over them; and, under His reign, they could raise their Ebenezer and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (1 Sam. vii. 12). It was when *departure from God* had set in, that they *demand a king*. "Now make us a king," they said, "to judge us *like all the nations*" (1 Sam. viii. 5). They got Saul to reign over them; and he was one they would be only too glad to point to as their king;

for "he was higher than any of the people, from his shoulders and upward" (1 Sam. x. 23). And yet what a dark page in Israel's history is presented to us in the life of Saul! Israel was determined to be like the nations; and, verily, they had their reward. The Lord deliver His people in these days from a like desire. The world still has its kings, its presidents and vice-presidents; and, in the domain of "religion," its clergy, and its spiritual superiors of many grades and ranks. May we be kept from desiring to be like them. What havoc has been wrought by this desire to be like the nations!

Carnal reasoning would argue that "worldly associations have their presidents: why should not *we* have a president too?" "The denominations have their splendid preachers, who do everything in the way of religion, for a certain salary per year: why should not *we* have that too?" This is the same as saying, "*Why should not we be like the nations?*" To all such questions the answer, given by the Lord to Israel's demand, remains the same—"They have rejected Me" (1 Sam. viii. 7). "A people without a head." Is there a reproach in being thus described? "If ye be reproached for the Name

of Christ, happy are ye" (1 Pet. iv. 14). Does it remind us of our helplessness to be told that we are a people without a head? Be it so. May we ever remember how helpless we are—how dependent on the Lord, who is our strength and song. It is easy to have an appearance of strength, and to have everything that the flesh delights to lean upon. You have not far to seek to find the *head* of the Roman Catholic system, for instance. And if we asked our gifted brother the question, Who is the head of *his* church? we wonder whom he would acknowledge as head. We take the place of confessed weakness before God, thankfully receiving what He is pleased to give. This may be trying to faith. But where is the exercise of faith if we bargain with some preacher to do all the preaching for twelve months, and we will give him so much money? We find no warrant in Scripture for such a thing; and we have never found it a part of the walk of faith to rest under the shadow of some one, head and shoulders higher than any of the people, and be able to point to that one as "our head" or "our minister." Yet, though the walk of faith may bring us into a position of confessed weakness, not one good thing fails of

all that the Lord hath spoken. We have our portion of meat in due season; and we can thankfully say, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased" (Psa. iv. 7).

Time would fail us to refer to everything in our brother's remarks. He says: "Though under a dead ministry, we may still trust in Christ." This is surely poor consolation for a Christian sitting under a dead ministry. Would the Holy Ghost lead a child of God to sit under the ministry of an unconverted sinner?—a wolf in sheep's clothing? We learn quite the opposite from God's Word. How, then, can such a thing be justified on the plea that we may "still trust in Christ"?

Our brother says: "We are no more responsible for the misgovernment or maladministration of any system, than we are for the evils in the world." Quite true; but we *are* responsible for *our association* with such systems. The question is simply: What right have we *there*, if God has said, "From such turn away;" "Come out from among them and be ye separate"? The plea is often urged, "But I can't prevent the unconverted being at the Communion

Table in such numbers." True: but, we reply, "you can prevent *yourself* being at such Communions."

Again, our brother says that "leaving one church to make another implies that we can make a better, or do better than our neighbours." This is misleading. It is equivalent to saying that every one should remain in the church in which he *was born*, whether it be the Church of Rome, with its sacrifice of the Mass, or the Church of England with its baptismal regeneration, and a communion which takes in the sceptic and the scoffer, not to speak of the avowedly unconverted without number. But, we do not leave one church to make another. The "other" is already *made*. It was made as far back as the "Acts of the Apostles;" and we simply do what the Lord tells us, and that is, *we come together unto Him*. We do not attempt to make a new thing. No; we just fall in with the order of things already laid down in the Word. It matters not what we have to leave; *He* is the rallying point. We must say we have never discovered the "disastrous consequences" of such a step. But though they were as disastrous as the famine which overtook Abraham in the promised land, that could

not alter the plain declaration of Scripture that the Lord's people are to be gathered together unto Him (Gen. xlix. 10; Psa. l. 5; Matt. xviii. 20, &c).

We are told that we have found fault with one system, but altogether failed in replacing it by a better. This is true, in a sense; for we do not attempt to build up another system at all. We do not believe in systems. If the Lord saves souls here, we put the open Bible before the converts and say, "*Act out what you find there.*" The result is: these converts find that God's Word binds them *together*; Christ gets His place in the midst as Lord; and the Holy Ghost "distributes" to each severally as He will. You may call that a system, and say that these young converts have joined a system. Very well; we cannot help what you say. But you cannot get over this, that these converts have done what the Lord told them to do: they have acted according to His Word. If there is any *system* in the matter, it is God's system—a system which commenced at Pentecost. We do not need to build it, for it is built and ready; and all that God's people have to do is to take their place in it. Be it noted that the New Testament order of

things has never yet been repealed. And let it also be noted that there is no warrant whatever in the Word of God for saying to young converts, "Just go and join whatever church you may have a mind to join." The Lord never scatters His people in that way. Moreover, the Word of God, which shows so clearly how to be saved, shows as *clearly* what you are to do now that you *are* saved. Now-a-days the Bible is eagerly produced (and rightly too) to show the sinner the way of salvation. But, when the sinner believes and turns round to inquire, "What am I to do now that I am saved? where am I to go?"—immediately the Bible is closed, and the reply given, "We take nothing to do with that;" or, "Go to whatever church you think best." There is a sad helplessness manifest here. Why not let the Word of God *remain open* and then point *from it* what the young convert is to do, and where he is to go?—that they that gladly received the word of the Lord were *baptized*, and "*continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers*" (Acts ii. 41, 42). The Word of God never tells young converts to go to whatever church they think best. O what need there

is to cleave unto *God* and to the *Word* of His grace. In these days of compromise, let our appeal ever be to the Law and to the Testimony; for the time will come (may we not say that the time *has* come?) when they will not endure sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers (2. Tim. iv. 3). May we be of those who are taught of God, and who take heed unto our way according to His Word. Though seemingly with no one to lean upon, our help is laid on One who is mighty. Though Israel was ruled by the Lord from heaven, yet the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night betokened the Divine presence ever with His people. And though our Lord Jesus is ascended far above all heavens (Eph. iv. 10), yet the Holy Ghost (our pillar of fire) has come. He is in you, and shall be in you, beloved. Ye have an unction from the Holy One. Walking in the power of that Spirit, let us build up one another on our most holy faith; let us watch, and wait, and testify; rejoicing if haply we may be counted worthy to "suffer shame for His Name."

—:o:—

TAKE good heed to your walk: God will care for your good name.

"WE ARE THE PEOPLE."

IF the Lord has opened our eyes to behold wonderful things out of His law, and if by grace we have taken our stand with the rejected Christ, there is one thing we need to guard against; and that is—fancying "we are the people," and getting proud over our knowledge. "Be not high-minded but fear." "Knowledge puffeth up." This is all that knowledge does of itself. "Love edifieth." "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord," &c. When *grace* keeps pace with *knowledge*, all is well. We are, like the conies, but a feeble folk; but our dwelling is in the Rock; and in Him is our strength. While we praise God for deliverance from bondage, of whatever kind it may be, let us remember that it is by the grace of God we are what we are.

—:o:—

HE that allows himself in small sins, will at length break out in great ones.

IT is only as by faith we see our home above, that we are proper pilgrims here.

SCATTERED FAR AND WIDE.

Now that it is getting near the end of the year, we are anxious to have specimen numbers of the *Pathway* scattered far and wide. Not a few of our new subscribers tell us they never saw the *Pathway* until now. And what numbers of the Lord's people have never seen it at all for the Lord's family are truly "strangers scattered;" and you must know that our parish extends from here to earth's remotest bound; while the flock, to which we endeavour to minister, is "the flock of God"—every member of Christ on the earth. What we would desire, then, is to *let the Pathway be known*—that is all. We simply wish that the Lord's people should see it; and then they can order it regularly or not, as may seem good unto them. For this purpose we have looked out all our back numbers, and will be glad to send free parcels to any address. All you have to do is to send us a post card, saying how many you would like as a sample parcel—10 copies, 20, or 50, or even more.

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DWELLING IN UNITY.

A COMPANY of believers dwelling together in unity! Truly a pleasant sight. When such is the case we may be sure that grace is abounding there, and especially the grace of humility; for, as some one has said, "the secret of unity is humility." If this be not *the* secret of unity, it has certainly a chief place in the foundation of that happy state of things described in Psa. cxxxiii. 1: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." The Lord looks down, so to speak, and He beholds that company of His people, as they dwell together in unity, and in His sight it is "*good*" and "*pleasant*." The Lord takes notice of this peaceful, loving dwelling together of His people.

It is to Him "an odour of a sweet smell." But this "savour of Christ" makes itself felt all around; for "by this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John xiii. 35). How important it is to see that we are dwelling together in unity. Where you see a gathering of saints of one heart and of one soul, loving one another as brethren—dwelling in unity, you behold a seed which the Lord hath blessed. You have before your eyes a fruit of the Spirit, which says as plainly as words, "God in the midst of her doth dwell." "Ah, I wish we were in that state," sighs some brother. Yes, dear brother; and perhaps not a few more are wishing for the same thing. But we must get further on than "wishing." At the very outset we must be clear as to this, that it is quite *possible*

to dwell in unity. But, more than that, it is the will of God we *should* dwell together in unity. And further still, if we fail thus to dwell together, we dishonour the Lord, and forfeit a great privilege, besides bringing leanness on our own souls. It is to our shame and loss if we dwell not together in unity. Fully alive then to the importance of this matter, let us see what hints and counsels we can gather from the Word as to keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The first thing we would mention is this: See that your own soul is right with God—that you are walking in fellowship with Him. “Take heed unto *yourselves*.” “Let a man examine *himself*.” “Follow *thou* Me.” Each one of us is called upon to live in the power of these words, “I am crucified with Christ.” The question, then, is this: “Am I following on to know Him? am I counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord? am I feeding on His Word, and delighting in the ‘soli-

tude’ of His presence?” We do well to test ourselves in this way, when there is a lack of unity among us. One individual in a bad condition may mar the happiness of a whole company of believers. Is that individual *myself*? It is always safe to ask the question, “Lord, is it I?” “As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come” (Prov. xxvi. 2). Is there not a cause? Woes do not come without wings; and how often we give them wings, and then wonder how they have come! We need not grumble at the lack of unity, if we ourselves are not living in the power of the Holy Ghost. Then let this point be attended to: “Lord, is there *anything* in *me* that would hinder our dwelling in unity?—any crooked way?—any impatient spirit?—any lack of *Thy* Spirit—of the meekness and gentleness of Christ?”

The next thing, and perhaps the only other thing actually needed, is for each one to take *the low place*. Now let us see that

we understand this; for we have arrived at a point where it will easily be seen if we are accustomed to deal with God in secret, and if we are growing in grace. Grace ever takes the low place. If our own soul is right with God, it will at once be seen in our manifesting that "*humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;*" which is immediately connected with "*forbearing one another, and forgiving one another*" (Colos. iii. 12, 13). In short, the brother who frequents the "desert place" to meet with his God, is never the one who strives for a place of pre-eminence. Like Abraham, he lets others have their choice first; and, like David, he can wait till the Lord makes room for him. "In lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil. ii. 3); "In honour preferring one another" (Rom. xii. 10). What "golden rules" we have in these two scriptures! We are apt to forget that they are in the Word. We are so prone to seek our own, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's. Ah, it is this

seeking our own that mars everything. Love "seeketh not her own" (1 Cor. xiii. 5). This is what we want to see in the churches—the Lord's people pushing each other over that by love they may serve one another. How different this is from pushing each other aside to get the high place! What an evil is strife. Where strife is, there is confusion and every evil work (James iii. 16). Beloved, let nothing be done through strife. You know it is written of Christ, "He shall not strive." Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. "Take My yoke upon you," says Christ, "and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. xi. 29).

In writing above article, we have taken it for granted that the believers in question have already been gathered together *in accordance with God's Word*. That is the first thing; for there can be no real unity among believers, unless they are first of all united according to *the truth*. Sanctify them, or separate them, "through Thy truth" (John xvii. 17). Then comes the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. If we will not be in subjection to the truth, we shall seek in vain for the unity of the Spirit.

TEETOTALISM AND THE GOSPEL.

WE are sorry to see so many of the Lord's dear children being carried away by a new temperance movement called the Blue Ribbon Gospel Temperance Army. It is matter of regret for us when any of the "heavenly family" are moved from the simplicity that is in Christ; and as very many professing Christians are being thus affected at this time, we are constrained to speak. We trust that what we have to say will be taken in good part by all whom it may concern. We seek not yours but you. We desire to be helpful in the Lord to all or any who know His name; for we have no greater joy than to hear that His children walk in truth (3 John 4). Teetotalism in our younger days had a quiet time of it. It did not seem to make much headway; for it was simply "the pledge," and nothing more. By-and-bye, however, it appeared in a new guise, that of Good Templarism. The new "order," with its flags and "sashes" and grades of officials, was well adapted to suit the popular taste; and, for a time, there were considerable accessions to the temperance

ranks. But the restlessness of human nature must ever be seeking "some new thing;" and the result is, that the temperance cause has in these days been brought again to the front—this time under the title of the Blue Ribbon Gospel Temperance Army. Now, we do not refer to these things because we have any fondness for speaking of what is going on in the world around. So long as such things are confined to the world, we have nothing to say; for our mission is not to reform the world. But, when we see the dear saints of God mixed up in these things, we must speak. Whatever concerns the eternal welfare of God's people, concerns us; and if it were not that they are in many cases being tossed about and distracted by this new movement, we would not refer to the subject at all. But let us not be misunderstood. We are not attempting to justify ourselves. So far as we understand God's Word, we find that though all things are lawful, all things are not expedient; and as a matter of expediency, we do not see our way to countenance the use of intoxicating liquors, simply because we believe we would thereby cause our brother to stumble. At the same time we find no scripture whatever for exalt-

ing this little "virtue" into the rallying cry of a so-called army. We find no scripture for associating ourselves with the ungodly in their attempts to reform the world; and we find just as little scripture for our wearing an outward badge as a symbol of an inward grace. By all means let us have our eyes open to the evils of intemperance. Yet we have to remember that Scripture nowhere justifies us in making common cause with the worldling, or in making "total abstinence" a ground of brotherhood. We may not "do evil that good may come;" nor can we join ourselves to a unity which God has never formed.

The wearing of the blue ribbon is defended on the plea that "this is the thing which the Lord commanded Israel to do." No one denies this. But has the Lord commanded *us* to do it? That is the question. Scripture nowhere says so. But let us look at the passage which some claim as a commandment of the Lord for us. You will find it in Numb. xv. 37-39: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments, throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue; and it shall be unto you for a

fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them." Now, it is clear that the ribband was *not* a badge of total abstinence. That was not the meaning attached to it by the Lord. The narrowness of man's ideas is here seen in marked contrast with the mind of God. The thing signified was something that took a far wider sweep than merely abstaining from strong drink. The outward symbol was to remind God's ancient people that they were to remember *all* the commandments of the Lord and *do them*. We thus see that the Word of God gives no authority for a total abstinence ribbon. And the fringe with its blue ribband was not for other people to look at. It was for the Israelite *himself* to look at and "remember." Moreover, if Scripture is claimed for the practice, why do away with the fringe in the borders of the garment? The fringe was as plainly commanded as the ribband of blue. And again, if you put yourself under the law of Moses in *one* thing, by all means be consistent, and put yourself under the law of Moses in *everything*. In the very same chapter in which the ribband of blue is mentioned, we find the case of a man who was stoned to death for

gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. Will any one dare to say that such is a command of the Lord for us? Surely those who preach that wearing the blue ribband is a command of Scripture, had better pause and consider if they are not putting God's people back under the types and shadows of a bygone dispensation—a yoke which neither Israel nor their fathers were able to bear. In Acts xv., the apostles put no such yoke on the Gentile converts; and, even in the few things enjoined upon them, the blue ribband was certainly not one.

But this subject brings up the whole temperance question in connection with gospel work. We can understand *the world* trying to reform the old Adam nature, for the world knows no better; but when we see God's people—children of the new creation—exhausting their energies in preaching teetotalism, or proclaiming a temperance gospel, it is virtually saying that "*the old gospel of Jesus Christ has proved a failure, and we must try something else.*" The lever provided by God for lifting fallen man is *the gospel*, and nothing but the gospel; for the gospel is *the power of God* (Rom. i. 16). But man lays aside God's lever,

and tries a lever of his own devising—the lever of total abstinence; as if man knew better than the Lord how to lift up the fallen race of Adam. *Man's* device effects a certain amount of reformation—*God's* way effects a thorough regeneration. *Man's* way professes to "improve" the sinner, but leaves him still under wrath, and dead in sins; while *God's* way imparts life everlasting. In short, God's gospel brings resurrection from the death of sin; while all man's reformation schemes leave the sinner where they find him; for they cannot impart a spark of life to a dead soul. We must say, we could never understand how a child of God could waste his time in preaching "teetotalism" to dead sinners. If you get a sharp knife to cut with, why lay it down and try to cut with a blunt one? If the Lord has given you the sharp knife of the glorious gospel, why attempt to do His work with the blunt knife of "temperance?" The Lord sent Paul to preach the gospel; but we do not read that Paul or any one was ever sent to lecture to dead sinners on teetotalism. Let God's people ponder this. You may get the signatures of 20,000 unconverted people, who say they will drink no more. But they are unconverted

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still. Men may praise you for doing a great work; but what of the judgment seat? Will *God* praise you for doing a work He never told you to do? We trow not. The 20,000 pledged unconverted men are going down to the same hell as the drunkard. Will any one have praise of God for these 20,000 at the judgment seat? Let God's people preach *Christ*—let them proclaim the *good tidings of great joy* revealed in the gospel. Our work is to lift up Christ. It is not to "puff up" the sinner, nor to exalt the virtue of temperance, as if it were the only virtue in the sight of God. If the world is to be helped, let us help it *in God's way*. If man is to be reclaimed, let us reclaim him by the *only method* revealed by the God of all grace and wisdom; and that is *the gospel*. Let us see that we "add not" to that perfect and glorious gospel. It is all-sufficient; and it is for all times and all peoples. The inventions of men have their day; and, after they cease to be popular, they are laid aside to make room for some new idea for causing a stir. But the gospel survives all the devices of men, and rolls on unchanging and unchanged, carrying its stream of salvation blessing from century to century and from people to people;

for *God* devised the gospel—*God* gave it—*His* power is with it. Though foolishness with men, it is the power of God. It is His means for taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name; and we need no other means.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON THE TEMPERANCE QUESTION.

WEARING a blue ribbon implies that you are a member of the blue ribbon army, although you may not intend that. It is generally understood to be a badge of the teetotal "brotherhood." A Christian, who wore the blue ribbon, was lately accosted as "O brother," by a blue ribbon man who is a *Unitarian*. "Brother!" the Christian repeated to himself: "if this ribbon causes me to be claimed as a brother by one who *denies my Lord*, off it must come," and off it did come.

Sometimes the blue is displayed even at the Table of the Lord! This shows to what a sad length a child of God can go in following the world's devices. Yet it is gratifying to know, that when the simple truth of God has been opened up in such cases, there has been a ready renouncing of the ribbon; for many dear souls, doubtless, thought they were doing God service by putting it on.

"But," we are told, "so many people are reached, now that the blue ribbon has been tried; and is that not a proof that it is right?" It is no proof to us. When a thing highly pleases the unconverted, that is no evidence that the thing is of God. Sometimes when "the old story" fails to reach people, a *brass*

band is added to the gospel, and then the people are reached truly. But no spiritual mind will say that this is how God's work should be done. What *takes* with the people can be no rule for us. Christ did not take with the people, and neither will the "ways which be in Christ."

If a blue ribbon is to be worn as a badge of "total abstinence," why not wear a yellow one to let people know we are delivered from the bondage of Papacy? and another to signify that we do not smoke? These and many more would be as justifiable as the blue—as a matter of fact we have heard of a proposed *Red-Ribbon* army. But where will such things end?

When a work of God was going on in a certain place, the leaders urged the young converts to don the blue ribbon; and it is little wonder that these new-born souls turned round in their simplicity and said, "We thought that *Christ* was enough." This reminds us of a simple young brother who was asked, "Are you a blue-ribbon man." "O no," he answered, with more point than he was aware of, "The Lord has delivered me from all these things."

We are told that temperance is a stepping-stone to the gospel. But where is any such stepping-stone revealed in the Word of God? We must see it *there*. We appeal to "the law and to the testimony," for it is written, "if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. viii. 20). We ask to be shown this stepping-stone in the Word. Do we find it? No. On the contrary we find in the Old Testament these words: "Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar" (Ex.

xx. 26). Nor are there any "steps" by which the sinner may get up unto the altar Christ, in this gospel age.

Did any of the Apostles preach stepping-stones to the gospel? Surely, if there is such a thing, we would have found some record of it in the Epistles. But there is no trace of such a thing. Paul knew nothing about stepping-stones. He preached *Christ*. He preached the Gospel—not a gospel—not a temperance gospel, or any other gospel; but *the gospel of Christ*. A *Temperance Gospel* is another gospel (if it is not, then why give it another name?) In the light of Gal. i. 8, we cannot understand how any one *dare* speak of a Temperance Gospel, far less preach it. Paul there says, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." God is jealous concerning His gospel, and He will not have man's trappings or "improvements" added to it. The world is ready to receive "another gospel" as it is ready to receive "another Jesus" (2 Cor. xi. 4). Let us be imitators of Paul regarding the Gospel when he says "*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ*."

We are also told that banding unconverted men together as teetotalers, is justifiable, *because* you must first get a man sober before you can preach Christ to him. But to this we reply, that you must first get a man sober, before you can preach *teetotalism* to him; and when you have him sober, why not preach *Christ* to him at once, and Christ only? Why bring anything whatever between him and his immediate acceptance of the gospel proclamation?

To ask an unsaved man to "take the pledge" implies that there is some good thing in him, while God's word says there is no good thing. You thus flatter the old Adam nature that it is not so "corrupt" as God says it is. We read that the Holy Spirit is to convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment (John xvi. 8). But what is the practical effect of the Temperance movement but to convince the worldling that he has "some good thing" in him, if it is only developed? Thus, unsaved men are "puffed up" and imagine they are something. Indeed, as a rule, you will find no one so hard to reach with the gospel as the "reformed man." His hurt has been healed slightly; he has become proud of his morality, and does not think himself the hell-deserving sinner he once was. This shows the need for God's people always to lay the simple gospel to the naked conscience of the sinner.

How much time is spent by dear children of God in preaching temperance, attending temperance meetings, and distributing temperance tracts. If that time were devoted to *exalting Christ*, and spreading a savour of His name, how honouring it would be to God! What fruit it would yield at the judgment seat. And how many dear unconverted friends are busy scattering temperance tracts, quite unconscious of the fact that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. xi. 6), and that all their work will count for nothing when they appear before Him. What they need is faithful testimony, and no minced words. They are in terrible danger—perishing, and in the midst of so-called service for God.

9

We are told that by wearing the blue ribbon, one is not so likely to be asked to drink. But *a child of God* needs no such invention to keep *him*. He is "*kept by the power of God.*" Why dishonour God by leaning partly on Him and partly on the ribbon? An outward badge may tell that you are a teetotaler, and so save you the trouble of saying anything. But the scriptural way is to be "*ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you*"—not of the badge that is outside (1 Peter, iii. 15). An answer would tell of Christ; and why should we avoid an opportunity of speaking of Him? They overcame "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony" (Rev. xii. 11).

If a man is unsaved, his great need is *Christ*. What we preach to him is a free, present, and eternal salvation. This is our *message* to him. God has not sent us to tell unsaved sinners to mortify the deeds of the body. No! He has given us a special message—even the glorious gospel of Christ. Without Christ, a man cannot be temperate. He may, in the power of the flesh, restrain a particular appetite. And, if he lives a *sober* life, he is only doing what is his duty to his fellow-men. But his need in God's sight is Christ; and, when he gets Christ, he does not need pledges to keep him, for the grace of God teaches him to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live *soberly, righteously, and godly* in this present world (Titus ii. 12). Christ is enough. His grace is sufficient. "*Trust in Him, ye saints, for ever.*"

Some say that Paul preached temperance,

and therefore God's people should do so too. But the passage referred to does not bear that out. It says Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come" (Acts xxiv. 25). Temperance, you see, comes in quite naturally after righteousness. That is the very thing the Word of God sets forth—righteousness first, then temperance. But even then, it does not mean temperance in *one* thing, but temperance in *all* things, as it is written, "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in *all* things" (1 Cor. ix. 25). Such is the scriptural signification of temperance; and as such it takes its place in the varied fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Gal. v. 22, 23.

God's word reveals only one brotherhood—"the brotherhood" of born-again ones. Let us see that we do not identify ourselves with any of the world's brotherhoods. We seem to be living in a time when there is special need to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). But let none think we are become their enemy because we tell them the truth (Gal. iv. 16). If we have spoken in accordance with the Word of God, then let the same have free course, and be glorified in your obedience to the same.

ALTHOUGH two disciples went down to Emmaus, their hearts were *one*. "Did not our *heart* burn within us?" It does not say "hearts." "The multitude of them that believed were of *one heart*." So should it ever be.

PATIENT BECAUSE ETERNAL.

WE are apt to fancy that time is being lost and that we must get into our proper position in the assembly without delay, even although we should make room for ourselves. But, dear brother, you can *live for God*, however humble your position among God's people. If you live for God, you do a great work. We read of some whose lives were a daily "address," because they themselves were a living sacrifice. We have heard it said that God can be patient because He is eternal. Perhaps this accounts for our impatience sometimes. We have only a short lease of stewardship; and we imagine that if we do not accomplish some "great thing," we will be *too late* to be of any use. But if we are clean vessels, the Lord has *always* some use for us; although it be but in "little things" as we call them. If we are "in the Spirit" we shall be always abounding in the work of the Lord; and understand in some little measure the patience of Him who is eternal.

WHAT A BLESSING.

“**I** CANNOT tell you, dear brethren, what a blessing I got to my soul through a single verse of God's Word which I read the other morning. You will find it in Galatians ii. 20: ‘*I am crucified with Christ;*’ and then further on in the verse: ‘*Christ liveth in me.*’ The words were carried home to my soul in the power of the Spirit of God. ‘I am crucified with Christ.’ God says it. I have died; and there is an end to self. ‘Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me.*’ Ah, that is it—Christ living in me. What a searching thought! How many things I say and do which would not be said and done, if I but remembered this: *Christ liveth in me.* But the Lord made this great truth a reality to me that morning; and I praise His name for it. Now these are the two thoughts that were on my mind during the past week; and I just thought I would tell you about them; for I believe it is the Lord's mind that when we get

anything from Himself in that way, we should not keep it to ourselves. The Lord bless it to us all.”

[The above is—as near as may be—an “address” delivered by a young brother at the mid-day meeting on Lord's day, 10th September. It would occupy some sixty seconds in delivery, and went from the heart to the heart. While we praised God for it, we could not help wishing that the Lord would raise up many more such preachers—men like Barnabas, full of the Holy Ghost, who can say, “We speak that we do know and testify that we have seen”—simple brothers, with no “airs” about them, in whom God's Word is as a fire in their bones and they cannot be silent. How refreshing such simple testimonies are! What a contrast they present to the long, dreary addresses to which the Lord's people have sometimes to listen. But, in this matter, we need to pray the Lord of the harvest to thrust forth labourers, and raise up teachers, helps, &c. When *He* sends them, they do not run in vain; He gives them the message. And when they have a message from *Him*, be it long or short, it is in power and demonstration of the Spirit].

—:o:—

“THIS is our calling, not only to be nothing in the world, but to be willing to be nothing even among our brethren; to take the nearest place to Him who has indeed taken the lowest.”

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ONE THEME FOR THE WORLD.

IN our intercourse with the world, we do well to remember this, that we have only one theme, and that is, "*Christ crucified*" (1 Cor. i. 23). When Paul went to Corinth, he determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (1 Cor. ii. 2). Paul could have discoursed to them about many things; but you see he deliberately made up his mind to know nothing save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. He kept persistently to the A B C of the gospel dispensation. How narrow-minded he would appear in the eyes of many—to keep to that one theme—Christ, the crucified One. But Paul knew the great need of the sinner. He knew the desperate condition of every one

who is out of Christ. And, when he came in contact with them, he had just one subject to speak about; and that was, *Christ crucified*. Now, there is something here for us to learn. When we who are God's people meet with the unconverted, what do we talk to them about? Paul had only one subject of conversation for them; and we too, have only one. The unconverted are *perishing* because they are out of Christ. They are starving for lack of the bread of life. So, when we visit them, or meet them, or mingle with them, how can we do otherwise than preach to them, in our own simple way, that Christ died for the ungodly, and that except they repent—except they turn to God—they shall perish? We feel assured that in this matter there is a great lack of testimony on the part of God's

people. Mr. So-and-so pays you a visit; and you talk about a great many things, and inquire after his bodily welfare; and perhaps you have a "very nice conversation." But what about the poor man's soul? Christ crucified is never mentioned! He who should have had the chief place, has no place at all! What a chance for testimony was lost! You had "a nice conversation;" yet, how could that be, when Christ was shut out? But what were you to do, you ask. You were simply to tell your friend about *Christ crucified*. That was to be *your* great theme, whatever might be your friend's great theme. You know if that friend dies as he is, that he will go down to hell; you know that the gospel of Christ is the very thing that can bring life and peace to that dark soul. Then, why keep back, or even becloud the message which God has given you to deliver? It may prove "a stumbling-block," as it did to the Jews. It may seem "foolishness," as it did to the Greeks. But be thou faithful, notwithstanding. It

is impossible that God can have made any mistake in the matter. *He* has told us what we are to *know* among the unsaved—nothing but Christ, and Him crucified. "As ye go, preach" (Matt. x. 7). We are not all platform preachers; but it is nevertheless true that we are all preachers. "Let him that heareth say, *Come*" (Rev. xxii. 17). You have *heard*; you are a born-again one. You have heard His Word; and now you know that you have passed from death unto life (John v. 24). What, then, is your mission? It is to cry, "*Come*." Your mission to your unconverted friends is to say, "*Come*," "Christ has died—without Him you must perish—in Him is life eternal." You say you have not *grace* to speak to one about Christ. Then, my dear brother, or sister, *get grace* without delay. There is no stinted supply of grace in Him who came "full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). "Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John i. 16). There is abundance of grace to be had. Are we not *in*

Christ? and is it not written that in Him *all fulness dwells?* (Col. i. 19). Is He not "able to make *all grace abound* toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work"? (2 Cor. ix. 8). Will this not suffice? Yes, His grace *is* sufficient. Then, what is needed for this quiet testimony concerning Christ, is to get into the secret place alone with God, and tell Him all about it. Let us wait on Him for power for this humble yet important service. We do not need to make excuses; for "God is able." That is the answer to every excuse. There are trembling ones among the Lord's people, no doubt, who would like to testify for Him, but they do not know very well how to begin. We would say, *begin with something very humble.* We knew a trembling one who saw that God would have him testify for Christ. That brother got hold of a *very little* boy on the street, and told him of Jesus; and he was wonderfully helped of the Lord in telling "the story." He

then preached Jesus to a boy a little bigger than the first one; then to several of the little folks. And so he came on, little by little, until he felt quite at home in telling of Christ to men and women, and even preaching Him to large audiences. Whatever we do, let us not be silent. Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, keep not silence. If we are in a low condition of soul, nothing reveals to us our true state more thoroughly than finding we have no power to testify for Christ. But we can praise God for even that discovery, if it lead us *to Him* to be endued with power from His own presence. It is sad to think of the intercourse that goes on between Christians and their unconverted friends, while Christ is as completely shut out as He was shut out of Bethlehem's inn! It would not do to talk about *Him*. At least, this is the conclusion that seems to be arrived at. Beloved, this ought not so to be. Why not boldly say to your unconverted friends: "And what about the soul?—What about

eternity?—What about Christ crucified?” Why not come to the point at once and ask the question, “Has Christ saved *you* from wrath to come?” If we are sanctifying the Lord God in our hearts, this will not be so hard as some seem to imagine. If the inner life be right, the outward testimony will follow quite naturally. Let us not fail to testify, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear (Ezek. ii. 5). Let us be true witnesses at all times—in season, out of season (2 Tim. iv. 2); for a true witness delivereth souls (Prov. xiv. 25). “Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven” (Matt. x. 32).

—:o:—

As to earthly store, an old writer says, “I am well enough if I have but enough to carry me well to heaven. I will, therefore, desire no more than what will mend my pace, and serve me in my journey.”

TO BE NOTHING.

IF we need power for anything more than another, it is power *to be nothing*. The natural desire of these hearts of ours is to be *something*; and, when we pray to God for power, we need to see that we are not wanting the power in order to lift up self. Perhaps the very thing we need is to be *brought down*, in which case endowment with power from on high would have a certain effect in the first place; and that would be to let us see that we are *nobody*. A high estimate of Christ will ever be accompanied by a low estimate of self. It is written of Him that He humbled Himself. How much more need, then, have *we* to humble ourselves. “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time” (1 Pet. v. 6). Let us attend to the humbling, and the Lord will see after the exalting.

—:o:—

NOT to be a conqueror is to be a prisoner. “Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body.”

ORDAINING OF ELDERS.

[This is a letter which we sent to a brother on 29th September, in reply to his questions concerning the points referred to. We insert our reply here, as many of the saints, no doubt, have similar difficulties. If what we have written should be found helpful in the Lord to any of His dear ones, we shall rejoice.]

DEAR BROTHER,—I have yours as to the word translated "*ordained*" in Acts xiv. 23—"when they had ordained them elders." You ask the meaning of the word. The meaning or root-idea of the word is to hold up the hand as in voting. At the same time it must be remembered that the idea of voting is not necessarily conveyed in the passages where the word occurs. Take, for instance, the Scripture in question: "They ordained them elders." The word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas, and not to the Church. It was not the Church that ordained. No. It was Paul and Barnabas; and it is simply out of the question to suppose that these two brethren had an election between their two selves by holding up their hands and voting. That passage, therefore, proves nothing. But the word occurs in another passage which you do not

quote. It is there translated "chosen" (Acts x. 41)—"witnesses chosen before of God." In this case it is, you see, impossible that the choosing could be by holding up the hand and voting, for it is *God* who is the chooser. It must, therefore, be clear to you that the idea of voting is not necessarily implied where that word occurs. I may say that I do not find in Scripture any authority whatever for the Church to elect its elders (or overseers). The Church chose a fitting person to carry its bounty to the poor saints at Jerusalem; for it is quite a proper thing that the Church's money be carried by those in whom the Church has confidence. Yet, even in this matter, we have no ground for supposing that there was any "*election*," or any *show of hands* whatever. At the same time Scripture marks the difference between the ministry of the Word and serving tables (Acts vi. 2). It is simply a question of stewardship. If the Church has £10 to send to some poor saints a hundred miles off, and the Church sees fit to send you with the £10, that is a little ministry you have received of the Church; and you must give an account to the Church of what you have done with that £10. You

received the stewardship *from the Church*, and you give an account of the same *to the Church*. This is clear, I think. But if *the Lord* has seen fit to bestow a gift upon you—say that of a pastor, a teacher, or a guide—that is something you have got *from the Lord*, and not from the Church at all; and it is *to the Lord* you must give an account of what you do with the gift *He* has given you. The Church does not interfere in the matter. You get your stewardship direct from the Lord, and to Him alone you give account of the same. The Church does not appoint you, or vote you on. If the Lord has really chosen and qualified you as an overseer, it is the Church's duty as well as its privilege to receive you, and to *esteem you very highly in love for your work's sake*, else the Church would be despising its own mercies. This, my dear brother, is, as I understand it, the order of things revealed in God's Word concerning the points in your letter. I would observe that the idea of choosing by a majority is utterly foreign to the Word of God. He urges upon us to be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. i. 10). After beseeching us to be of *one* mind, how

could He authorise an election, to make it manifest that we are of *two* minds? The popular election is a thing I cannot find in the Word of God. Just think of it—a show of hands to see who is for this brother, and who is for brother So-and-so (see 1 Cor. i. 12). Perhaps one brother gets eighty votes, while the other gets fifty. The brother with eighty is thus forced in to minister to fifty people who do not want him at all! These things go on in many quarters. But it is not to be so among us. The Lord never authorises this kind of striving; but He does say, "Be of the same mind in the Lord." If the Lord's people were only half as eager to be of *one mind in the Lord* as they are to carry out their own ends, it would save them a world of troubles, not the least of which seems to be the election of who is to be over us in the Lord.

You ask if it is "scriptural for brethren to elect or ordain themselves into the office of elders, without the consent or approval of the assembly." In answer to this, I would say that there is no Scripture for going through the *form* of ordaining oneself at all. But there *is* Scripture for *using whatever gift the Lord may have*

given us, and fulfilling whatever ministry we have received of Him. The house of Stephanas "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints" (1 Cor. xvi. 15). The word there rendered "addicted" is translated "ordained" in Rom. xiii. 1. The house of Stephanas thus *ordained* themselves, if you will have it. Archippus was told to take heed to the ministry (whatever it was) which he had *received in the Lord* (Col. iv. 17). We do not read that he was ordained by his brethren at all. He was simply told to *fulfil the ministry which he had received in the Lord.* The elders of Ephesus were told to *take heed to themselves, and to feed the flock.* As to their ordination, all we are told is that "the Holy Ghost" made them overseers (Acts xx. 28). I trust that these scriptures will be sufficient to show that those whom God calls are not to wait for man's appointment. If the Lord has gifted you, say as an evangelist, you are responsible to the Lord to make use of that gift. What the Lord says to you is, "Do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. iv. 5). This may look like ordaining yourself. Very well. No matter what it looks like. God says *do the work.* He does not say you are to take


some title. No. He says, "*do the work.*" And it is the same with an overseer or shepherd of the flock. If the Lord has given you the shepherd's heart to care for the flock—if the Lord has fitted you for that work—then, dear brother, you are responsible to the Lord to do that work. If you are one whom the Holy Ghost has made an overseer, the word of the Lord to you is, "Feed the flock"—"Shepherd my sheep"—visit them, care for them. Do the saints object when a God-sent man thus cares for them? I humbly think not. With all their shortcomings, God's people do appreciate being cared for. What they object to is the one who merely *professes* to be an overseer, and that is all the saints know about his "eldership." But if a brother with a shepherd's heart is really doing shepherd work, who would ever think of objecting to him? Exceptions may occur. Saints may refuse to be cared for, because they do not want to be disturbed in their backsliding or worldliness. But you will find the rule to be that a man's gift maketh room for him, and that where an overseer is himself walking in subjection to the Lord, in like measure is he warranted to expect the saints to be in subjection

to him. Of course (though cherishing the love that thinketh no evil), when we see a professed overseer who has *not* the scriptural marks of an overseer (see 1 Tim. iii.), and is *not* doing oversight work, we are *not* called upon to acknowledge such as over us in the Lord. Those over us in the Lord are to be esteemed for their work's sake, not for their profession's sake, or their position's sake. Trusting that what I have been led to say may be helpful to you in the Lord.—Yours, &c.

We would just add that if elders are to be appointed, the question immediately arises: "Who is to appoint them?" *Not* the Church. There is *no scripture whatever* for the Church appointing its elders. That would be the *lesser* appointing the *greater*. God's order of things is the reverse of this. Even supposing that Paul and Barnabas "voted on" the elders in question, that would afford no authority for *the Church* to do it. But we think the matter must be quite clear to any one who wishes to be guided by, "Thus saith the Lord." *He* has never told us to appoint elders; but *He* has told us to *obey* and to *esteem very highly* those who are doing the work of His shepherding ones.

—:o:—
 "HE that thirsteth after heavenly things is always filled; and the more he receives the more he desires."

SUFFICIENT.

“Y grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Cor. 12. 9).

It is not *more* than sufficient, nor is it *less* than sufficient. But it is *sufficient*, praise His name. God's people find it so, do they not? But He does not give grace *to be wasted*. It reminds one of the widow's pot of oil (2 Kings iv. 2). So long as empty vessels could be procured, the oil did not fail; but whenever the empty vessels ceased to come, the oil ceased to flow (ver. 6). So is it with grace. God never fails. He ever abideth faithful. If anything is wrong, we have ourselves to blame. If grace is not flowing in, it is because we have allowed *something else* to flow in. God wants our emptiness; and at once we are filled out of the fulness which is in Christ; and abundantly satisfied with the fatness of His house.

—:o:—
 JOHN the Baptist was great in the sight of the Lord. This was a great testimony, for the Lord seeth not as man seeth.

OF ONE ACCORD.

“**A**ND where are all the believers?” I asked, as we got comfortably seated in the tea-meeting; for, although I was a stranger, I missed a good few faces. “O you know there is a temperance soiree to-night, and another meeting in the town too; and no doubt a number will be at these meetings.” “Dear me,” I said to myself, “this does not look like being of one mind in the Lord. There’s something wrong; yes, there’s something wrong; I’m sure of it.” We had been together in the market place preaching Christ; and, when the toil of the day was over, we were to have a little time of mutual refreshing at the tea-meeting in the evening. But this seat was empty, and that seat was empty; and then I discovered that quite a number of the Lord’s people were away at some other meetings altogether. Temperance had drawn one, something else had drawn another. I was sorry—not at the size of the meeting, for it was a fair

size—but sorry to see those dear Christians with so little unity of the Spirit that every one seemed to go where he pleased, while temperance and such like had a greater power to draw than even that Name which is above every name. Now such things ought not to be. “Being let go, they went to their own company” (Acts iv. 23). If a thing is to be done, let it be done heartily, and let us be together in the matter—of one heart and of one soul. If it is the gospel, the Lord says, “*Striving together* for the faith of the gospel.” If it is prayer, let us be of one accord in one place (Acts ii. 1). God wants a united people—perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. This is quite a different thing from every one doing that which is right in his own eyes.

If God has gathered us together, why should we be scattered hither and thither by any movement however imposing it may appear? Whatever we do, let us do it as *one man*. If it is the prayer meeting, let us be there as one man; if it is

the believer's tea meeting, let it be the same; and if it be the gospel meeting, let us, as one man, hold up the hands of that brother who is holding up Christ before the perishing. And as in Solomon's time, the glory shall come down and fill the house (2 Chron. v. 13). In the Pentecostal time, we are told that they were *all* with one accord in one place, and, in three verses after that, we read that they were *all* filled with the Holy Ghost. This is surely worth the consideration of those who believe in every man doing that which is right in his own eyes. Paul gave no countenance to such a thing. In writing to the Philippians we find him saying, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in *one spirit*, with *one mind*, striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. i. 27).

—:o:—

"THE man that enjoys God carries heaven about him."

LOST IN THEE.



ONCE I was lost; but Thou didst find me, Lord; and now I would be lost again, but lost *in Thee*. I would lose sight of self in Thee; I would forget myself in Thee. I would be *lost* once more, so that they cannot find me, because I am *hid* in Thee; and if they find me, they must find Thee too. Be Thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort (Psa. lxxi. 3). Be Thou my dwelling-place, where I may ever dwell, and no more go out from Thyself. And when they search for me, let them find that I have *died* in Thee, and am *risen* with Thee, and that my abode is now with Thee; that thus Thou may be seen, Thyself exalted, Thy Name glorified. And still my prayer would be, that I may know Thee, and the power of Thy resurrection, and the fellowship of Thy sufferings.

—:o:—

THE portion of the child of God is not in this life. His reward is great *in heaven*.

TO OUR READERS.

THIS number completes the third year of the *Pathway*. We have been cheered and encouraged in this little service far beyond our expectations. It has been indeed to us a labour of love. From many and remote quarters letters are constantly coming in, telling us how, through these pages, the Lord has been pleased to minister to His weary, His perplexed, and betimes His careless ones—how one here has been stirred up to seek his God anew, while another there has been set free as a bird from the snare of the fowler. To all this we can only reply that, "The Lord is good—blessed be His name. He has done it: let us praise Him."

We have had occasion to do some "plain speaking" in these pages; and sometimes we even half expected our circulation to suffer. But, strange as it may seem, the little paper has only spread the more. The Lord's people have "suffered the word" in a wonderful way, while in grace they have borne with us in our imperfections as well as the points in which we all may not just see eye to eye. This is most cheering. So, assuredly gathering from these many tokens that we should continue in this humble service, we shall enter, if the Lord will, upon another year, looking to Him for the needed message to His saints, and that His people may be willing in the day of His power.

To the Lord's people who judge us to have been faithful, in some little measure, and to whom this little periodical commends itself, we would say, "Brethren, pray for us."

A FURTHER ENLARGEMENT.

From and after January, the *Pathway* will be enlarged to *sixteen* pages. The increasing demand for the paper has encouraged us to do this. The enlargement is not so much to give more reading matter, as to enable us to have the articles printed more uniformly in the *large type* of our first page. Want of room has hitherto prevented us having as much large type as we would have liked; but we expect the *sixteen* pages will make this all right. The price will remain the same as it has been. We trust this increase in size will commend itself to our readers, and encourage them all the more to *scatter the truth*.

Our *back numbers* are exhausted now. But, if you wish to introduce the little paper, we will send you eight copies of current numbers *free* for that purpose, on your letting us know.

The *Pathway* for *November* was quite sold out, although we printed an extra supply. In order not to disappoint any one, we have printed a further supply. The *November* number is thus still to be had.

LOCAL ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE EVANGELIST.

We have hitherto been unable to meet the wishes of some of our friends as to *local advertisements of meetings* on last page of *Evangelist*. We have now overcome this difficulty; and, from January onwards, we shall be glad to insert such advertisements. The charge will be *One shilling per month* extra, for *any* quantity, if to continue four months, or longer, *without charge*. For instance, 500 copies monthly with local advertisement will be 6/ per month. If the advertisement requires at any time to be changed, there will be a charge of a shilling, as a new stereotype plate would be required. We print two months at a time; so please let orders reach us not later than 10th December, 10th February, and so on. Each advertisement will occupy the *whole* of the last column.

NOW READY,
THE ANNUAL VOLUME
 OF
THE BELIEVER'S PATHWAY
 For 1882.

Bound in Cloth as before,
 Price **ONE SHILLING** (*Post Free*).

We have also prepared
A CHEAP EDITION,
 In Paper Covers,
 Price **SIXPENCE** (*Post Free*).

When we consider the variety of subjects in the numbers for this year, the papers bearing on daily life, and on our separation unto the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we cannot help feeling that this year's Volume will form a little "compendium" of truth calculated to be helpful to the Lord's people everywhere; and we would certainly desire to see it *widely scattered among the Lord's people*. We have made the price as low as we can, to bring it as nearly as possible within the reach of *all*. So, for 6 penny stamps we will send a Volume, post free, to the Backwoods of America, or to the village a few miles off, as may be desired. Of course, if you wish more than one Volume, we can send them direct to as many different addresses as you may desire.

The Volume for this year will consist of 144 pages—a half larger than it was in former years.

Both the sixpenny and the shilling editions are now ready for sending out. So, kindly let us have orders as soon as you conveniently can.

ADDRESSES.

In sending orders, kindly let your *address* be plainly written, and say if Mr., Mrs., or Miss.

Please note this, as we have considerable "deciphering" to make out addresses, and sometimes fail to do so after all.

If there is any error in the address on your monthly parcel, please point it out to us as soon as you can.

OUR ADDRESS

is simply

Mr. W. SHAW,
 MAYBOLE,
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This finds us from any part of the world.

TO SUBSCRIBERS.

We shall continue to send out your usual monthly supply during the incoming year, if we do not hear from you to the contrary by 15th December.

In Remitting Money,

You can use post-office orders or postal orders. But, if these are not convenient, penny stamps will not come wrong.

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United States and Canadian paper currency is taken in payment of accounts—the dollar note being considered equal to four shillings.

No one need send stamps for postage. Everything we issue is sent *post free* at published price.

VOLUME OF "PATHWAY" for 1881.

PRICE ONE SHILLING (*Post Free*).

The Believer's Pathway

is published at the beginning of each month,

PRICE ONE HALFPENNY.

Its pages are devoted entirely to the great truths of God's Word for His people; and it is humbly intended that the articles appearing in its columns should be the message of God to His people in a dark and evil day.

The *Pathway* is sent, *post free*, to any place in the United Kingdom, the Continent of Europe, Canada, the United States, and all countries in the Postal Union, at the following rates:—

For One Year.

1 copy monthly, - 1/	5 copies monthly, 2/6
2 copies " - 1/3	6 copies " - 3/
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WILLIAM SHAW, Maybole, Scotland.