

THE
BELIEVER'S TREASURY.

VOL. IV.

W. SHAW, MAYBOLE, SCOTLAND.

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Vol. IV.

WHAT IS 1889 TO BE ?

WHAT is the year 1889 to be in our experience? This is the great question of the hour. We sit, as it were, upon the ends of time. Another year has spun itself off into the great web of Eternity. "Warp and woof," it hath been woven together; and now no power either in heaven or earth can *undo* that great Past! The angry word, that shot like an arrow from the bow, is now beyond recall. It went to make up the web of another year of life! That word contributed its iota of colouring to the fabric. It is there—in the web! The un-Christ-like spirit—the impatient demeanour—the unmortified temper—all have gone to make up the web. "Ah," we are prone to say, "if I had known—if I had only thought I was really weaving the great web of life, how careful I would have been—how considerate of the feelings of others—how gently, how softly I would have walked!" Yes; but it is too late now—too late for 1888! The web has been woven—the history has been written—the book has been closed. All that *has been* in 1888 is recorded there; and not one word can be altered now—not one


thread (to revert to our figure) can be taken from or added to the web of another year of life. Solemn reflection! Fain would we take our pen, if such a thing were possible, and dash out these dark passages; fain would we pick out these threads that produce such a jar in the harmony of colour. But it may not be. The great Past is beyond our reach. "Give me another chance," you say: "give me 1888 to live again, and see if I do not weave a different web!" But it cannot be. Through the eternal ages not another chance shall be given to live 1888 again. One of the world's poets once cried for Time to roll backward in its flight, and make him a child again, "but for one night." But the cry was vain. The Sun may stand still upon Gibeon, and the Moon in the valley of Ajalon (Josh. x. 12); but Time shall not turn upon its course a single hour. Words, and deeds, and thoughts have come crowding in, and recorded themselves upon the great Dial-plate. Efface them, you cannot: they are there—indelibly there—passed on to the archives of the eternal History!

What, then, is to be done? Are we to sit down in mute despair, and mourn the tangled and discoloured web of the

departed year? Are we to heave the hopeless sigh over wasted opportunities, and all that *might have been*? Never! By all means let us sorrow; but not as those who have no hope. 1888 is beyond our reach for ever. *But 1889 is ours!* What is this year to be? What is it to see? What sort of web are we weaving? The warp and woof—of what material are they? Profiting by past failure, is it now the high and holy purpose of our heart that warp and woof shall consist of nothing but that which is pure and lovely and of good report? No more chances for 1888; but here is 1889. Shall we not, then, by God's grace, carry out in *it* that which *should have been* in the bygone year? If we cannot change the record for 1888, we may at least redeem the time—we may buy up the opportunities for 1889. No longer must the golden hours be frittered away; no longer must carnal delights captivate the soul, or worldly glory fill the eye. "I am weaving for Eternity!" Let this thought be kept before us. Whatever the past may have been, let us now press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. If the past cannot be undone, it may at least serve as a beacon light to warn us from the dangerous and desolate shores of departure from God. Yea, in spite of all that may have been, who can tell but this year shall be indeed a year of power and refreshing from the right hand of the Throne on high! The Jews in the days of Mordecai could not undo the writing that was against them. Yet, although

that writing stood, the king's word went forth in power and grace; and soon the remnant of Israel found themselves possessed of a power and prestige such as they had never enjoyed in the realms of Ahasuerus. Our God is not straitened. He is still commanding the light to shine out of darkness. With Him nothing shall be impossible; and all things are possible "to him that believeth." Who, then, is willing—yea, rather, who is purposed in heart that, whatever 1888 may have been, 1889 must be redeemed for Him who gave Himself for us?

THE DEW OF YOUTH.

T is said of some men that, from an earthly point of view, they never become old. They retain their clearness of mind, and their enthusiastic temperament up to the last. This is also true, in a spiritual sense, of the believer who lives by the faith of the Son of God. Such a believer never "gets old." On the contrary he is found bringing forth fruit in old age (Ps. xcii. 14). He retains his spiritual vigour and buoyancy, while others have succumbed to the seductions of an evil age.

"Thou hast the dew of thy youth" (Ps. cx. 3). These words, primarily true of Christ, have yet an application to all who follow in His steps. Youth is associated in the mind with vigour, warmth, zeal, joy. In the early days of conversion, when the dew of youth was upon us, how bold not a few of us were

for Christ! Truly He was "all and in all." Everything was judged in its relation to *Him*. Even the "little things" were weighed in the balances of the Sanctuary. "Will this please Christ?" Such was the question asked, whenever some doubtful thing presented itself. Thus, with a single eye, light was sought. Nor was it sought in vain; for they who welcome the light are never without light. The mind of the Lord was not hard to find. Yea, our path was as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. If, in the experience of any, those days have departed, then we must become *children again*. In an earthly sense this is impossible. But, in a spiritual sense, it is a "miracle" constantly wrought by the power of grace divine. See yonder believer, who has been merely eking out a precarious spiritual existence; finding little to attract him in the paths of heavenly communion; and much to entertain him in the ways of worldly conformity. But there comes a change—a change in some respects as remarkable as conversion itself. Indeed, it *is* a conversion; it is a *turning again* to the Lord. Brought to an end of himself, that believer has come back to the Father, and is now sitting in the banqueting house, wondering that ever his eyes turned away! He has got back the fire and energy of those days when he first trusted in Jesus. All that his soul had tried "left but a dismal void;" but now *Jesus has satisfied!* The returning one has found that the world, either for saint or sinner, is *vanity*;

and just as a broken limb *may* be even stronger than it was before, so it sometimes happens that the returning backslider enters into a deeper experience of the love and grace of God than ever he had known before. But let no such "peradventure" lead us to look lightly on departure from God. It is an *evil* and a *bitter* thing to forsake the Lord thy God (Jer. ii. 19): evil in the sight of the Lord, and bitter for the departing child. Many a saint of God would give his earthly all to enjoy the unbroken communion of a bygone time. Therefore, let there be no unholy presuming upon the restoring grace of our God. It is no mark of a child of grace to sin that grace may abound. If the dew of youth has been lost, we must have that dew again. It may cost us much. We may, in a certain sense, have to sell all we have, in order to possess it. But, no matter what the cost, we must have the dew of abiding communion, and the freshness of a life practically hid with Christ in God.

NEW LIGHT.

WE may profess to have light, and to be getting more light, even *advanced* light. But, if that light has come *from above*, it will attest its heavenly origin by conforming us to the image of the heavenly One. Has our professed light this effect? Does it conform us to the image of God's Son? Even the unregenerate may dig into the

Scriptures and profess to have made discoveries—to have got “new light” on some point. Unconverted professors of theology are constantly finding what they call “new light.” But the unconverted do not search for light *in its relation to Christ*; and that is what *differences* them from the devout searcher of Holy Writ. The lover of the Lord is on the search for *Jesus*; and he not only searches, but he *finds*. Just as every road in England, if pursued far enough, will lead to London, so every path of Scripture will be found leading to Christ. The carnal eye may not see that path—yea, cannot see it; as the unshod foot of worldly wisdom cannot tread it. Yet all Scripture testifies of Him (Jno. v. 39). Thus the diligent search of a loving heart is abundantly rewarded. The true seeker finds, and is ever finding, “Him of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, did write” (Jno. i. 45). The effect of finding Christ—discovering new beauties in Christ—is this, that the finder becomes conformed to the image of the altogether ‘lovely One. Now, if our professed light has not the effect of thus moulding us to the divine image, we may well question if it is light from above. In this day of new doctrines, it is well to remember that every *true* doctrine will have two marks. (1) It will be found in the Scriptures; and (2) it will be found manifested in the life of those who hold it in righteousness. God’s light will never teach us to call evil good, or good evil. Light from above is very soon manifest in our testimony below; and

such light will bear witness to its own existence by conforming us to the Master’s image.

RESTORATION.



MY Father, I’ve wandered
 Again and again—
 Grieved often Thy Spirit,
 By words light and vain :
 And yet, in Thy word, the assurance I see,
 That, ’spite of my wand’rings, Thou carest for me.

Such love is amazing :
 O where is its source?
 On *Calvary* gazing
 I see but its *course*;
 But down in *Thy heart* the love had its rise,
 That is deep as the sea, and high as the skies.

O *how* could I ever
 From Thee go astray?
 Communion to sever
 For even one day :
 In Thee there are pleasures earth cannot supply;
 I come to Thee, Father : “Restore me,” I cry.

How great the provision
 To meet my deep need !
 With humble contrition
The Blood I can plead :
 Confess’d and forsaken—the sin put away,
 Now *keep me abiding*; no more would I stray.

Yes, Thou hast forgiven ;
 Thy love fills my breast :
 What joy Thou hast given—
 What peace and what rest !
 Fresh beauties in Jesus now rise to my view ;
 My soul is refreshed, as a desert with dew.

O Christ is the fairest,
 The chiefest of all ;
 His lips are the sweetest,
 His eyes do enthral ;
 His arm is so gentle, and yet ’tis so strong ;
 I lean hard upon it—He leads me along.

ORILLIA, Ont. W. H. S.

JOTTINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

DURING 1888 we sought to glean a little from epistle to the Romans.

This new-year we bestir ourselves to bring forth new and old things from the epistle to the Philippians, which was written from Rome. The great theme of this letter seems to be, "The way of the Spirit," as opposed to "The way of the Flesh." The latter doth always seek to corrupt God's way. No doubt, as others have well observed, Ephesians may be styled the epistle which "perfects into one"; Colossians, that which unfolds, "Thou in Me"; while Philippians is that which seeks to fulfil, "I in them" (See John xvii. 23). Let the reader suffer to be reminded that these words were spoken of us by the Lord as the Son to the Father. Moreover, Jesus Christ was the Son of the Father in truth and love.

This letter presents, and speaks to, a church in that development which is in accordance with the Lord's will concerning His churches. That is to say: A company composed of saints, with men among, yet *over*, them *in the Lord* (bishops); having also actively serving ones in the Word and otherwise, who are deacons. Paul ("worker") with his child Timotheus ("who honours God") as bond-servants of Christ Jesus, join hand-and-heart in wishing Grace and Peace unto those of this Church. Yes, grace and peace from God (the) Father of us, and (the) Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, it is just as this grace and peace are to

those in a church, that their behaviour as Saints, Bishops, and Deacons, is according to the Spirit, and not according to the Flesh. These are contrary the one to the other—the fruit of the Spirit leading to a life for the immediate glory of God, in the immediate good of others; the works of the Flesh evidenced in a life for self, largely without regard to others. The greeting over, Paul, as Apostle, at once communicates alone the message of the Spirit. Note well the words, "I," "my," "mine," and "me," in verses 3, 4, and 7, all which express the most intense individuality. Verse 3 announces how he continually thanked God as he thought upon them *all*. This third verse should be read in connection with verses 5 to 8. Therein is given the details which caused his thanksgiving; while verse 4 should be read with verses 9–11; these telling what, in every prayer for them *all*, the Apostle made request with joy. What an inspiring testimony to a church's behaviour is, "Fellowship towards the Gospel, from the first day until now"!

Here, indeed, is a people having a mind to work. Here, too, the Nobles put their necks to the work of their Lord. Little wonder of the Apostle's confidence in them; since always and anon they show how truly in their heart they had him whom God used to their conversion and instruction in the right knowledge of the Faith, either directly or indirectly. We say "directly," because of those who were immediately thus blessed by the Apostle's own labour; and "indirectly," because of those who

were reached by these first converted and gathered ones. Yet, after all, this zeal and affection was but the fruit of God's own grace in them and the Apostle. While God was his witness how he longed after them all in the bonds of Christ Jesus, it was that very yearning that caused him to pray that their love might abound yet more and more. But, observe, he earnestly wished this development to be *in* right knowledge and *all* sense. Oh! the delusion of love that lacks right knowledge and sense—even knowledge which guides and gives sense to discern both good and evil; whereby, the proud shall not be called happy, neither shall they that work lawlessness be set up, nor they that tempt God be delivered—that is, escape from due discipline. Alas! alas! still indeed may God's beloved saints permit their souls (the seat of love) to become discouraged because of THE WAY their God hath appointed for them to walk in. Such discouragement ever results in murmuring, &c., &c.; the solemnity and terrible-ness of which I Cor. x. 9 (R.V.) tells; and with which see also Numb. xxi. Let us then, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, see to it that ours is that love in knowledge and all sense which causes the approving of things, however like, that yet are really different; whereby the counterfeit shall not pass for the real, nor the false for the true. Then, indeed, shall we stand the sunlight of God's revealed will concerning ourselves and others, as well as be without offence unto the Day of Christ; having been, and

being, filled with the fruit of righteousness which is by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God. Which fruit of righteousness is *sown in peace* (the Lord's servant must not fight) to those who make peace; while we shall go on to know the bruising of Satan under our feet shortly, by Him who is the God of peace. To whom, by us, as churches of His constitution and continuous government, be all the glory, now and aye. Amen.

J. B.

TO THE UTTERMOST.

THESE words are used by some preachers as applying exclusively to the unsaved. The general understanding of the passage seems to be, that Christ is able to save the coming sinner—the one who is coming to God by Christ the Way. But a very little consideration will show that such is *not the truth taught there*, however true it is that Christ is able to save the coming sinner. The passage in question teaches that Christ is able to save *the coming saint*. It refers to God's people—those who have been justified by faith; and it declares that Christ is able to save *them* to the uttermost. This becomes all the clearer when we remember that the passage might be rendered, "Able also to save them to the uttermost that *are coming* to God," &c. The passage, you see, applies to those who, having entered by the Door (Christ), are now *on their way* to God. Precious truth for the

saint of God—weary, buffeted, oppressed! What a goodly company are on their way—*coming unto God!* What is the pledge that they shall appear “in Zion at length”? He (the risen Jesus) is able to save every such coming saint, unto *the uttermost!* The application of the passage is put beyond doubt, if we read the remainder of the verse—“seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” We do not need to be told that “them” are His own; for He is not appearing in heaven as the Great High Priest of the children of wrath.

But while we point out that the words have a primary application to the redeemed, we see nothing unfitting in using such a passage as a Gospel text from which to proclaim Jesus' power to save. The Glorious Gospel tells of salvation from sin as well as salvation from wrath; and in no Scripture is Jesus more strikingly set forth as *the Saving One* than in Hebrews vii. 25.

“OCCUPY TILL I COME.”

FRET not, belov'd: our absent Lord will soon be here:

O take the promise in; 'twas given thee to cheer:
Thy mansion is prepared, thou soon shalt be at home,
Thy labour will be ended, and needed rest have come.

Fear not, belov'd: the Lord has trod the way before:
Dark waters roll around; but thou art near the shore:
And soon, for endless years, sweet fellowship thou'lt know,

With Him whom thou didst seek to serve while here below.

Faint not, belov'd; for in due season thou shalt reap:
Fret not; the Lord thy soul in perfect peace will keep:
Fear not; trust on; His arms are round thee night and day;

Pillow thy head upon His breast; *look up, and pray.*

BELLEVILLE, Ont.

W. H. S.

AN UNFRIENDLY EYE.

WHATEVER mystery may surround the position of Judas as one of the twelve, there is at least one thing we can learn. The fact of his being in that little company, is of itself a witness that our Lord was all that He professed to be. The Master's sojourn on earth was thus ever under the searching gaze of an unfriendly eye. Had the twelve been all loyal hearts, then the sceptic might have said: “We did not see His private life: for anything we know, it corresponded ill with his spoken testimony.” But the sceptic has been left with no such argument. There was a Judas in that little company; and had there been spot or flaw in the Holy One of God, would it not have been manifest to the traitor? Would he not have communicated it to the Scribes and Pharisees? Or, failing that, how could he have confessed in his latest moments, “I have betrayed the *innocent blood*”? Love might be slow to see imperfections, and refuse to tell of spots in the character of the loved one. But no such considerations could have weight with Judas. No gleam even of transient love—no burst of sudden enthusiasm—lights up for a moment the dark path of the man who betrayed the Guiltless. With keen and critical eye he watches all that transpires in the little circle of the disciples. He knows nothing of the love that thinketh no evil. If the Prophet of Galilee be a mere pretender to the throne of David and to the attributes of Divinity,

then it must fare ill with Him at the hands of Iscariot. But, as the prince of this world came and found nothing in Jesus, so was it with Judas. No spot in the Spotless One, although constantly under the searching eye of the traitor! The world's heroes are surrounded only by the faithful and the true—men who are beyond suspicion, and who would cover with the mantle of love the faults of him whose rule they own. But it was not so with the Son of God. He knew, if no one else knew, that in Judas would that Scripture be fulfilled, "He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me" (Jno. xiii. 18). Yet, knowing all this, He shows Himself to be the Holy, the Harmless, and the Undeiled; and boldly asks the question, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (Jno. viii. 46). Beloved child of heaven, think not your lot hard because, it may be, your "manner of life" is constantly under the searching gaze of some unfriendly eye. Perhaps you are coming into frequent contact with those who are the enemies of the Cross. You live in the same house with the unconverted. They know that you profess to be a follower of Christ; and you may be tempted to wish that your lines had fallen in more pleasant places, and that you could be relieved of this constant watch upon your actions. But think not such a trial strange; for trial of your faith it truly is. The Master has trod the way before you. It would be "so nice" to be mingling with none but kindred spirits. But it might not be so

good for our spiritual prosperity. If there were no critical eye upon us, we might become careless, and forget our heavenly citizenship. The world, we admit, is apt to demand more from a child of God than it has a right to expect. Yet, at the same time, it has often proved a message of heaven when the worldling has turned round to the believer, and said, "I never thought a converted person would have said that!"

Conversion is the more likely to be real, if it endures the searching gaze of the worldling. Often a false professor has discovered his true character, through the world's testimony that he was just like one of themselves. And often, too, the true child of the Kingdom has found his faith strengthened by the fierce tempest of persecution and reproach. Just as the storms of winter cause yonder oak to strike its roots deeper into the mountain-side, so does the believer find himself driven into a closer walk with God, even by the sneer of the enemies of the Cross. Let us rest assured that there is some "needs-be" for that trial, and that, in the purposes of heaven, it is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

—♦—

EVERY believer carries with him a certain moral influence. He cannot divest himself of that influence. It has an existence, whether he attempts to exercise it or not. His manner of life—his actions—even the passing word—are all leaving their impress for eternity. What manner of people ought we to be!

THE YOUNG CONVERT.

IT is generally admitted by Christian workers that to have a chat with a new-born soul is one of the rarest luxuries in our spiritual experience. If you want to have a real refreshing conversation on the things of the Kingdom, commend us to the young convert, rejoicing in the new-found joy of a Saviour's love. Life, to such an one, is like a long, beautiful summer day. There is a winning simplicity about the young convert of yesterday, which you rarely find in the "old convert" of five years ago. The young convert dwells in a kind of Eden, so to speak, shut in from the great world of envy and strife and self-seeking that rages without. What does the young convert know of "likes" and "dislikes," and "putting on airs," and harbouring grudges? Nothing at all! The young convert has not *come* to that experience yet! He (or she) is finding *everything in Jesus*. You have no difficulty in opening up a spiritual conversation. The young convert is *ready* for you—ready to chime in at once. You do not need (as in the case of many) to broach the subject gently—beginning with the state of the weather; then making a remark on the progress of the Lord's work; and then (if you dare!) asking the question, "How is the soul prospering?" With the bright young convert, all this "beating about the bush" is done away with. You go right into your subject without ceremony. You find you are dealing with one who will

not thank you for lingering in the outer court. You therefore press boldly in, and find—that you cannot say too much about Jesus, and the things that touch the King. Every word is drunk in eagerly; and yet there is thirst for more. No look of cold suspicion meets you while you are dwelling on the heavenly glories. There is no sullen assent to your spiritual application of the subject. On the contrary, you find a cheerful acquiescence, and a *discernment* in the things of God, as surprising as it is delightful. Truly, clearness of vision belongs more to the *single eye* than to the experience of years. But the conversation goes on. You pass from one line of truth to another; and as these lines are all found converging on Christ, the young convert has a feast—and so have *you*. You find that the time has fled with surprising speed; and as you wend your way homeward you feel that you have been on the Transfiguration Mount; the world is something away in the dim distance; and as for the conversation with that lamb of the Saviour's fold, you would not have missed it for all the gold of Ophir, and all the honours of earth!

O yes, commend us to the new-born ones, if a real talk about Jesus is wanted. We do not say that you cannot have such a conversation with converts of old standing. We can praise God for those who are bringing forth fruit in old age. Yet they form the fewer number of God's saints in the present evil day. To speak of things as we find them, how soon, in

the generality of cases, do young converts lose their freshness and simplicity! It is not long till they find out that they are *somebody*; and, whenever that discovery is made, farewell to the charming simplicity of conversion's early day. "Yes," said a Christian worker, "I must have a chat with this young convert, *before the bloom has faded!*" But why should the bloom ever fade? Young believer, *take care of the bloom!* Beware of the company you keep. Beware of the conversation to which you lend your ear. Ask yourself the question: "Does this lead to Christ?—does it conduce to my soul's prosperity?" Many promising young converts have been withered and blasted by the east wind of evil speaking and idle gossip, at the lips of believers professing to be *established* in the faith! Sitting at the feet of such professors, you shall assuredly be conformed to their image; and, instead of the fruits of the Spirit spreading their sweet fragrance around your path, the fires of pride and envy shall shrivel up every bud that promised so fair in the day of your espousals! There is no reason why the "bloom" should fade, or the new-found joy decay. What is it that imparts that bloom, and gives that joy? It is all due to this—that *Christ sits upon the throne of the heart*; and so long as He is enthroned there, the bloom cannot fade, and the joy cannot pass away! Let Him have His place on the throne of the affections; and there shall be no lost ground—no fading bloom—no waning joy!

THOSE DAYS ARE PAST.

THE time has come when saints are going to be no longer imposed upon by long prayers and sanctimonious gestures. Time was, when there was very little light going, that if a man could pray for ten minutes, and preach twice that time, he was reckoned a saint of the highest order. "Sure to be a good man—did you hear how he prayed?" But—in goodly measure at least—those days are past. In circles where God's truth and God's power have their due place, the saints do not measure a man by the length of his prayers, or by the eloquence of his address. He may have the eloquence of an Apollon and the seeming unction of a Barnabas; but what of *his life*? What manner of spirit is he of? Has he the Scriptural marks of a messenger of God? Everything depends on the answer to that question. If he has *not*, then the saints just take his utterances for what they are worth—namely, "Sounding brass and tinkling cymbal." They say—and in a certain sense they have a right to say—"We want to see these truths in you, the preacher; physician, heal thyself." In short, many of the saints have found out that there should be some correspondence between the message and the messenger; and it is well that this should be so. Nothing has such a deadening effect as burning truth coming from cold lips, or professions of the highest devotion from a heart that is not finding in Christ its chiefest joy.

WAS JUDAS THERE?

WAS Judas present at the institution of the Memorial Feast? The religious world with one voice answers, "Yes." But, indeed, it could not well give any other answer. The denominations of Christendom find it convenient to believe that Judas was there. They therefore contend and preach accordingly. Such a "doctrine" is found a favourite argument for the presence of the unconverted at the "Communion." When you point to the crowds of dead, unregenerated sinners that solemnly sit down to the "Sacrament," you are at once told that *Judas* was at the first "Table," and that we cannot expect to have a purer communion than the one instituted by the Master Himself. Worldly systems of religion consider this an unanswerable argument for the presence of the worldling at the sacred Feast. The argument may have weight with some, even of the Lord's children. But we are convinced that Judas was *not present at the Memorial Feast*. We know that he was at the *Passover Supper* (Matt. xxvi. 17, 23, &c.). There was nothing whatever to hinder him from being *there*, if he was "ceremonially" clean. Therefore we find him taking his place at the Passover. But there is no proof whatever that he was present at the *second* Feast—"the breaking of the Bread."

The thirteenth of John gives us, in the order of time, a narrative of what took place; and surely no one can carefully

read that chapter without *seeing plainly* that Judas was *not* at the Feast of Remembrance. In verse 2 we read, "And during Supper" (See Revised Version)—the Passover Supper, mark you—"the Devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him; Jesus . . . riseth from Supper," &c. Then comes the feet-washing, followed by the significant words of verse 11: "Ye are clean, but not all; for He knew who should betray Him." In verse 21 He says plainly: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me." This causes a searching of heart as to who is that one. Peter then beckons John to ask the Master who it should be of whom He spake. "Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it." He then dipped the sop, and gave it to Judas Iscariot. This, you observe, occurred *at the Passover Supper*: the *sop* and the *dish* put that beyond a doubt. From this point events follow each other in rapid succession. "After the sop, Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly" (ver. 27). "He then, having received the sop, went *immediately* out; and it was night." Now, no one can fail to see that, on receiving the sop at the Passover Supper, Iscariot went *immediately* out. He therefore was not at the Feast of Remembrance; for there is no record whatever of his having *come back* to the "Breaking of the Bread." On the contrary, obeying the Satanic impulse, he went straight to the rulers and

Pharisees to seal the covenant of betrayal!

It is here most instructive to note, that after Judas had gone out, our Lord opens His heart to the eleven in a wonderful way. While the traitor was present, the Master was evidently under a certain restraint. This is clear from the mysterious words of verse 18: "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen." But no sooner has Judas departed, than the restraint disappears. "Therefore when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified," &c. Then, in verse 33, we find Him addressing the eleven by the endearing epithet, "little children"—a term that found no place while Judas was present. All these "lights and shadows," as well as the plain statements of the sacred narrative itself, lead only to the one conclusion, namely, that Judas did *not* receive the bread and the cup. He received the sop, we know. But, with the receiving of that sop, he was at once made *manifest* to all. Noneed, therefore, to prolong his awful hypocrisy for another moment. Hence we read that he "*went immediately out,*" and could not therefore be at the Feast of Remembrance.

We are well aware that Luke xxii. is cited as proving that Judas must have been present, seeing the bread and the cup are mentioned *before* we have the words recorded in verse 21, "Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table." But there is really no difficulty in the matter. Luke is stating what took place; but he is not giving the events *in the order* in which

they took place. Indeed, it has been remarked that he habitually groups his statements in a certain *moral* order, rather than in *the order of time*. Thus, he records the imprisonment of the Baptist *before* our Lord's baptism (Lu. iii. 19-22); although we all know that our Lord's baptism took place before His forerunner was cast into prison (See Matt. iii. 13; and xiv. 3, 4). Luke also tells of the rending of the veil before he records our Lord's death (xxiii. 45); while we learn from Matt. xxvii. 51 and Mark xv. 38 (which clearly keep the order of time) that the rending of the veil *followed* the death. No one need therefore have any difficulty as to Luke's account of the Passover. The events in consecutive order, are found in Matt. xxvi. 17-30, and Mark xiv. 12-26; and both of these accounts harmonizing with the narrative in John xiii., leave no doubt whatever that Judas was out in the dark night, while the Bread and the Cup were passing round the little company with Jesus in the midst.

THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE.

REDEMPTION through His Blood;
My many sins forgiv'n;
A child and heir of God;
A home for me in Heav'n;
There to behold my Saviour's face—
All through *the riches of His grace.*

Now kept by power divine
Upon the heav'nly way;
A life of praise be mine
Till dawns the longed-for day,
When through eternal hours I'll trace
The wondrous *riches of His grace.*

J. T.

CAN IT BE!

SAY, are the earth tracks sweet, that thou should'st stray?
Can they be happy paths that lead away
From God and all that's beautiful and true?—
Away to search out some old thing anew.

O can it be that any spring of earth
Can satisfy a soul in which heaven's mirth
Doth dwell?—a soul once taught to sing
Of pure and heavenly streams; yea, taught to bring
The empty vessel, and to draw with joy
From out those wells of bliss without alloy.

It cannot be; for all that earth can show
Is but the gilded tapestry of woe.
No lasting joy—no peace it has to give;
But weary bitterness for those who live
Upon its smile. Then why would thou,
Dear saint of God, upon thy brow
Aught of its vanity e'er seek to bring?
Thy life—thy all—belongs to heaven's King.

Full many an eye is bent upon thy life,
More than thy words. If in the heavenly strife
Thou seekest carnal things, will they not say,
"Tis all an empty show?"—Thou wilt betray
Thy Master, not thyself; for His it is
To keep the children's feet in paths of peace.

If in thy life the impress full is borne
Of that fair image, and in all is worn
The humble, happy spirit, men will see
That Jesus' life is manifest in thee.
And God will bless thy labours o'er and o'er,
And in the days to come, upon that shore,
Some of the many souls that are displayed
In blood-washed garments, pure and fair arrayed,
Led to the Cross, the cleansing fount of love—
Now in the glorious courts of joy above—
Shall praise their God that on thy form had been
The glad fore-shadow of the glory seen.

Live now no more to self; O cast away
Whatever hinders, even by delay,
The shining light—the radiance soft and free—
That should thy vessel fill, though clay it be.
The radiance shall be brighter—brighter still,
If thou art living only for His will.
And if the light be strong—too strong for thee,
By frailty thou the more His grace shalt see;
Until He please the vessel then to break,
And home for ever to Himself shall take.

C. A.

THE STEDFAST FACE.

OUR Lord set His face stedfastly
to go to Jerusalem. The
mark was before Him. Therefore
He presses on with stedfast face.
There are enemies; but He fears
not. There are adversaries; but
He crushes past them. Nothing
must come between Him and the
mark at which He is aiming. Yet
that mark involved shame—suf-
fering—death! Yes; but for the
joy set before Him, He endured all.
Believer, on the heavenly way, dost
thou set thy face stedfastly for the
heavenly Canaan? Or dost thou
sit down by the world's wayside, to
pluck its flowers, and taste its
sweets, and only wake up at certain
intervals to find how time is mis-
spent, and opportunities lost for
ever? Ah! there must be the
stedfast face, if we are to do the
will of the Father. There are
many things that may be *desirable*;
but there are a few things that are
needful; and one of these is *the
stedfast face in the path of God*.

WITH God and a good conscience,
you need not fear the difficulties of the
path of faith. Very little faith will
give endurance under trial; while very
little of a bad conscience will cause the
knees to tremble and the heart to fail.
It is "the righteous" that are bold as
a lion.

OUTSIDE AND INSIDE.

THE attempt has been made to come outside the camp on Lord's-day forenoon, and to go back inside the camp in the afternoon. The question has been asked: "Can we not have the Lord's Supper outside of the denomination, and then go back and hear the clergyman in the afternoon?" Those who ask such a question have surely never learned the significance of the words, "*Be ye separate, saith the Lord.*" Many are quite willing to have the Weekly Feast, and generally everything good that's going outside the camp; *but* they "reserve liberty" to sit under a clergyman, and to go wherever they may feel disposed to go. But Scripture grants no such liberty. If we sit at the Lord's Table to-day, and mingle with the world's worshippers to-morrow, we thus make the Memorial Feast a mere convenience, to minister to our ideas of religious comfort. The first thing to be done is to obey the command, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." Then the Lord says, "I will receive you." There may be a zeal to obey the command, "This do in remembrance of Me." But the same Lord also said, "Come out from among them." The spirit of loving obedience will be as zealous for the one command as for the other. Pharaoh suggested that the Israelites could worship God in Egypt. But Moses replied that they must first *come out*. Thus, in Scripture, we have a *separated*

people before we have a *worshipping* people. So it was then, and so has it ever been. They who are truly separated unto God have no desire to return to the thing from which the word of the Lord has separated them once and for ever.

MUST BE TESTED.

JEREMIAH xvii. 9 tells us that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." These words apply to a wider circle than the unconverted. They are true of the natural heart of the believer. If your path is smooth, and circumstances all that you could desire, there will be very little to try you. But, depend upon it, the testing time will come. God never gives grace without testing it. If we are not continually abiding in Christ, the enemy will trip us up before we have time to flee to the great Hiding-Place. If we are not constantly clad with "the whole armour," he will have us wounded ere our hand can seize the sword: we shall find ourselves in the mire, ere we can grasp the shield. M. Y.

2 COR. iv. 17.—Dear tried child of God, put your "*light affliction*" into one scale, and the "*eternal weight of glory*" into the other, and you shall see what a millionaire you are. M. Y.

It is the mark of a true faith that it refuses to surrender the citadel, even although the enemy be at the gate.

THE BITTER WATER.

ISRAEL murmured because of the bitter waters (Ex. xv. 24); and the time came when they had no water of any kind—not even bitter water! (Ex. xvii. 1). Let us therefore learn not to despise God's provision. The way may be hard; and we may find ourselves at "Marah" (Ex. xv. 23)—the place of bitterness. Yet, if Marah be in God's path it is designed of heaven for the perfecting of our faith. If we take our bitter waters of disappointment and trial as coming from God, they shall undoubtedly yield their store of grace. But if, like Israel of old, we are found murmuring with what the Lord is pleased to give, He may find it needful to send deeper trial. "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not" (Job xxxiii. 14). Thus it is with many in the heavenly family. In the course of our wilderness journey we suddenly come upon some "Marah"—some sharp disappointment of one kind or another. But we stay not to enquire, "What does the Lord mean me to learn from this?" We are so busy—or so self-sufficient—that we resolve to "battle through." The heavenly voice is neglected. God has spoken *once*. But His message is neglected and forgotten; and we press on with *our* plans—*our* projects—carrying out our will; until suddenly *God speaks again*. This time His voice is louder; for the "deep sleep" (Job xxxiii. 15) must be broken. Then, with nothing but the parched wilderness all around us, we are

brought to an end of ourselves, and make the discovery that we had been following Christ afar off. Happy they who, by grace, are making such a discovery, and who, praising God for the waters of Marah, are now found exclaiming, "All my springs are in Thee!" (Ps. lxxxvii. 7).

1889.

WE have now entered upon the fourth year of the *Treasury*. We are thankful for the door that has already been opened for its acceptance. We have again had the most cheering testimony that these pages have carried the needed word to many a troubled heart. For this we would humbly say, "Unto Thy name, O Lord, be glory."

As to increasing our circulation, we have to thank all who have kindly helped in that work; and we have to report a continued, gradual increase. But what about the future? We believe the *Treasury* would circulate more largely if the Paper was *known*. Now, we have observed that where *one* energetic brother, in each local centre, takes up a matter of this kind, the work is *done well*, and the end is reached. Who will help? If Specimen Copies are wanted, just let us know.

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THE

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Vol. IV.

LEVI RESPONDS TO THE CALL.

IN the last words of Jacob to his sons we find no blessing bequeathed to Simeon and Levi. The aged patriarch has something to say to them ; but it is not a parting benediction. It is rather something that sounds very like a curse. Certain it is, that if not a curse upon them, it is a curse upon their ways. "Simeon and Levi are brethren," he says ; "instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret ; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united ! for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce ; and their wrath, for it was cruel : I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel" (Gen. xlix. 5-7).

A reference to Genesis xxxiv. will show why such a judgment was pronounced upon these two brethren. Under the guise of pretended friendship, and in order to have what they considered lawful revenge, they had planned and carried out the massacre of Shechem. In his dying hour Jacob remembered the whole circumstances ; and instead of calling down upon their heads the blessing

of heaven, he consigned them to a wandering and an aimless life : "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."

To all appearances, speaking after the manner of men, their doom was sealed. After such a judgment had been pronounced upon them, how could they ever hope to attain any position of honour in Israel? Like two men without a character—yea, with a very bad character—they were sent away, as it were, to ponder the words, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." From the manward point of view everything looks dark and hopeless. But "with God all things shall be possible." It is He that commandeth the light to shine out of darkness ; and truly out of the darkness that seemed to have settled upon the path of Levi He commanded a wonderful light to shine. But how did it come about? Well, on turning to the Word we shall see. In Exodus xxxii. we find that it is a time of great apostasy in Israel. While Moses seemed to delay his coming down from the Mount, the people disowned the leadership of Jehovah, and sat down to worship a golden calf. When Moses returned he saw that the time for judgment had come.

But who was to carry out the Lord's will? The apostasy was so widespread that it was questionable if any could be got who would be truly for God. But Moses put the matter to the test. Standing in the gate of the camp he cried, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me." The people were now brought to the testing point. Were there any among them who were purposed in heart to be for God at this crisis in Israel's history? Strange to say, the sons of Levi stepped forth as one man unto Moses. The very tribe whom Jacob had come so nigh to cursing, and whom he had consigned to a wandering life, are here found laying themselves on the altar for God! And they are accepted. How marvellous is the grace of God! No one is cast out—be he coming sinner or coming saint. Levi was about the last tribe in Israel from whom you would have expected such devotion to Jehovah. Yet here the last is seen to be first.

Now, behold how the grace of God shines with new lustre in all that follows. Levi honours God, and soon finds the fulfilment of the words, "Them that honour Me I will honour." The children of Levi came to the help of the Lord against the mighty; and soon they discovered that the Lord had come to their help—that the judgment pronounced by their father Jacob is to be turned into a blessing. Their service in the day of apostasy is not only accepted, but it is rewarded. "Behold," saith the Lord, "I give unto him my covenant of

peace, . . . even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel" (Numb. xxv. 12, 13). Thus Levi is chosen for a place of nearness to the Lord, such as no tribe in Israel enjoyed; and this notwithstanding the sentence of their father. It is true that Levi's sons were divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel; but they were scattered for blessing—to minister before the Lord continually. Yea, Jacob's sentence was superseded by the parting words of the great law-giver as recorded in Deut. xxxiii. 8-11: "And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and Urim be with thy holy one, whom Thou didst prove at Massah . . . They shall teach Jacob Thy judgments, and Israel Thy law: they shall put incense before Thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon Thine altar. Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands."

With the history of Levi before us, who need be discouraged in running the heavenly race? It matters not what the past has been: the question our Moses is asking to-day is this: "*Who is on the Lord's side?*" Who is going to be laid upon the altar for God? His grace is abounding. None are cast out. He simply desires a willing people. Who, then, are going to step forth at His call? Israel may refuse to hear; but the true sons of Levi shall not only hear, but rejoice to hear, the voice that calls them to the experience of a deepened consecration and an abiding communion.

ARTICLE ON HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM.

THE article on "Household Baptism," which appeared in our December number, has evidently been found in many quarters a word in season upon a much-needed subject. So great was the demand for that number, that we were completely sold out, and required to re-print it.

Now, this special demand for December *Treasury* has led us to make a few reflections—which, however, had been occurring to us even before the article on "Household Baptism" appeared. Our reflections simply come to this, that perhaps we should have been at that subject, and a few kindred subjects, at an earlier date. We have a certain amount of diffidence in dealing with the errors of brethren with whom, on many points, we are in perfect agreement; and perhaps for this reason, more than any other, we have been silent as to what we consider, and hold to be, the *heresies* of a certain school of believers. But if there is a time to be silent, there is also a time to speak; and, when sitting down to get our December number ready, we believed that that time had come. But while we have been silent, our brethren of the "Household-Baptism" theory have not been silent. They have been busy, by voice and pen, quietly, but persistently, propagating their doctrines. The leaven has been at work; and the leaven has been doing its work. Therefore, as those who feel some little responsibility to contend for the faith

once for all delivered to the saints, we lifted our voice against the heresy of "Household Baptism"

We are convinced that the great antidote to false doctrine is to *let in the light of the Word*. A tempted believer, at his wits' end how to repel the suggestions of the Wicked One, was counselled by an old brother to "try him wi' a text." This advice might be profitably carried out in testing the new theories that are constantly being floated. Try them with a text—prove them by the Scriptures. If infant baptism is of God, then there will surely be *some vestige* of it in the New Testament. But the truth is—there is not a vestige! Now, there should be a vestige, and far more than a vestige, if infant baptism is scriptural; for it is surely strange to contend that a thing is scriptural, while not a trace of it is to be found in the Scriptures! In Acts xviii. 8 we read that "many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized." Now, if infant baptism is of God, is it not a remarkable thing that we do not read of any of these *many* believers' infants being baptized? If that ordinance would have introduced *them* into some inner circle of privilege, why does the apostle not urge the parents to let their children at once have the "advantages" of baptism? When Philip went down and preached in Samaria, we read that, after they had believed, "they were baptized, both *men and women*." But why is there not a word about children? If infant baptism is of God, then the infants of these

Samaritan converts were entitled to the ordinance. Yet we do not read of one of them being baptized, although the sacred historian is careful to mention both "*men and women*"! How is this silence to be accounted for? It is very easily explained. The reason why both Paul and Stephen were silent as to the "privileges" of Infant Baptism is simply this, that *there are no such privileges revealed in Scripture!* The reason the apostles did not speak of baptism bringing the unconscious infant into a "second circle," was just because there is *no such circle known to Scripture!* If there had been such a circle, and certain blessings and responsibilities connected with infant baptism, then surely the apostles were depriving the early church of a positive blessing by maintaining an *unbroken silence on the whole subject!*

We have heard the remark made that "Mr. ——— is a remarkable teacher: what wonderful things he can bring out of the Bible!" All very true, perhaps. But you must be on your guard to see that he has not first *put these wonderful things into the Bible* before he brings them out.

It has been remarked that departure from the truth has characterised the close of every bygone dispensation. If, as many believe, we are nearing the close of the present dispensation, there are certainly abundant "signs," in the shape of departure from the faith; and not the least of these is the return to infant baptism on the part of Christians who at one time seemed the last people in the

world from whom you would have expected such a thing. But we have ceased now to be surprised at anything we hear from some quarters. It is simply a question of *what is to be the next departure?* When the helm of truth ceases to be acknowledged in the guiding of the vessel, she is at once at the mercy of every wind of scepticism, and every current of carnal reasoning: no one can tell whither she shall drift.

A PRAYER FOR HUMILITY.

O BLESSED Lord, who do'st resist the proud,
But ever to the humble givest grace,
Look down, as in Thy presence I am bow'd,
Cause me to see the shining of Thy face.

O keep me, Lord, from giving place to pride;
For pride, I know, but leadeth to a fall:
Near to Thyself I ever would abide;
For there a lofty thought can but appal.

Thy fresh'ning rains roll off the mountain height,
While lowly vales receive a double share;
The lesson taught, deep in my heart indite;
To lower get, should be my constant care.

O God, break down my stubborn heart and will,
And work by summer's breeze, or winter's gale;
Transform what now is but a sterile hill,
Into a lovely, smiling, fruitful vale.

Not for *my* pleasure do I breathe this prayer,
But that to *Thee* some glory may be brought,
That many other hearts may long to share
The blessed humbling that Thy grace hath wrought.

In Jesus' Name—that Name to Thee so dear—
My prayer ascends; the answer now I crave:
Thou hast the promise giv'n: Thy Word is clear,
"Whate'er ye ask, believing, ye shall have."

ORILLIA, Canada.

W. H. S.

SECTARIANISM.

IN carrying on work for God, some preachers may be heard saying, "Now, we are not here to build up a sect: we have no intention of doing any such thing." This sounds very well. But if we happened to be present where such an intimation was made, we would likely have a strong inclination to say to the preacher: "You are perfectly right not to attempt sect-building. But answer this question: Have you any intention of *building up a church according to the New-Testament pattern?*" A question of that kind would very likely bring out the answer: "O no; I don't attempt work of that sort; I keep to the Gospel, and do nothing that would hinder me from working in harmony with the existing churches." In other words, the preacher declares himself to be *unsectarian*; and yet he takes care to be *in harmony* with sectarianism! You may have heard certain believers crying out against schism, and declaring that they will not have anything to do with "making another sect." Yet these very believers are found countenancing the great schisms of Christendom, working in harmony with sectarian clergymen, and sitting on platforms where almost every shade and colour of sectarianism are represented. These believers start back at the bare idea of forming what they call "a new sect." They emphatically declare themselves *non-sectarian*. But, no sooner have they delivered their mind on this point, than they turn round and take any

number of sects into their arms! This is called non-sectarianism. But a more fitting name, as a brother recently remarked, would be *pan-sectarianism*—that is, a combination of sectarianism of every kind and degree. No good end can be secured through calling things by their wrong names; and "non-sectarianism," as generally understood, is certainly a very misleading title. To speak of a combination of the sects of Christendom as a non-sectarian company, would be as unreasonable as to make a mixture of all the alcoholic liquors, and then pronounce the compound to be a teetotal beverage.

Look at that so-called non-sectarian meeting. What a diversity of sects and views are represented on the platform! What an array of conflicting opinions— if they were only allowed to get vent! Yonder sits a Church-of-England clergyman, who has signed his name to the declaration, and publicly proclaims, that through the symbolic water of the baptismal font the unconscious infant has become a member of Christ, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven! Sitting beside him is a staid Presbyterian minister, whose soul abhors such deadly heresy. On the third seat is a Baptist, who emphatically differs from them both! Yonder is a clergyman whose church receives the ungodly in hundreds to the communion table; while, sitting close by his side, you find a zealous Christian worker who, on other occasions, is known to preach "separation" vehemently. Yet they all seem to be in perfect agreement. Truly a strange spectacle! But how do

they happen to agree so well on that platform? It is upon this wise: They do not allow an *open Bible there*. It is distinctly understood that no one says anything that would cause a jarring sound to be heard. The Baptist brother daren't say a word about believers' immersion: such a "digression" would simply *spoil the meeting!* He may feel inclined to deliver his testimony on Baptism. Yet he knows that there is no liberty to do such a thing. The brother who preaches separation must not on any account deliver his soul as to the fearful sin of allowing the enemies of Christ to share the Bread and the Cup. The word of the Lord may be burning in his bones like the fire of Jeremiah xx. 9; yet he must not speak—at least on that subject. If he does—if he expounds the simple truth of God concerning fellowship with the ungodly—he is a marked man: he has "spoiled the meeting," and it is his last appearance on that platform! Such is sectarianism. It will not allow a single voice to be raised against itself. The great truths of revelation must be suppressed, one after another, in order that there may be perfect agreement between the speakers on that platform. The truth of God is sold in order that unity may be bought. Yet unity is not attained. On the contrary, you have the most antagonistic schools of thought—the elements of a slumbering volcano that needs only a touch from the torch of Truth to set the whole meeting in a blaze! Sectarianism is thus a huge delusion, no matter how you view it. In

its attempt at unity it has adopted the Caiaphas-like counsel, that it is expedient that not only one, but many of the great truths of revelation, must be rigorously suppressed, in order that all the sects may be of one mind! In carrying out this policy, the platform of truth has been so "cut away" on every side, to suit all comers, that it may be well compared to the bed of Isaiah xxviii. 20—"shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." On the sectarian platform the Lord's servant is thus compelled to stand upon a narrow space. On every hand he is hemmed in by virtual proclamations that the mention of certain truths would be trespassing on forbidden ground. He therefore recoils from such a position, refusing to be bound hand-and-foot by laws that God never made.

Sectarianism and true liberty cannot exist together. The path of the servant of God, as well as of the child of God, is plain. *Where there is room for the Lord Christ, there will be room for His Word: where there is not room for His Word, there is no room for His servant.*

—♦—

SIMPLICITY and purity are the two great elements of a happy life. Simplicity teaches us to seek not high things, but to condescend to men of low estate. Through purity of heart we see the hand of God in the circumstances of our lot, and in the merest details of life. Thus we are enabled to say, "All things are of God."

WHAT SEPARATES US ?

BUT, we may be asked, are true children of God not to be found in the religious denominations of Christendom? Indeed they are, we reply. Some of the excellent of the earth are there. We are linked to them, and they to us, by the bond of an everlasting brotherhood—a bond that all the inventions of man cannot break. They may permit themselves to be separated from us by the traditions of the so-called Church. But in spirit we are one. We are members of the one heavenly family, redeemed by the same precious Blood, and travelling to the same eternal home. It is true we are separated from each other down here. But what is it that separates us? Not the truth of God; for the tendency of the truth is to gather His people together, and bind into one. It is simply the traditions of men that keep our beloved brethren in the fellowship of the world's religion. There is no reason why it should be so. There is nothing in common between God's saints and unconverted worshippers. Therefore we long to see the day when the separating truth of God shall have its due effect; and then it shall come to pass that scattered members of the church of the first-born ones shall find themselves going forth unto the rejected Christ; not only one in Him, but one with all who own His sway.

MANY desire peace, but follow not the things that make for peace.

ATTRACTING TO A WRONG POSITION.

SURPRISE has been expressed that a man of such a loving and beautiful character as Jonathan should have been found at Saul's table (1 Sam. xx.); and no less has been the surprise that a man so hard in spirit and treacherous in nature as Joab the son of Zeruiah (2 Sam. xx. 10), should have taken his stand with the Lord's anointed. "What a pity," we are almost inclined to say, "that Jonathan did not cast in his lot with David; and what a blessing it would have been if Joab had never been the captain of David's host." But although we may think that such an arrangement would have been more in keeping with the fitness of things, we have to deal with events as we find them—not as we would wish they had been.

In the diverse natures and positions of Joab and Jonathan we are satisfied there are lessons for us to learn—lessons that have a very vital bearing on the state of things in our day. Jonathan—the man of an excellent spirit and an aimable disposition—was associated with the very one (Saul) who was persecuting the anointed of the Lord. Jonathan, in short, was found fighting under the banner of the man whom God had rejected (1 Sam. xv. 23). In a word, Jonathan, with many excellent qualities, was (so far as we can see) in the *wrong place*. Certain it is, that if he had been with David he would not have fallen before the sword of the uncircumcised Philistines on the fatal Mount of Gilboa

(1 Sam. xxxi. 2). If he had identified himself with the true king of Israel, there is every likelihood that he would have seen the fulfilment of his own prediction to David (1 Sam. xxiii. 17), "Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee." But that happy day never came for Jonathan. That his heart was with David, we know. He loved him as his own soul (1 Sam. xviii. 1). But what secret attractions bound him to Saul's court, we can only surmise. It was perhaps "natural" that he should stand by his father. Yet therein may have lain the trial of his faith. He knew that his father was rejected of heaven, and that David was destined to sit upon the throne. Yet, knowing all this, he refused to sever the cords of nature, and go forth to the wilderness to succour the rejected king. One bold step, and the sword of the Philistine would have sought him in vain on Gilboa: one bold step, and—days of rejection over—he would have been next to David in the kingdom. But that step was not taken; and Jonathan's voice was amissing in the hour of David's triumph. *Why* the step was not taken, we cannot tell. But this much we *see*. In the present day there is many a Jonathan—many a true lover of the Lord—who is not treading the path of rejection with the Lord's Anointed. Beautiful in character, loving and lovable, their hearts seem to be in the wilderness with David. Yet they cling tenaciously to Saul's table. The ties of flesh and blood may be permitted to hold them. There may be

secret attractions, unseen by mortal eye. But, from whatever causes, they do not go forth to the cave of Adullam (1 Sam. xxii. 1). They may make a stolen visit to David; yea, they may be found strengthening his hand in God (1 Sam. xxiii. 16), thereby admitting that the path of rejection is the true path. Yet in a few short hours they are found at Saul's table!

Men of the Jonathan type not only forfeit blessing by remaining in Saul's house, but (unwittingly, doubtless) they do a serious injury to the cause of truth. By remaining in Saul's court they *attract* to a *false centre*, and thus *allure from the true centre*. And the more Christ-like they are in disposition, the more effectually will they attract to the false centre. It is one of the hindrances to the spread of the truth, that men of zeal and love and a beautiful disposition, are found in the wrong place, so far as their church-fellowship is concerned. "My church position cannot be far wrong," some say, "seeing such a godly man as Mr. So-and-so is one of our elders." "O yes," we reply, "there is many a Jonathan at Saul's table—many an Obadiah in Ahab's court." But that is no proof that such is the place where God would have them to be. We must prove all things by the Word. If my church position will not stand the light of Scripture, then I must go forth at the bidding of God. Jonathan may be determined to remain. But what *he does* cannot supersede what *God says*. "What is that to thee?" says the Master; "follow thou Me."

JOTTINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

SAINTS! Bishops! Deacons! This interesting trio demands our further consideration. Are all apostles?—are all prophets?—are all teachers? is thrillingly asked by Him who wishes us ever to remember that the Word of God has come *to us*, and has not emanated *from us*!

In the spirit of the above questionings we ask, Are all saints?—are all bishops?—are all deacons? It is a divine certainty that no man can be bishop or deacon in God's estimation, save as he is firstly a saint. God's children should therefore cultivate fellowship with Him in this particular, and so refuse any man as bishop or deacon who is not unquestionably a saint. But, here, it is well to be clear as to what constitutes a saint; or, in other words, how a man becomes a saint. No one can be a saint through attainment in walk, or holiness of life and practice. Nevertheless, no one may be reckoned or accounted a saint who lacks holiness of life and practice. This principle of the grace of God is like the great doctrine of justification by faith. Therein it is plainly declared that a man is justified from all things by faith in the Son of God—Jesus; and this, too, apart from works. Yet, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works, can *that* faith save *him*? We trow not! Hence it is, that "saint" is a name that belongs in common to every born-again person. It is a family name of the

children of God; a name, moreover, that tells

WHAT THEY ARE,

even *holy ones*—made so by the call of God (Compare Rom. i. 7, and 1 Cor. i. 2). Observe that what the Scriptures declare is, that believers are "called saints"—not that they are called *to be* saints. There is no need to put in the words "to be." Holiness becometh the saint, *not* to make him a saint, but because he *is* a saint; just as princely ways become the one among men who is born a prince, because he is such. While behaving like that prince, will never make the most perfect imitator to be a born prince, so also in the matter of saintship.

God never calls a man a saint because of his walk, his virtues, or his attainments! At the same time, God always demands that His saints shall be holy because He is holy (1 Pet. i. 16). Doubtless some may here answer, "Then, because a man is a saint, he may assay to be a bishop." Ah! no. For any man that is newly come to the Faith must not assay to do such work. For those "new plants" (Compare 1 Cor. iii. 9) to engage in overseeing work would expose themselves to the very judgment that the Devil himself fell into. Moreover, the Devil doth busily lay snares that therein well-meaning, but mistaken, saints may fall. How exceedingly solemn all this is when considered in the light of the, alas! too common practice of those that are appointed to bishopric-work, but who have not come to the Faith at all! and not a few of whom most bitterly and

always oppose the Faith. Indeed, is it not also a fact that many are made "elders" although it is well-known that they are not yet born-again? What words could tell the judgment unto which those thus come?

The word "bishop" is the combination of two words which mean *to oversee*. Whence, as in Acts xx. 28, we read: "Made you overseers to feed as a shepherd the church of God." Thus the word is faithful: "If any man desireth oversight, he desireth a good"—what? A good "living"?—emoluments?—stipend?—titles?—office? &c., &c? Nay, Nay. Let God be true; let God be heard. "If any man desireth oversight, he desireth

BEAUTIFUL WORK."

Wherefore, let such know that it becomes them TO BE as 1 Tim. iii. 1-7 tells. Yea, it becomes them TO DO as 1 Thess. v. 14-22 exhorts; while, in their arduous toil, let them know and be encouraged by the fact, that when the Chief Shepherd doth appear, they shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away. Men doing overseeing-work will cause themselves *to be known* by the saints as those who labour among them—yea, who are over (that is, who go before) them *in the Lord*; being ensamples of the flock. Such will be men of fatherly firmness and motherly tenderness, who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore are they "apt to teach"; that is, ready to impart the word of counsel, which is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

Their ear is opened morning by morning to hear as the learner, and unto them is therefore given the tongue of the learner, so that they know *how* to speak a word in season to him that is weary. Verily these refuse sleep that they may watch for souls as they that must give account, recognizing always that the flock is God's, and not theirs. Whence every saint among whom such overseers or bishops are, is bestirred to be far removed from the spirit of Cain, that asks in self-justification and self-gratification, "Am I my brother's keeper?" while also in the spirit of the Good Shepherd all are instructed to look diligently, lest any fall short of the grace of God, that root of bitterness spring not up, nor trouble and defilement appear. The deacon we must leave over till our next issue, as already space is taxed in February number. Praying that we may only jot the way of the Spirit, and in no wise the way of the flesh, so that every reader, being in *the way* himself, may know the bliss of the Lord-led one, and help to bring about the meeting of *our* Rebekah and Isaac.

J. B.

THERE is no such thing now as a new revelation to the Churches. All that is needful for life and godliness is to be found in the Scriptures. The novelty of a new doctrine has great weight with some minds; and they believe everything without any appeal to that which is written. But they of the Berean spirit (Acts xvii. 11) will *search the Scriptures* to see if these things be so.

THE EARTHEN FLOOR.

“**T**HE first time a dear sister found herself in the little company gathered to the Lord's Name, her first thought was that it was a very poor affair, and that she would not be at home there at all. The room was only a small one; and when her eye rested on the earthen floor, she felt a sinking at the heart. She thought at first that she had come to the wrong place. But no sooner had the meeting begun than she felt that God was in that place. The earthen floor was entirely forgotten; and she praised the Lord that she had found that poor place to be unto her none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven.”

Such is the substance of a little jotting from Newtonstewart Conference on 1st January. To the carnal eye there is something very imposing in magnificent places of worship, painted windows, “dim, religious light,” and seats done up with all the art of the upholsterer. But wherever there are hearts truly seeking Christ, the world flourishes its trumpets in vain. The meeting-place with the Beloved One may be an unpretending hall, a joiner's shop, or even a room with an earthen floor. But it matters not to those who seek the Master for Himself alone. The surroundings may be humble in the extreme. Yet, if the King be there, the place is invested with the royalty of a palace, and the dignity of heaven. If Christ gets His true place, that spot is hallowed ground.

NOT BOUND TO PRAY FOR EVERYTHING.

IF you feel led to pray in a meeting, don't be under the delusion that you are bound to pray for *everything you can think of*. If you harbour that idea, you will be found going over so much ground, that instead of having the “Amen” of the meeting, you will be found giving rise to the wish that you would draw to a close. In private prayer there need be no limit; for in that case there is no one to “consider” but yourself. But in a public meeting it is different. For one thing, you must aim at *carrying the meeting with you*. In the matter of public prayer a wise man will seek to *lead* his brethren—not to *drag* them. It is a sure sign of formality when you can tell all that a brother is going to ask, as soon as he has said, “Let us pray.” Long, formal prayers are undoubted hindrances to the life of a meeting. They draw out the sigh of relief, and not the Amen of approval. When the praying is (wittingly or unwittingly) left to two or three brethren who seek to fill up the time as well as they can, we need not wonder at unprofitable meetings. The “silent” brethren must be aroused to their privileges. They are “priests unto God” as truly as the greatest brethren in the assembly; and, generally speaking, their word would be not only acceptable but positively welcome. Who has not felt refreshed when one of these silent brethren, of godly walk, has suddenly poured out his heart

in a few stammering words of true adoration? We want more of such ministry in our assemblies. There are a great many unobtrusive "rank-and-file" brethren, the lack of whose word is a decided loss to the churches. We need all that the Lord has given us; and if these brethren would just rise to their responsibilities, and be ready to open their mouth as the Lord might lead, we are satisfied that long, dreary prayers would soon become a thing of the past.

DO YOU REJOICE?

ARE you a ministering brother? Do you occupy the Gospel platform occasionally, and open up the Scriptures, by a time, to the saints? Very well: if you do not rejoice to hear a brother who is a better preacher than yourself, you may well question if God is with you. The true ambassador of heaven is one who rejoices when a fellow-labourer shows that he has a greater "gift," and is more manifestly used of God. It is to be feared that there are Christian workers who become alarmed at the bare thought of some new preacher arising, who will be preferred before them. But such a prospect will cause no apprehension to a man with the "single eye." Instead of being downcast at the thought of being eclipsed by the new-comer, he will rejoice that Christ is to be raised higher than ever. The man who does not praise God in such circumstances may rest assured that

he is in no condition to run with the messages of heaven. The heart of envy cannot be a channel for the Gospel of grace. *To rejoice with Christ* is one of the first qualifications of a soul-winner; and I cannot be rejoicing with Him if I am murmuring at the gift and grace He has bestowed upon my brother.

BEREAVED.

(Jeremiah xlix. 11; Psalm lxxviii. 5).

Lines written to a friend who had suffered the loss of a loved one.

FEAR not, dear sister, though earth's sorrows roll
Like angry billows o'er thy burdened soul:
His presence shall be with thee all the days,
To strengthen thee and keep thee in His ways.

Although the one thou best didst love below
Is carried far beyond earth's pain and woe,
One tender heart is beating for thee still:
O bow thee to His wise and loving will.

Bright promises He has for thee in store,
Which thou could'st not have claimed as thine before:
Just seek them out, and make them all thine own,
As spoken to thyself from yonder throne.

"Jehovah-Jireh" (Gen. xxii. 14) shineth now so bright,
To thee it shall be in the darkness light;
O rest thy soul upon it; fear no more:
In Christ there is a never-failing store.

He loves thee much; He careth for thee now;
See on His hands and feet, His side and brow,
The marks of that deep love, so rich and free:
Then doubt not; for His love is proved to thee.

He fully understands thy wounded heart;
'Twas He removed the one who bore a part
With thee in every trial, fear, and care;
But oh! look up; he waiteth for thee there.

Amid the glories of that happy place,
Gazing together on thy Saviour's face,
Thy dear one and thyself soon, soon shall be
United through a blest Eternity.

E. J. I.

LEAVING THE CHURCH.

LAST night at the Prayer Meeting we heard a strange voice. It was the voice of a weather-beaten old quarryman who had come to work in the neighbourhood. On getting into conversation with him at the close of the meeting, we found that he was fourteen years on his heavenly journey. He told us he had been converted in the village of L——, some twenty miles from here. Before his conversion he had been a staunch supporter of one of the denominations. But no sooner did he get his eyes opened to his lost condition as a sinner, than he got his eyes opened to his true position as a child of God. He at once went forth unto the rejected Lord Jesus Christ. Needless to say, he was missed from the place where he had formerly been a "worshipper." One day the clergyman met him, and said: "I am sorry to hear that you have left the Church." "O no," replied our old friend, "I haven't done that: *I have only now got into the Church.* But if you mean the stone-and-lime building that goes by that name, it's quite true that I have left it." The clergyman could make no headway against the scriptural arguments with which he was met; and our brother has remained outside the camp to this day. His case is not peculiar by any means. Many have been assailed with the same words—"Why have you left the Church?" Perhaps for long years they had been unconverted sinners on their way to hell, with their name duly

recorded on some church books; and yet they were reckoned members in "good standing," and not a question was asked about their soul! But now that they have been converted to God, and made members of the Church, the Body of Christ, and have gone forth in obedience to the Scriptures of Truth, immediately the cry is raised that they are leaving the Church! But *the Church* is not being left: it is simply being entered; and the will of its great Head is being carried out.

REPELLING FROM THE TRUE POSITION.

JOAB, David's general, furnishes us with a striking illustration of believers who are in a perfectly scriptural church-position, and yet in a lamentable condition of heart. In last year's volume we considered Joab's history, and saw it to be destitute of every redeeming feature. Yet we found that very man identified with the rejected king—sharing in his sufferings—bearing his reproaches—standing by the Lord's anointed, even when the chances of regaining the kingdom were small indeed. Why was such a carnal man as Joab on the side of David? How did it come that one in such a sad condition, was yet in the right position? If we had eyes to see a little below the surface, we might understand some of the hidden workings that have put men of the Joab character into a right position and kept

them there. One thing, at least, we learn; and it is this: Although your feet are treading the Lord's path, your heart may be far enough away from Him. We must ever remember that being in a correct church-position is no guarantee whatever that we are right in heart with God. Joab was what we would call *in the right place*. Yet he was of such an envious, selfish, and revengeful disposition, that he brought no joy to David's heart. Yea, we find the king groaning over the captain of his host, as one of those concerning whom he had to say, "They be too hard for me" (2 Sam. iii. 39).

In Joab's history we learn that fleshly men may be found in the right place; but the right place does not cease to be the right place because such men may be there. The true lovers of David did not forsake rejection's path although they saw a Joab to be even one of the chief men. Doubtless the circumstances were trying—they were a trial to David himself. But the presence of Joab could not, and did not, make the path of rejection anything else than what it really was. Therefore the faithful ones were still found identified with him whom God had chosen.

Apply all this to the state of things to-day, and you will find history repeating itself. In the path of rejection you may see men of a spirit far different from the spirit of Him unto whom they have gone forth—men of a cold, hard, repelling nature—yea, perhaps even aspiring to be captains of the host! How came they

there? We know not. Why do they stay there? We cannot tell. Perhaps, having stepped into the path of rejection without due consideration, they are determined to "fight it out" rather than humble themselves to say, "We have changed our minds." They do not adorn the doctrine—they do not commend the truth. Indeed, it is one of the drawbacks to the progress of the truth that men of that character *repel from the true position*, instead of *attracting to it*. These "inferior samples" are invariably selected by the opponents of the truth in order to prove that professed "separation" is a failure. If there is an inconsistent person in an assembly—if there is a man of a hard, worldly spirit—that one is invariably picked out as an infallible proof that God is not there. But Scripture gives no warrant to come to such a conclusion. The humble enquirer after the path of truth will not come to a stand-still because he sees a Joab in the way before him. When we came outside the camp, it was not with the purpose of *finding a perfect company of believers*. We simply desired to discover *God's path*, as revealed in the Scriptures of truth. We did not come out to *brethren*, nor to a company of believers which we considered to have a "very good testimony." We went forth *unto the rejected Lord Jesus Christ*. If, professing to tread His path, we find men whose spirit ill accords with their profession, the path of rejection is still the path of rejection; for the truth, like God Himself, changes not. Therefore, let those who

have gone forth unto the Lord's Anointed *continue with Him in this the hour of His rejection.* Failure there may be. Yet God abideth faithful. There may be much to discourage. Nevertheless, with even a *little strength*, let us seek to *keep His Word* and not to *deny His Name.*

THE NIGHT OF SORROW.

PRECIOUS is the night of sorrow,
Needful is its gloom :
There will be a glad to-morrow
Of eternal bloom.

'Tis a loving, heavenly Father
Rules the midnight sky ;
In the roughest, darkest weather,
Boundless strength is nigh.

All the desert path He knoweth,
Every subtle snare ;
Yet through all He safely leadeth
On to glory fair.

Seek not, then, to choose thy pathway ;
Lean upon thy Guide ;
Let the wildest storm but drive thee
Closer to His side.

Soon the mists shall all be scattered,
And the shades of night,
With their sadness, be forgotten
In the cloudless light.

Haste, Lord Jesus, Thy returning—
Break, oh longed-for day,
When I'll hear the Bridroom's greeting :
"Rise, and come away."

JANUARY, 1889.

B. C.

IN THE MATTER OF ADDRESSES

we must gently remind Subscribers to be careful always to give their full name and address. When (as sometimes happens) they give only the initials, or no name at all, but simply the name of the town, it causes a good deal of searching, and risk of error. Of course you can save yourself the trouble of writing your full address if you simply give your name and the number that appears on your monthly parcel, thus : J. Johnston, 983. There can then be no mistake.

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MARCH, 1889.

Vol. IV.

A GOOD MAN, AND A RIGHTEOUS MAN.

TO be a *good man* is something more—far more—than merely to be a *righteous man*. Scripture testifies concerning Barnabas, that he was “a good man” (Acts xi. 24). Now, as Barnabas was a remarkable man, and one of the very select few whom Scripture mentions by name as being filled with the Holy Spirit, it may be well to enquire, What is a good man, according to the scriptural meaning of the word? Rom. v. 7 clearly teaches that a *righteous* man is one person, and a *good* man is quite another person. You would find it hard to get any one to die for a righteous man; “yet peradventure for a *good man* some would even dare to die.” A righteous man is one who keeps to the strict line of righteousness—pays twenty shillings to the pound, and not a farthing more. His transactions are weighed in the even scales of justice: he gives you *that*, but that is all. He is a man who keeps his engagements, and does all he is *bound* to do; but beyond that point he does not care to move. If (to use an illustration we once heard) the merely righteous man is

weighing you out an ounce of tea, he will give you *just weight*—you may be certain of that, but nothing more; while a good man (if dealing with a poor customer) might throw an ounce in to the bargain; for “the liberal deviseth liberal things” (Isa. xxxii. 8). A “good man,” in short, is one who, while taking care to be strictly righteous in his dealings, has got such a warm heart that he is never really content except in seeing others happy. His sympathies are broad and deep. He is one easily affected by the need and suffering of his fellows, makes a true and constant friend; and as for being “a good hater,” he does not know what that means. In money matters you will find him dipping his hand deep into his pocket—not to drag out the reluctant three-penny-piece, but to hand out the cheerful offering according as the Lord has prospered him; for well he knows that the Lord loveth a cheerful giver. At the same time, he is valued for his sympathy more than for his money. He is a man with a *heart*; and out of the good treasure of that heart he brings forth good things. Such is the good man of Scripture. Without seeking to be seen of men, he is yet seen, and taken knowledge of. Yea, he is held in

such regard that some would even *die* for him! On the other hand, he who is a righteous man and not a good man, will command no such esteem. His virtues are purely of a negative character. He can point to a great many bad things that he would not indulge in upon any account. But you search in vain for his positive virtues. He is not a worker of evil, certainly. Yet his testimony is not adorned by those "beautiful works" which mark "a good man." The man who is simply righteous and nothing more, may have a high opinion of his own perfections. But, lacking the true "bowels and mercies," he shall be left like the Pharisee of old (Lu. xviii. 11) to find his highest delight in contemplating his own excellencies. In the day of trouble he shall not be able to cheer his heart, like Job, with the reflection: "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy" (Job xxix. 11-13).

The righteous man, pure and simple, is well worthy of our emulation in his unflinching integrity, and the resolute determination that every obstacle must be overcome, rather than spend money that is not his, or do anything that will not bear the light of Scripture. And God forbid that such principles should cease to command our highest regard.

But it is not enough to root out the weeds and noxious plants. There must be more than the barrenness of the wilderness in the garden of our testimony. That garden must be radiant with the graces of a self-sacrificing love, that seeks rather to remember the good it has failed to do, than the feats of self-denial which it has accomplished.

NOT VERY FAR.

YOU are not very far away from worldly conformity if you abstain from it merely because it would not be expedient to indulge in it. That is just another way of saying, "I would do it if I dared; but I daren't." If such be your sentiments it is clear that there has been a return to Egypt in heart—a very dangerous condition to be in. If it is only the outer shell of profession that keeps us from conformity to the world, we may rest assured that sooner or later that thin "wall of partition" shall be broken through. Where there is a wistful eye cast backward to the forbidden things of Egypt, the subtilty of Satan will very soon furnish us with some plausible excuse for gratifying our desires.

MANY can say that "all things work together for good to them that love God;" but it is only through the teaching of *experience* that we can affirm, "*We know* that all things work together for good."

THE WHOLE TRUTH.

WE have been told that among believers there is a "school of thought" consisting of those who contend strongly for separation from ecclesiastical evil; but who have little to say as to separation from that which is un-Christ-like in life and character. These believers can show the evil of sitting in church-fellowship with the enemies of Christ. They can take the sword of the Word and hew the great apostasy of Christendom into pieces. They are thoroughly posted up in separation truth, so far as it relates to the believer's path as entirely distinct from the religious confederacies of the day. They can expound the effects of defilement, and the working of the leaven of evil doctrine. But the strange thing is, that these brethren are scarcely ever heard to wax warm in their exhortations as to a mortified temper, a self-denying walk, and a Christ-like life. They have but little to say as to the sterling honesty that should characterise the believer—the "cleanness" that should be manifest in his ways in the world—and the *separation* that should mark him out in the paths of every-day life as a man who is "not of the world." Now (if there be such a school of thought), we can follow these believers up to a certain point. We have no fault to find with the teaching of separation from ecclesiastical evil. We are firm believers in such separation. We find it clearly revealed in Scripture; and that is enough

for us. Therefore we can give our hearty "Amen" to the teaching of separation from worldly systems of religion. But why should there be only a feeble reference to the necessity for practical godliness? We do not believe in exalting one part of God's truth at the expense of another. If separation truth is to be taught, let it be taught in all its length and breadth. While there ought to be clear testimony as to the sin of church-fellowship with the ungodly, let there be as clear testimony concerning the sin of worldly-conformity and the absolute necessity for holiness of life.

But there is another "school" of believers, who dwell almost entirely on separation from moral evil. They confine themselves to the truth that bears upon practical godliness. They say—and rightly so—that God demands holiness from all who profess the name of Christ. These Christians therefore make it their special aim to open up truth calculated to conform the believer to the image of God's Son. Whole meetings are devoted to that subject; and a blessed subject it is. We give a hearty "Amen" to all the teaching comprehended in that line of things. But the remarkable thing is, that these believers have not a word to say as to ecclesiastical evil! They are entirely silent as to the great things of God's law concerning church-fellowship with the ungodly. *The Lord* hath asked the question, "What communion hath light with darkness?" and He has followed up that question by the plain command: "Wherefore, come out from

among them, and be ye separate" (2 Cor. vi. 14, 17). Nevertheless, the believers in question seem to think it of very little moment whether you sit at the Communion Table with the enemies of Christ or not. Yonder young convert may be withering his soul among unconverted worshippers—mixed up with church entertainments and religious concerts. But no voice is heard sounding forth in trumpet tones, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." Why? Simply this, that perhaps the speaker on the platform is an elder in that very church; or, it may be, even the clergyman himself! He simply *cannot* expound 2 Cor. vi. If he did so, and the truth were obeyed, what would happen? Why, every *living* member of his congregation would *come out* from among the ungodly at once, and leave him to hand out the bread and the cup to the unconverted worshippers that swell his communion roll! It would thus *never do for him* to expose ecclesiastical evil. Therefore evil of that kind is not hewn in pieces. And thus it comes that a large portion of separation truth is passed over as if it were of no moment whatever.

Now, we can follow these believers up to a certain point. Their "line of things" is excellent, so far as it goes. We do not believe that there has been a bit too much teaching in the direction of personal holiness. We want it. But we also want the teaching that will make clear to the young convert (and to the old convert) what God has said concerning

the gathering together of His people as Churches of God on earth, and the sin of fellowship in what God has distinctly forbidden.

It will be seen that up to a certain point we are at one with both schools of thought. We agree with them in what they give out, but not in what they keep back. Let the truth—the whole truth—be told. Let us take into our hands the truth that gives clear, definite teaching as to church-position and fellowship, and the truth that deals with what is known as practical godliness; and we shall go forth with a "body of divinity" that shall prove mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds—to the building together of scattered saints, and the building up of these scattered ones in all the graces that can adorn the Christian character.

THE SCRIPTURAL SCHOOL OF THOUGHT.

WHILE we have been speaking of two "schools" of thought among the Lord's people, we give thanks to God for all who form the true and scriptural school, namely, those who contend earnestly for *the whole truth of God*—no matter whether that truth demands separation from doctrinal evil, or moral evil—whether it be church truth, or truth relating to the believer's walk in the world. All hail to those heaven-sent messengers who can proclaim, with no uncertain sound,

what it is to be separated to the Name, while at the same time they can expatiate on the delights of heavenly communion, and bring the withering denunciations of Scripture down upon the popular sins of the day. Where the truth is thus "rightly divided," it shall not fail of its due effect.

NO ARGUMENT.

THE truth of separation to the Name of the Lord is sometimes resisted on the plea that you will find persons professedly separated to the Name, who are yet in some respects more worldly than many who profess no such separation. But, while that is admitted, we must point out that such is no argument for disobeying the plain commands of Scripture. Where God has spoken, it is my simple duty to obey. If I find you breaking the fifth commandment, that is no reason why I should break the eighth. Yet that is the very argument taken up by some in their opposition to what is called "separation truth." They produce examples of those who profess the *separation doctrine*, and yet fail to manifest the *separation life*. But if they are to make good their position, they must produce *Scripture* to show that God does not require obedience to His revealed will. Seeing, however, that no such Scripture is forthcoming, we must, by the grace of God, continue stedfastly "in the apostles' doctrine." We are all familiar with the argument

that two blacks cannot make a white. In other words, if *you* are not doing the right thing, *that* cannot justify *me* in doing the thing that is wrong. Or, if you wish the same thought in scriptural language: "Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend" (Hos. iv. 15). If some, professing separation, have failed to adorn the doctrine, such is no reason why I should refuse to *obey* the doctrine. Nay, it is in a certain sense a very cogent reason why I should not only obey, but seek all the aids of heavenly power that I may *adorn*, the doctrine I profess to hold. The more false witnesses there are, the more incumbent it is upon me to be a true one. If there are carnal professors who yet claim to be separated to the Lord, that is no reason why we should forsake the position to which the truth of God has separated us. There is no call whatever for us to "sell" a single particle of the truth. If the "failures" in question have any voice for us, it is this: "Be it *your* care so to manifest a separated life, that mere *professors* of separation shall find it impossible to carry on the imposition any longer; just as the *false* must ever be made more or less *manifest* in the presence of the *true*."

THE "expulsive power of the new affection" (love for the absent One) is the great lever wherewith the hosts of evil are to be successfully resisted. The joy of the Lord is strength. Where heavenly joy is on the wane, Satan is preparing for a victory.

SIGNS AND TOKENS.

WE have now arrived at a point in the history of the Church, when signs and tokens accumulate that the Lord is at work in separating His own from that which is of the earth, earthy. The religious world is getting worse and worse. True children of God, whose "lot is cast" in some denomination, have been in the habit of using the argument that it is their duty to remain where they are, and try to "make things better." But it is now being seen that this argument has lost its point. The denomination, instead of getting better, is getting worse. The enemies of Christ are actually chosen as "pillars," in preference to undoubted children of God! Worldly entertainments are the order of the day; while the preaching resolves itself into some moral essay, that constrains the true seeker after Christ to say, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." If some faithful Jeremiah dares to raise his voice against such spiritual wickedness in high places—if he dares to cry out, "I protest against the unconverted being allowed to sit at the Communion Table, and the enemies of the Cross being recognised as pillars in this Church," he is at once dealt with as a "troubler of Israel," and silenced by sheer force of numbers.

What is the effect of all this upon the devoted few in that congregation who seek to follow God? They begin at once to ask themselves the question, "Is this

the New-Testament type of a Church of Christ? The world has evidently full power here, and the few born-again ones are powerless. Is it according to Scripture that we should be here, worshipping among the dead?" Scripture is searched; and they discover that the Lord never placed them in that denomination! Discoveries of this kind are being made. The increasing worldliness of popular religionism, while attracting the worldling, is simply driving away the remnant of God's children who happen to be there. Thus the Lord, in this indirect way, is separating a people from the great mass of fashionable Christianity. For this let us praise His name. It is surely a "sign of the times" in which we live—a token that He is about to "gather others to Him, beside those that are gathered unto Him" (Isa. lvi. 8).

LINES

Written by a young woman on being restored to the joy of salvation after backsliding from the Lord.


DO thank Thee, O my Saviour,
That a faithful child of Thine,
With his lamp well trimmed and burning,
Noticed darkness pass o'er mine;

And, in words that made me tremble,
Showed the danger I was in—
Told me how I had departed,
And had grieved Thee by my sin.

Grieved Thee, O my loving Saviour,
Though for me Thy blood was shed!
But I come to be forgiven,
By thy Holy Spirit led.

Yes, I know Thou hast received me,
Henceforth now to do Thy will;
And when Thou shalt come to take me,
May my lamp be burning still.

ENTITLED TO TAKE PART.

N our assembly life you may have observed a tendency to allow all the *ministering* to fall into the hands of two or three brethren. How is this to be prevented? for we take it for granted that such a tendency is not desirable. If godly brethren sit in continued silence while two or three are left to lead the gathered saints in praise and prayer, besides the thanksgiving for the Bread and the Cup, the effect cannot be for the highest blessing of the assembly. It is quite possible that the two or three brethren who get everything to do, will gradually come to think that they alone are entitled to do it; while the silent brethren may unconsciously come to believe that it would be *presumption for them* to take any public part in the meeting. This would be a very undesirable state of things. Therefore we call attention to a few points which may be helpful in keeping the assembly as a ten-stringed instrument, in whose music our God can delight.

It must, then, be clearly understood that any brother of godly walk is perfectly entitled to give out a hymn—or to read a portion of Scripture, if led of God so to do. Yea, if such a brother is led to “give thanks” at the weekly feast, let him do so. This is clearly taught in 1 Cor. xiv. 26–40. We are not speaking just now of the *diversity of gifts*, which is another matter. We are speaking of the *general ministry* which is the privilege of the “humblest” brother in the meeting.

“Then,” you say, “brother So-and-so—that godly brother who keeps so quiet—is quite at liberty to lead in prayer or praise?” “Most assuredly,” we reply. And not only is it his privilege so to “take part,” but it is his *responsibility* to do so, in the leading of God. When, through mistaken humility, he suppresses the promptings that would lead him to offer his “tribute of praise,” he will deprive the church of whatever “help” his word might have been, besides leaving a gap through which “the restless flesh” may come in to “relieve the suspense.”

Only two things are needed in order to effectually prevent the “service of the sanctuary” falling into the hands of a select few. (1) Let there be a clear proclamation of the priesthood of believers; and (2) let us see that we are individually in such a condition of soul that we shall be ready to be channels through which the living water may flow.

You may have observed that we do not say “any brother” is at liberty to take part in the meeting. We say “any brother of *godly walk*.” The explanation is this, that taking part in a meeting is a *public act*; and those who thus publicly serve must see that they are not disqualified (See 1 Tim. iii. 8–13). For example, a brother of disorderly walk, or one given to gossip or jocularly, would not be warranted to lead the prayers or praises of the assembled saints. Any one can see that such a proceeding would be unseemly, even apart from the plain prohibition of Scripture. In

referring to these "restrictions" we trust that none of the truly godly will, through mistaken humility, mark themselves down as unworthy to open their mouth. If they do so, they may find that they have simply been paving the way for this public service to fall into the hands of brethren who are not hampered by any scruples as to their own unworthiness. While we thus speak we trust that godly brethren who are wont to lead in praise and prayer, will still continue to be exercised as to this ministry. It is often left to fall upon a few who, in weakness it may be, are yet faithfully seeking to carry out the order of the Lord's house. Let us praise God for such, and pray that He may add to their number.

THROUGH THE FURNACE.

PASSING through the furnace,
Holden by Thy hand ;
Love has placed me in it,
But to break each band.

Passing through the furnace,
What have I to fear ?
Father, all Thou knowest,
And Thou'rt ever near.

Passing through the furnace,
'Tis in love I know,
For *Thy heart* has planned it,
Marked each step below.

Passing through the furnace,
Kept by pow'r divine,
Pillow'd on th' assurance—
"Fear not, thou art Mine."

Passing through the furnace,
Press'd by fire and flood,
Soon to cry in gladness,
"Father, it was good."

JANUARY, 1889.

B. C.

THE GOD OF RESURRECTION.

THE God we have to do with is the God of resurrection. We learn this from 2 Cor. i. 9, where we read that we have "the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead." In trusting God for any special deliverance, let us always remember that He is the Almighty One—even the God who raiseth the dead. Abraham's faith was, so to speak, resurrection faith. He accounted that God was "able to raise up Isaac even from the dead ; from whence also he received him in a figure" (Heb. xi. 19). Our path may be intricate, and the difficulties many ; yet *God is able* ; and this is sufficient for the child of faith.

NO ROOM.

YOU may renounce the world's joys, and yet fail to be truly separated from these joys. The mere refusal to taste (however needful that refusal may be) will confer no power to resist. From whence, then, is that power to come? It is to come through drinking at the fountain of heavenly joy. Let us ever be found drinking there—filled out of the fulness that is in Christ Jesus ; and no room will be left for the beggarly elements of the world. If that world be cast out, and heavenly joy not brought in, the empty space will be filled by the "old things" of a Christless world.

ANOTHER DAY.

ANOTHER day of mercy, another day of love,
 Another day of patient care, in which His goodness strove
 To lead me on, and nearer to the precious Christ of God—
 To show me more of what is His, and mine by right of blood.

Another day of waiting in the presence of the King,
 Of patient hope of that bright morn which shall His glory bring ;
 When, freed from all that clings to earth, I rise to greet Him there,
 And all I love in Christ below shall meet Him in the air.

But draw me, draw me *nearer* : I long to see and know
 More of the love that follows me with mercy as I go.
 Thus lead me, Master, lead me, to a deeper rest than this ;
 For as in heaven, on earth I know there is a path of bliss.

There is a way of holiness, a brighter, sweeter path ; [hath ?
 Though thorns there be, how can they harm the soul that Jesus
 Then patiently I journey on, to reach His perfect rest ;
 No weary toil to walk with Him—my way He knoweth best.

Rest thou in Him—the stormy sea of trial fades from view,
 When thou canst see the Saviour-Man who ever pleads for you.
 Is this the path He'd have thee tread ? then, there's no other way
 In which He could reveal Himself, and be thy strength and stay.

Then rest thee calmly in His love, tho' oft thy faith He proves,
 While for thy good His patient hand the fount of mercy moves.
 Keep close to Him, O child of God, whose love shall never fail ;
 Soon thou shalt be where He is now—at rest within the veil.

However small thy burden be, 'tis not too small for Him ;
 He loves to hear His children's voice, e'en though the faith be dim.
 The heaviest burden *cast on Him*, no more a burden proves ;
 'Tis but another pledge to faith, that He for ever loves.

Then wouldst thou have a closer walk, and know the peace-kept
 mind ?

Thy plea is heard in yonder court, O come, and seek, and find.
 Tell out to Him thy heart's desire, that He may fan the flame,
 Till thou shalt be a shining light—a witness for His Name.

O tell Him how the fire of love burns low within thy breast—
 That thou hast found, away from Him, no dwelling-place—no rest.
 Fly to the Ark ; the piercé hand shall quickly draw thee in,
 And in thy fiercest conflict He the victory shall win.

C. A.

I'M NOT WILLING.

IN 2 Chron. xviii. 26 we
 find Ahab getting rid
 of the prophet's testimony
 by sending the faithful
 messenger to prison. The
 king of Israel was deter-
 mined that he would have
 no testimony, unless it was
 in agreement with his own
 mind. In much the same
 way not a few professed
 believers are found getting
 rid of troublesome testi-
 mony to-day. If you
 preach pleasant things, you
 are reckoned a fine brother.
 But if your testimony is
 withering to the flesh and
 worldly conformity, you
 will find that world-con-
 forming professors take
 care to have as little of
 your testimony as they
 possibly can. We know a
 brother who, when a certain
 periodical came in, was
 wont to put it in his book-
 case unopened, contenting
 himself with merely looking
 at the outside wrapper.
 He confessed that he was
 afraid to open it ; "for,"
 said he, "that paper would
 search me, and I'm not
 willing to be searched."
 He was in a sad condition
 truly. Yet he had not
 reached that stage of
 departure in which God's
 message is openly resisted,
 and God's messenger sum-
 marily rejected.

READY TO RUN.

THEY who are in a state of readiness to run the Lord's messages, are seldom long idle. When Israel were going up, under the "fiery, cloudy pillar," to take possession of the land, the promise was given: "The Lord, He it is that doth go before thee" (Deut. xxxi. 8). These words apply no less truly to all in the present age who are led by the pillar of the Divine Presence. The believer who is living a life of faith, and treading the path of communion, finds that the Lord is going before him and preparing the way. Difficulties are overcome—doors are opened. His lines fall in pleasant places. He is permitted to see undoubted tokens that the Lord is with him. These tokens are vouchsafed, not for the calling forth of faith, but for the strengthening of a faith already in existence. Gideon is found among the faith-worthies of Hebrews xi.; yet we find him both asking and receiving tokens. To-night he makes request that there may be dew upon the fleece (Jud. vi. 37); and to-morrow night that the fleece may be dry (ver. 39). In both cases the Lord sends an answer according to the tenor of Gideon's prayer; and the man of faith goes forward in the Lord's path, encouraged and strengthened—prepared for fresh conflict and fresh victory. So is it ever with the child of faith. "To him that hath shall be given." He that hath a little real *trust in God* shall soon have more. The Lord will acknowledge it,

and give tokens whereby the little faith shall be strengthened. Thus the believer is led to make bolder ventures, and draw larger drafts, upon the promises. From strength to strength he goes, until he launches out "into the deep," and—*with* tokens, or *without* tokens—is found saying, like Job of old: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job xiii. 15).

THE SCHOOL OF SUFFERING.

IT is only in the school of suffering that some believers are made manifest. Trial has a different effect on different people. In some cases it brings out hidden graces and beauties of character, just as certain flowers, on being bruised, will emit their sweetest odours. But some believers are upset altogether in the hour of trial. Bold and rejoicing while the sun of prosperity is shining, they lose heart, and give vent to their murmurings as soon as the bitter waters are reached. Hidden things are then brought to light; and they find—as it is well they should find—that they are not the saints they had fancied themselves to be. Under affliction you see them at their worst, just as, in the case of others, you view them at their best while they are in the furnace of suffering. After trial, they come forth as gold. Trial, in the life of the believer, is thus doing a great work, whether it be in drawing out the hidden virtues, or in making manifest the secret corruptions.

JOTTINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

THE deacon of Scripture is a very different person from the deacon of Christendom. In religious circles generally, the deacon is understood to be one that looks after the secular affairs of a church. Few persons are more misunderstood than are the deacons of God's House. Great confusion also exists in regard to their especial work. No doubt, a deacon of a church may care for the poor, as well as minister the Word, or do any other service of a public character for which he is fitted. It is, however, worthy of closest attention that neither they of Acts vi., who were appointed to deaconize (that is, serve) tables, nor they of 2 Cor. viii. 19, who were chosen of the churches to travel with the gifts of fellow-saints to needy others, are ever called deacons. Nay, those of 2 Cor. viii. are rather called the apostles (messengers) of the churches; while one of the seven (Stephen) is revealed as being a most effective preacher, and another (Philip) definitely styled an evangelist. The above expression, "apostles of the churches," throws considerable light on the matter of deacons, chiefly because it shows how very different it is to be such an apostle, and an Apostle of Christ Jesus, as was Paul, for example. The like difference abides in deacons; for it is one thing to be a deacon *of* a church; and it is quite another thing to be a deacon of God *in* a church. Phebe (Rom. xvi.), as a deaconess of the church

at Cenchrea, is an example of the former. We may now proceed to deal with deacons as public servants in church of living God, which is also House that God builds and dwells in!

The principle of deacon-work is, that it is service of a *seen* character. Thus, the servants at the marriage in Cana of Galilee were the deacons of that party, and were men (John ii. 5).

So sacred is the deacon's work that the Lord Himself says in John xii. 26: "If any man deaconize (serve) Me, let him follow Me"—proof of which following is: *Where* He, the Lord, is, *there* shall also His deacon be. How disastrously sad it is, when this order is reversed! Moreover, he who thus deaconizes (serves) the Lord, will be honoured by the Father. Christ was a *Deacon* of the circumcision *for the truth of God*, to confirm the promises, &c., &c. (Rom. xv. 8-13). Apollos and Paul were *deacons* by whom Corinthians had heard and believed (1 Cor. iii. 15). Paul declares that God had made him an able *deacon* of the New Testament (2 Cor. iii. 6). In all things he sought to approve himself as a *deacon* of God (2 Cor. vi. 4). Observe, in passing, the deacons of 2 Cor. xi. 23, and Gal. ii. 7. Eph. iii. 7 tells that Paul was made a deacon according to the gift of the grace of God; and this, be it noted, unto declaring the unsearchable riches of Christ. Then Eph. vi. 21 tells us that Tychicus was a beloved brother and faithful deacon *in the Lord*. Moreover, Epaphras was his dear fellow-slave; and *for* Colossian believers he was a faithful

deacon of Christ (Col. i. 7). Then, twice over Paul affirms himself to have been made a deacon of the Gospel, &c., unto filling up the word of God (Col. i. 23, 25). Here it is solemnly arousing to mark the diligence of Satan against the will of God, whereof 2 Cor. xi. 25 tells. There we find that *Satan's* DEACONS are transformed as the deacons of righteousness; against all which let the saints and churches of God be on their guard, and watch. In contrast with Satan's deacons, it may be interesting to note that the angels of Heb. i. 14 are described as sent for *deaconry* on account of those about to inherit salvation.

1 Tim. iii. 8-10 was written that deacons might manifest due behaviour in God's House, which is *Persons brought and kept together by the living God*. For a house is not uncollected stones; neither is it stones unbuilt. But it is that which, having been gathered, is builded together (each stone in its proper place), and is therefore a house, raised on one foundation.

Deacons in God's house are persons who are firstly to be proved, and then allowed to serve, being blameless.

The "likewise" of verse 8 carries in and with it all the instructions given in the first seven verses concerning the overseeing men. Indeed, since the work of overseeing ones is especially towards the saints, there is superadded to the responsibility of the deacons the solemn obligatory words of verses 8-10.

The standard for the overseeing men begins with blamelessness: that of the

deacon ends with blamelessness. The deacon should be grave: not two-tongued (that member of our body figuring largely in deacon work); neither given to much wine, nor greedy of base gain, which is far more than mere love of money, bad as that is. Besides, the deacon is to be of such understanding in the mind of God, that he can and will hold the mystery of the faith in a clean conscience; while chap iv. 6 of 1 Tim. shows how one may be a good deacon of Christ Jesus, nourished up in the words of the faith and good teaching which he has diligently followed.

Alas! alas! to-day, in not a few churches of God, veriest novices are *allowed*, while others are *thrust* into deaconship position and work; and this, too, although their practice and preaching betray the two tongues which they have; for they are found suiting their speech to their audience, and sinking differences that they may appear in unison with those with whom they are not in agreement. For a good end they thus agree to differ!

In conclusion we may add that the word "deacon," like the word "baptism," is a Greek word *not* translated, but merely put into English form. If "deacon" be translated, it means *servant*, not so menial as a slave. If baptism be translated, it is *dipping*, as opposed to both sprinkling and pouring.

J. B.

—♦—
THERE is no darkness so great as that which follows rejected light.

TWO THINGS IN GIDEON'S VICTORY.

Judges vii.

THE trumpet, and the light (ver. 20) —these are two significant things associated with Gideon's victory over the Midianites. At the appointed moment the three hundred lights were to shine forth, and the three hundred trumpets were to sound. When the moment came, the lights flashed out into the darkness, and the sound of the trumpets broke the stillness of that early hour. What next? The Lord wrought a great victory in Israel.

If these two things—the light and the trumpet—do not typify, they at least illustrate, a great truth connected with our testimony as saints of God. Two things are required of the believer; and where you find these two things, you shall find signs following. These two things are *life* and *testimony*. In Gideon's three hundred with lighted torches, we see the believer as one who is no more darkness but light in the Lord (Eph. v. 8)—one who is to let his light shine (Matt. v. 16)—one whose *life* proclaims his heavenly citizenship; for "the life" must be "the light of men" (Jno. i. 4). We thus see the believer as one in whom Christ is manifest—but only manifest when the earthen pitcher is broken (Jud. vii. 20). There must be the broken will, before the heavenly light can shine out. There must be the reckoning of death (Rom. vi. 11), before that light which hath shined in our hearts (2 Cor. iv. 6) can shine out upon the darkness of a Christ-

rejecting world. The pitchers had to be broken, else Gideon's lights had never illumed the darkness. And those unmortified tempers must be subdued—that unforgiving spirit must be put away—those unbending wills must be broken; else we shall utterly fail to be a light to them that sit in darkness and in the region and shadow of death (Matt. iv. 16). In the three hundred lights we thus see the believer as one whose *life* bears witness that he is not of the world. Like a city set on an hill, he cannot be hid (Matt. v. 14). Men take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus (Acts iv. 13). He is a living epistle, known and read of all (2 Cor. iii. 2). His heavenly-mindedness is apparent. He is a marked man; and you hear it said of him: "No doubt *that* man is the real thing—the *life* is there; and we have no argument against *it*."

In the three hundred *trumpets* we see the believer as a witness—bearing testimony—sounding out in trumpet-tones the tidings of salvation to a guilty world. You thus see that while *life* (a consistent walk) is needed, something more is needed. He who said, "Ye are the light of the world," also said, "Ye are *My witnesses*" (Isa. xliii. 10). It is well—yea, it is all-important—to live a godly life; but our God also desires *testimony*. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth *confession* is made unto salvation" (Rom. x. 10). Christ must be confessed. Yea, if He has His true place in the heart, may it not be truly said that He

shall be confessed? A simple but firm confession of Christ has not only a strengthening effect upon your own spiritual life, but it lets others know *who you are*. If you make it plain that you are clear out for God, the world at once "knows its man," while worldly professors see at a glance that they need not try to make use of *you* as a fighting man in their battles. On the other hand, if you fail to make it clear whose you are and whom you serve, you find the world patting you on the shoulder, and claiming you as one of its own children. While this is going on, you find yourself in a very painful position. You must either dissimulate, and make yourself a worldling for the time being; or else you must make a bold stand, and say: "You have mistaken your man; I am a child of God, and an heir of heaven." Many a believer who dwells on the world's "border-land" finds himself most awkwardly placed. He is continually being annoyed by the world fawning upon him—courting his favour—pressing him into its schemes. He cannot understand it; for brother So-and-so is not troubled in that way at all. But the reason is, that brother So-and-so is one who confesses Christ—who takes a decided stand for the Master; and *the world knows it*. Thus it comes that the out-and-cut believer is not troubled with the world's flatteries. Let the trumpet of our spoken testimony give forth no uncertain sound—let the life also of Jesus be manifest in these mortal bodies (2 Cor. iv. 11)—and victories shall be

wrought in Israel. The tents of worldliness shall be overturned; the Midianitish hosts of evil shall be put to flight; sinners shall be won for Christ; for we know that "a true witness delivereth souls" (Prov. xiv. 25). Satan, too, shall be defeated; for is it not written that "they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony"? (Rev. xii. 11). Therefore let testimony to the truth go on—let practical conformity to the mind of Christ be enjoined and sought after with the whole heart; and, these two witnesses being in agreement, we need not doubt that the word shall be with power.

TRIALS PROGRESSIVE.

IN the path of the believer, trials are progressive. That is to say, the trial through which you are called to pass to-day, is one that you could not have borne at an early stage of your Christian experience. As thy day, so is thy strength. Hard lessons are not set before one who is newly at school. But when you are brought to understand the ABC of Christian experience, you find that the Lord has new and harder lessons for you in the school of affliction. Yet, through grace, you receive all as from the hand of a loving Father, persuaded that in some way or other that affliction shall work for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

SYMPATHISERS in affliction are often more easy to find than those who rejoice in your prosperity.

A BIBLE READING WITH YOUNG
BELIEVERS ON
"THE NAME OF THE LORD."

WE are saved in the Name ; for it is written, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name" (Jno. i. 12) ; and we know that there is "none other name" whereby we must be saved (Acts iv. 12). Then, we are *baptized* into the Name (Matt. xxviii. 19). In Acts x. 48 we hear Peter commanding the newly converted household of Cornelius to be baptized.

Then comes the *gathering together* in the Name ; for it is written : "Where two or three are, having been gathered into My Name, there am I in the midst" (Matt. xviii. 20).

Having been gathered together into His Name, we are found *worshipping* in His Name, as it is written : "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).

Besides all which, we are to *pray* in His Name ; for He has said, "If ye ask anything in My Name, I will do it" (Jno. xiv. 13, 14). Yea, *whatsoever* we do in word or deed, all is to be done in the Name of the Lord Jesus (Col. iii. 17). Thus honouring His Name, we shall find a *Refuge* in that Name ; for "the Name of JEHOVAH is a strong tower : the righteous runneth into it and is safe" (Prov. xviii. 10).

May each reader of these lines be able truly to say, "*Thy Name* is as ointment poured forth" (S. of S. i. 3).

W. M.

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Vol. IV.

TRUTH THAT IS NOT WANTED.

T often happens that the truth we *need* is not the truth we *want*. When Ahab laid violent hands upon Naboth's vineyard, he was ill-prepared for a lecture on covetousness (1 Kings xxi.). Elijah might come with any message he pleased, so being he did not refer to that vineyard. But such was the very subject of the prophet's testimony! It was *truth concerning the vineyard* that Ahab needed; and, however little he might wish to hear such truth, it was the very message that God sent His servant to deliver.

Saul had no desire whatever to be reproved for his disobedience to the revealed will of God. But truth concerning *obedience* was the very truth he needed; and, although he boasted of having carried out the will of God (1 Sam. xv. 20), the prophet is sent to confront him with his rebellion.

The truth specially needed by the Jews in our Lord's day was truth bearing upon their inner corruptions—their hypocrisy and lifeless formalism. But truth dealing with these things was the very truth they were determined not to have. They were quite prepared to be

told of their privileges as children of Abraham, and the glory of that coming kingdom when Israel's true King should reign in Mount Zion before His ancients gloriously. They were ready to receive testimony to the effect that salvation was of the Jews, and that the temple-worship was of God. But they were determined to resist all testimony that would deal with the state of their hearts. Our Lord gave them the truth they needed; but it was not the truth they wanted. Therefore He was rejected, and His testimony quenched, as they thought, for ever in the Cross of Calvary.

Passing on from Bible times to the days in which we live, we find that where certain truth is most urgently needed it is often most determinedly resisted. Some preachers seem to understand this perfectly. They carefully observe how the wind of popular opinion is blowing, and they regulate their ministry accordingly. They seem to go upon the principle that nobody must be offended; which is just another way of saying that *no conscience must be reached!* These professed ambassadors preach very comfortable things. If a certain truth is clearly needed, *that* seems to them an excellent reason why nothing

whatever should be said about it! Brother So-and-so has a good purse, and must not be offended. To call attention to certain evils would not be "acceptable," for the saints seemingly love to have it so. Thus the preacher who tries to commend himself to everybody, is found spinning out beautiful theories about persons and things ten thousand miles away from his audience. He may flatter himself that he is earning golden opinions of his ability as a preacher. But he only earns the thanks of those who are "at ease in Zion," and who are heartily glad that he has not disturbed their sleep of carnal security. With preachers of the Elijah type, how different it is! They deliver God's message even although a highly-exalted Ahab may reckon them an enemy (1 Kings xxi. 20). They have never learned how to fawn upon the great, or lay a flattering unction to the soul of the rich. The message may be rejected; and, through faithfulness to God, the preacher may have to eat the "bread of affliction" (1 Kings xxii. 27). But, if he has the consciousness that God has been pleased, he will care but little for the fleshly opposition that the truth may arouse.

The truth that is needed may vary in different places, or in different companies of believers. In yonder company of believers, the needed message may be death-and-resurrection truth, as symbolised by the water of believers' baptism. Yet that is the very truth that must not be mentioned! In that other company there is an evident need for truth bearing

on the sin of fellowship with the enemies of Christ. Yet there is no liberty for expounding what God has said on that subject! Then, there are believers who will allow you to expound almost anything but the Christian's relation to politics; while others, again, will listen patiently to all you say, provided you do not bring Scripture to bear upon the question of tobacco! Each seems to build a wall round *something*, and then says, "Now, you can cut down everything but that." In other words, the needed truth is often the truth we do not want, and the truth we cannot bear. It should not be so. If we are of those who tremble at the Word (Isa. lxvi. 5), and rejoice at the Word (Ps. cxix. 162), we shall welcome the heaven-sent messenger; and, no matter what Scripture he may expound, we "shall not be afraid of evil tidings" (Ps. cxii. 7).

HANDLING A MATTER WISELY.

WOULD-BE helpers in the church need to remember that there is such a thing as *handling a matter wisely*: and we know that "he that handleth a matter wisely shall find good" (Prov. xvi. 20). It often happens that "good" is not found, simply because a matter has not been dealt with in a right way. In the affairs of a church, things are constantly turning up that require to be handled wisely. If we would *reap* the peaceable fruit of righteousness, we must see that the

sowing is "wisely" done. To this end it may be well to keep a few points before us. A very important "point" is to remember the principle: "To every man his work" (Mark xiii. 34). In any matter that requires to be wisely handled, the question is simply this: "Who is fitted for that delicate work?" Mark you, it is not a question of "Who would be flattered by getting the work to do?" Even the world might read some believers a lesson in this very thing. Go into that factory, and you see the principle carried out—"To every man his work." If something is to be done that requires a steady hand and an unflinching eye, the *fittest* man is set to the work. The master of the place does not sit down to consider who would be offended, or who would be flattered. If he did, he would get his work spoiled. He simply wants the right man; and, when he gets the right man, the work is rightly done. And so is it in the building up of a church of Christ. You must have the right man at the right work. Delicate work does not do to be entrusted to *anybody*. "One man is as good as another," is a principle that finds no countenance in the Scriptures. One man is *not* as good as another—that is, so far as the serving of Christ is concerned. There is a wonderful and beautiful diversity in the family of God. One brother is specially fitted for a certain work, while another brother is manifestly called to a different department of service entirely. It will be to the profit of the church if we have the wisdom to observe

these things and to act accordingly. Often a matter has miscarried completely, and for no other reason than this, that it was handled by the wrong persons.

But it is not enough that a matter should be handled by the right persons. They must see that they are handling it in *the right way*. There must be no presuming upon our qualifications or our past experience. If the right man does not do his work in a *right spirit*, the work might as well be done by the wrong man. Spiritual work must not be carried through with fleshly energy. Mere gift, or reasoning power, is not enough. There must be the gentle touch and the spirit of meekness. If there is to be victory for God, there must be simple dependence on God. If we go forth saying to ourselves, "No doubt *we* shall manage the matter without a hitch," we have yet to learn how delicate work is to be done. Self-confidence failed to take Ai, although it looked a small place; and self-confidence has in like manner failed to adjust many a seemingly "small matter" in the church. We need all the wisdom that God has given us, and all the grace that is available, if we would be of those who know how to handle a matter wisely, and thereby *find good*.

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 "THEY that *will* be rich," means they that are determined to be rich at any cost. These truly seek money with the whole heart; and if the whole heart be thus occupied, there is nothing left for God.

WISDOM FROM ABOVE.

THE wisdom that comes from above can never mingle with the policy that comes from beneath. These two elements cannot come to an agreement. Carnal policy may gain your end, whatever that end may be ; but heavenly wisdom alone shall reach *God's* end, and work His glory. Carnal policy may secure the applause of your brethren ; but it is only in the path of heavenly wisdom that you will meet the approval of God. Through carnal wisdom you may be looked upon as a great man in the church ; yet it is only as you cultivate the heavenly wisdom that you can be "great in the sight of the Lord" (Lu. i. 15). Carnal policy may fail, even to reach its own ends. But heavenly wisdom cannot fail to work out God's purposes ; for it is "from above." Carnal policy loves the darkness ; but heavenly wisdom comes boldly to the light, that its deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God. Carnal policy may look wise ; but "hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world ?" (1 Cor. i. 20). Carnal policy puts *success* first ; heavenly wisdom puts *purity* first ; for it is written, "The wisdom that is from above is *first pure*" (Jas. iii. 17). Carnal policy may do in a worldly society, where the potsherds of earth are striving with the potsherds thereof. But in the things of God, carnal weapons are forbidden ; for we have "renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully ;

but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. iv. 2). Let ours ever be that wisdom which comes from above ; so that we may be able to say, "With *heavenly* weapons I have fought the battles of the Lord."

THE SPIRIT OF PRAISE.

YOU may have observed that the spirit of prayer seems at times to depart, or rather to be suspended. For the time being, it is swallowed up in the spirit of praise and adoration. The glories of Christ so fill the eye—His beauty so captivates the soul—that there are *no wants*. It is a time of special gladness. The sacrifice of a heaven-begotten praise is ascending. Our own need, and even the need of others, is for the moment forgotten. As joy begets strength, so do these special seasons of refreshing fortify us for the great battle of life. From the presence-chamber of the King we go forth to meet a cold, unbelieving world. Yet, we are not dismayed. Strengthened by the true wine of communion, we reject the rewards of Sodom's king (Gen. xiv. 22). At the same time, conscious of our need, we find the spirit of prayer asserting itself. While there is a transfiguration-mount for communion, there must be a desert-place for prayer. And none the less earnestly shall we make our requests known, if we have been learning what it is to "rejoice with joy unspeakable."

BLINDED BY PARTIALITY.

BEWARE of the partiality that leads you to see everything that is good in your friends, and nothing but evil in those who oppose you. Some men, in forming their opinions of others, seem to start with the question, "Does he see eye-to-eye with me? If so, then his good qualities must be extolled. But if he is not in my line of things, his defects must be shown up in all their nakedness." These words may not be used; but that is virtually the process of reasoning. It is wonderful how some believers can show you the black spots in some brother who happens to be "on the other side of the house." But when they secure that brother's support, he seems to be suddenly transformed into an angel of perfection; for you hear no more of his inconsistencies! To act upon such principles is simply despicable. There is a littleness of soul that can see nothing good in an enemy, and nothing evil in a friend. But true largeness of heart will weigh men, as well as things, in the even balances of the sanctuary; and be ready to acknowledge what is good in those that oppose us, and to rebuke what evil we may see in our bosom friends.

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THERE is an unmistakable courtesy in love. It never behaves itself unseemly. On the other hand, pride and envy are constantly manifesting their own nakedness by an absence of that gentleness ever found associated with love.

WARNED TO TAKE CARE.

WHEN I was first exercised as to the great truth of Separation to God, kind friends, with good intentions no doubt, took care to keep me duly supplied with pamphlets warning me against the so-called "Plymouth Brethren." It was pointed out to me that they were divided into a hundred different sections, that they had no ministers, that their doctrines were opposed to Scripture, and that a corrupt tree could not bring forth good fruit. I read these terrible descriptions, and made up my mind that I would have nothing to do with the persons therein described. I was convinced that a professing church cut up into a hundred different sections, could not be according to the New-Testament pattern; I did not want to be in a church whose doctrines were opposed to Scripture; and as for "ministers," I believed that what was good the Lord would give. I therefore continued my search; and, in order to "know the worst," I read every book against "brethrenism" that I could get my hands on. After wading through them all, however, I observed that not one of them had brought forward a single argument against the believer *acting out* what he finds written in the Word. I found that God was speaking to *me* through the Scriptures. He was telling me that the living and the dead—the enemies and the friends of Christ—could have no fellowship together; and that I was to go forth *unto Him*,

bearing His reproach, and owning the Name of the Lord Jesus as the only centre of gathering. I saw that if God was to be obeyed, man would be displeased. Friends besought me, even with tears, not to "leave the church." But I showed them that the Lord had never placed me in the denomination which they termed "the church;" and that I was going forth in obedience to the call of God—not to "The Plymouth Brethren," nor even to "The Brethren," but to the Lord Himself. Thus it came about, that I found myself where a few, led by the same Spirit, in obedience to the same Word, were gathered into that Name which is above every name. I did not fall in with the believers who were said to be cut up into a hundred different sections; nor have I discovered them to this day. I have been equally unsuccessful in my search for the "doctrines opposed to Scripture"—although I have found not a few doctrines opposed to the "Confession of Faith" and the traditions of the religious world. As to our having no ministers (gifted preachers, that is), it would not trouble us much even although the statement were true; for just as Elkanah was better unto Hannah than ten sons (1 Sam. i. 8), so is the Lord Jesus "in the midst" better unto us than ten ministers. But I can praise God that we have not been without ministers—able ministers of the New Testament, although no university sent them forth, and no "presbytery" licensed them to preach. They were sent from a higher source. They were the


gifts of the ascended Lord. At the call of God they went forth, and in responsibility to Him they delivered their message. Of such it can truly be said, that they are "as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men" (Mic. v. 7). While we have much to be thankful for, we have had much to mourn over, and doubtless we have still much to learn. But we have had an experience which we feel certain could never have been ours, had we not responded to the call to go forth to the rejected One. Certain it is, that we have never for a single hour regretted that we came "outside the camp" to own none other name than the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ; unto whom be glory in the Church, unto the eternal ages. Amen.

THIS IS THE PATH.




F we are treading God's path, we shall have the consciousness that we are where He would have us to be. It begets a wonderful calm in the soul when we are able to say, "*This is the path which the Lord has commanded me to tread.*" If I am in doubt about the matter—if there is a secret misgiving that I am in the wrong path—uncertainty brings unrest. I may have much to praise God for. But, if I am not persuaded that I am treading God's path, I cannot praise Him for the testimony of an approving conscience.

MISREPRESENTED.

T may not be out of place for us to call attention to a device frequently adopted for the purpose of hindering believers from obeying the Truth of Separation, as laid down in the Scriptures. A book against the so-called "Brethren" was put into our hands at the time when we were first exercised as to our Church-position. We read the book from beginning to end. It drew a terrible picture of what "brethren" were supposed to be. The list of evils was a long one. On finishing our perusal of the book, we laid it down, saying to ourselves, "Well, if all *that* is true of the brethren, I must be cautious in what I am doing." On a little further enquiry, however, we found that the writer of the book had been describing a body of believers known as "Exclusive Brethren," with whose leading doctrines and practices we had no sympathy whatever. In fact we had not the slightest idea of becoming an "Exclusive," and we have never seen cause to change our mind on this point. Yet, in the book referred to, the whole theories of Exclusivism were fastened upon the "brethren" generally; and we were plainly warned to take care, for *these* were the people we were going among. But we were not going among them at all; and it may be that we felt a little "righteous indignation" at such an attempt to hinder the truth from having free course. The writer of the book was either entirely ignorant of his subject; or, if he knew what he was writing about, he was guilty of a deliberate attempt to mislead enquiring souls. He systematically ignored those believers who gather simply in the Name of the Lord, but who are in no way identified with Exclusivism. It was only the

other day that we saw a letter in a religious paper relating why some one had "left the Brethren." The writer of the letter gave these brethren a very bad character; but before we reached the end of his epistle, it was quite clear to *us* that he was describing the *Exclusive* brethren. He should have said so. When he spoke about being required to judge "the Park Street case," we saw at once where he was. But enquiring believers *may* have read his letter, and accepted his statements as true of brethren who never had the remotest connection with Exclusive theories! Of course this is just one of the many withering influences with which the truth has to contend. With many adversaries, the way of truth assailed, and its followers misrepresented, we can only praise God that, like the "Burning Bush," it is not consumed. Yea, the truth, in spite of all opposition, seems to be gaining ground. There is a growing number of believers who have ceased to be influenced by the mere reasonings of ecclesiastical theorists, and who are learning eternal principles from the unchanging Word of Truth.

TREASON NO MORE.

HERE is a saying, that "when treason is successful, it is treason no more." That is to say, rebellion against established government ceases to be rebellion whenever it is manifestly a success. But in the affairs of the Lord's work we must not conclude that a thing is of God simply because it is successful. You may find believers making some "new departure," or attempting to start some new thing. It is very likely called

“rebellion” at first. But when, contrary to general expectation, the thing succeeds, it is called rebellion no more! Some of the very men who at first showed the *unscriptural* nature of the “new departure,” are now found patronizing the movement. It has been successful; and therefore it is held to be scriptural! But a thing may be successful, as the term goes, and yet be entirely opposed to the teaching of the Word. If a thing is *unscriptural*, no amount of success can make it scriptural. You hear it said, “If a thing is of God, it will go on; and if it is not of God, it will come to nought.” But this is not always the case, by any means. According to that reasoning, the Church of Rome should have come to nought long ago. Yet there is no appearance of it breaking up.

The judgment-seat alone will reveal what movements were really of God, although cut short by seeming failure. The call to repentance at the lips of our Lord and the Baptist, with the proclamation that the reign of the heavens was at hand, seemed to produce very little effect. Very few repented. The Kingdom was not set up. On the contrary, the King's Son was taken and crucified. From no human stand-point could you pronounce the setting up of the Kingdom a success. Indeed it was not set up at all; nor has it been set up to this day! Yet we know that the “movement” at that time was of God; and the call to repentance a message from heaven. Thus has it often been in the history of God's people on earth.

As “the Word made flesh” was rejected then, so is the written Word being rejected now. The inventions of men are being welcomed—the counsel of the chief priests prevails, and is successful; while it is only the few that receive, with cordial faith, the tidings contained in the Scriptures of truth concerning a rejected Lord Jesus Christ and our rejection with Him. Worldly religion seems to flourish, and has an abundance of corn and wine; while “the way of truth,” in these evil days, has few followers, compared with the host of fashionable religionists. But Wisdom is justified of her children (Matt. xi. 19). They who are “of the truth” hear Wisdom's voice, and attest that the light is good. They wait not for signs and wonders. The Lord has already spoken. Scripture testifies of Him. It is theirs to obey. It matters not how many in Israel are going after the golden calf, the children of Wisdom shall be found, Levi-like, standing forth for God, even in the midst of apostasy. Numbers may be few, and the way of truth may be evil spoken of. Nevertheless, they shall be unmoved who endure “as seeing Him who is invisible.” The uncertain wind of success may waft the multitude hither to-day, and thither to-morrow; but the child of faith, steering his course by the unerring Word, shall be found steadfast and unmoveable amid all the storms that shall beat upon the churches in these last days.

IT often takes “more grace” to remain silent than to speak.

UPSET BY EARTHLY PROSPERITY.



SUDDEN stroke of "good-fortune," as it is called, will generally prove a far severer test of a brother's *grace* than the furnace of affliction. Trial has a tendency to drive us to the mercy-seat. Many believers would not have the close walk they are enjoying to-day, had it not been for affliction. In the day of trouble they cried out to God as they had never cried out before; and in the hour of deliverance they found an experience of God's faithfulness that has taught them to trust in Him at all times. Thus, with strengthened faith they entered upon a closer walk, and were able to say like the Psalmist, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted" (Ps. cxix. 71).

But when "trial" comes in the shape of an addition to our earthly store—if we are left a legacy, or come suddenly into possession of unexpected wealth, our faith is at once subjected to a test that very few seem able to stand; for, as some one has said, "it takes a steady hand to carry a full cup." The sudden acquisition of wealth has often the effect of leading its possessor to sit down and worship the golden calf. When the love of money comes in, everything that is pure and of good report seems to go out. It often happens that the more there is in the purse the more tightly are the purse-strings drawn together. Some men seem to be no great lovers of money, so long as they have very little of it; and you can always depend on them for

willing help in time of need. But no sooner do they become possessors of a good round sum than they manifest an unmistakable reluctance to part with a sixpence. Money has acquired a new value in their eyes. It has become extremely precious. An increase of riches seems to have had the effect of closing up the streams of benevolence! How needful the exhortation, "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them"! (Ps. lxii. 10). Joseph needed two years of humiliation in Pharaoh's prison before he was able to bear the exaltation of being next to Pharaoh on the throne.

Believers who make an open shipwreck deceive no one. Their case is duly recorded by the church and set up as a beacon of warning to all who name the name of the Lord. But who shall declare the record of those who, while keeping up a circumspect outward profession, are yet undoubted shipwrecks—helplessly stranded upon the bleak lee-shore of Mammon-worship. Better far to have an empty cupboard than have our souls shrivelled up and our whole spiritual growth dwarfed and stunted by the love of money. It is said that when the habit of opium-eating has once fastened itself upon its victim, there is almost no hope of rescue. We fear that the same thing can be said about love-of-money. The drunkard can be separated from his cups, and the impure from the dominion of lust. But how rarely do we find the lover of money changed into another man! You may find believers who could suffer the loss of all things with

wonderful composure ; and yet a flood of "good-fortune" would upset them entirely. If "the back is made for the burden," it is perhaps well that some of us have no more of the mammon of unrighteousness than we already possess. The wise man understood this when he said, "Give me neither poverty nor riches."

IS IT GOING TO SUCCEED ?

SOME men have a dread of being identified with a thing, unless they are perfectly sure it is going to be "a success." If a few believers in a place are coming out to the rejected Name of the Lord Jesus, and seeking to bear witness to the truth of God, you will often find some who stand looking on with critical eye, "waiting to see if the thing is going to succeed." If it succeeds—if there is a rush of believers to own Christ as the true centre—the "onlookers" in question at once join in the rush. They come to the conclusion that the movement is the right thing ; and they may even be found contending strongly for the truth of separation. But if the movement is what is called a failure—if it is not going to "take" with the people—these onlookers conclude at once that it is the wrong thing altogether, and therefore congratulate themselves that *they* have had nothing to do with it. In plain words, instead of appealing to Scripture to see what *God* said about the matter, they waited to hear what *man* would say. If man smiled

upon the work, it would be reckoned good, and would be patronized. If man frowned upon it, then it would be treated as evil, and avoided accordingly. But although a thing is rejected on earth, that is no proof whatever that it is rejected in heaven. What I have to find out from the Scriptures of Truth is simply this: "What would the Lord have *me* to do?—What path does His Word say that I am to tread?" Having found an answer to that question, my path is clear. If the Lord says I am to go forth outside the camp to the rejected Christ, then forth I go. I do not wait to see if the "coming out" is going to be popular. Neither do I tarry till I see if brother So-and-so is coming too. I have simply got to do with what the Lord says ; and He says I am to "go forth *unto Him* without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. xiii. 13). This is enough. I may find myself in a very small company, and with those who are poor indeed, so far as silver and gold are concerned. Nevertheless, I find One in the midst whose presence could not be purchased with gold, and whose approval is sweeter than the applause of the greatest congregation on earth.

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HE who preaches beyond his experience is like the man who lives beyond his income. It may do well enough for a time. But sooner or later he will find that there is such a thing as spiritual bankruptcy. It is well when the preacher can say, "We speak that we do know."

JOTTINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

HOW blessed it is that, though man be allowed of God to imprison His bond-servants (who also are His deacons), yet no one can bind the word of God. Nevertheless, it behoveth saints to ever pray that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified—run, because it is as living water, causing everything to live whither it cometh (comp. Ezek. xlvi. 9).

In verses 12 to 14 of this first chapter we have a fresh evidence of how God bringeth meat out of the eater, and water out of the flinty rock. Paul imprisoned proves but the furtherance of that very Gospel, for the proclamation of which he had been shut up by man. Truly, the door that God openeth no man is able to shut. Neither can any one open when He hath shut. Not only in "Cæsar's Court," among the many guardsmen that went to and fro in the routine of prison-life, but outside the whole range of these, was the furtherance of the Gospel manifest.

Most of the brethren in the Lord, stirred by the apostle's example, waxed bold and fearless TO SPEAK the word of God. That mouth-to-mouth labour on their part waked up the many, not merely to speak but to preach, by heralding forth the Christ. Some preached for very envy and strife; seeking thus to arouse new hostility against the apostle, and increase the severity of his imprisonment. Others preached of good-will,

knowing that Paul, as a defence of the Gospel, was laid across the path of the opposers; for such is the idea in the word "*set*." What then? Paul rejoiced; for he knew that all such preaching of Christ could have but one result, namely, his salvation, that is, his deliverance from the bonds he was then enduring; and this, too, as helped on by the prayer of the church in Philippi. What encouragement the apostle would doubtless find for this confidence as he thought of the fellow-apostle who had been so delivered, whereof Acts xii. so instructively and touchingly tells. O that God, in exceeding mercy, would waken up His churches to a sense of the power of the prayer of a church!

The apostle, however, did not rest merely in the prayer of the church. He counted also on the Spirit of Jesus Christ so supplying his need that, according to his earnest expectation and hope, he would not be ashamed in anything; but rather in all boldness, as hitherto, so still, Christ would be made great in his body, whether through life or through death. Life to him meant one manifestation, and that—*Christ*; while to die would be but gain. In the willingness and satisfaction of love he could not choose which to prefer. But as he looked at the great need of the saints, he had this confidence that the time of his departure was not yet come. Wherefore, he would be with them all yet, for their furtherance and joy of the faith. This "joy of the faith" is something very different to, although springing from,

the Gospel being furthered. Yet alas! the furtherance and joy of the faith, as connected with churches of God to-day, is made light of by many who pose as teachers of the mind of the Lord. Yea, it is actually decried by such, and denied in their practice, while they beguile the simple and uninstructed by a zeal for getting sinners converted, which work they use as a "set-off" against such matters as concern the Lord's glory in the behaviour of His saints.

One thing the apostle indeed desired of the Philippians *as a church*, viz., that whether he were absent or present, they would arrange their whole manner of life, in every sphere thereof, worthy of the Gospel of Christ. This, if done, would be evidenced by their standing fast in *one spirit*, with *one soul*, *striving together* for the faith of the Gospel, in nothing daunted by the opposition of adversaries. Such opposition was to their adversaries an evident token of their own perdition, as also an evident token of the salvation of the Philippians, and this from God, in whose will it was given them not only to believe in Christ, and so to be saved, but as saved ones to suffer on behalf of Him in whom they had believed.

J. B.

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SELF-WILL dies hard. There are many sins that we abhor and condemn. But self-will is such a subtle and plausible enemy that it is often greeted as a friend, and called "zeal for God's honour." It takes the exercised heart and the anointed eye to discover the workings of the flesh, even in ourselves.


CHRISTIANITY IN THE KITCHEN.

TRUE conversion produces a true Christian; and a true Christian is one who carries his Christianity into the affairs of every-day life. Some people seem to have the idea that Christianity has no connection whatever with their own fireside, and the duties of home. Christianity to their mind seems to be a dreamland of sentimentality—attending meetings, singing hymns, and "feeling happy." To descend from such blissful occupations, and commence to the unpoetic work of scrubbing a floor, seems to them to be almost a misfortune. It is looked upon at least as a rude jar upon the sweet experiences through which they had been passing, and is accepted as a "necessary evil" attendant upon the wilderness journey. But such is an entirely wrong view of true godliness. If we are following the Master, we shall find every step of the journey radiant with the light of heaven. He came to do His Father's will; and in that will He found His highest delight. Toiling in the carpenter's work-shop at Nazareth, or preaching good tidings in the streets of Jerusalem, He was alike doing His Father's will. In both cases there was perfect fellowship—unbroken communion. Everything the Perfect Servant did was *to Godward*. To Him nothing was "secular," as we understand the term. The humblest act of His life on earth was *for God*. Now, whatever was true of Christ as the Pattern Servant, is, in measure at least, to be true of us. If

we are seeking ever and only to do the Father's will, we shall taste a kindred joy to that experienced by Him of whom they said, "Is not this the Carpenter?" What is the will of God concerning *me* for this present hour? That is the question I have to ask myself; for we must remember that present blessing is ever associated with the performance of present duty. Is it the will of God that I am to chop that wood, and brush those boots? If so, then I go to work—not as to an irksome task, but to do what some one has called "the sweet will of God." In chopping that wood—in brushing those boots—I am as truly doing the will of God as if I were present at a great Christian convention, or even occupying the platform and holding a large congregation spell-bound. This is a line of truth that some believers have, seemingly, yet to learn; and, until they learn it, they will lose untold blessing, and perhaps fall heir to a spirit of discontent which the Lord never meant them to possess. If we profess to have received a great blessing to our souls, and if that blessing causes manifest duty to be distasteful to us, we may rest assured that we have got the wrong kind of blessing. The true blessing will lead us to see God in everything, and to delight in His will, whether that will consists in scrubbing a floor, or in keeping needful watch at home, while others are away hearing some gifted preacher. Conversion should not make us *worse* servants of an earthly master. Grace has an entirely opposite effect. We

remember being told of a mistress who declared herself satisfied that her servant-girl was converted, and added by way of explanation, "I find that she sweeps below the mats now." This may look a very small shred of evidence. But it was sufficient to show that a *new tide* had begun to flow. Something more than an earthly mistress was being served: a heavenly Master had to be pleased; and the young convert knew that He was One who could *see below the mats*.

WHAT SOME ONE MAY SAY!


" YES," says some one, after reading the foregoing article, "that's what I believe—duty first, and meetings afterwards. You may glorify God as much by doing needed work at home as by attending meetings."

But stay, friend; perhaps you need the *other side* of the truth. We said not a word against attending meetings. We believe it is an undoubted "means of grace" to hear the Word preached, and to call unitedly upon the name of the Lord. Indeed, if a believer is in a proper state of soul he will give heed to the exhortation not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is. There are extremes in the matter of attending meetings, as in everything else. We have pointed out one extreme; and now we must point out another. There is such a thing as getting so absorbed with earthly affairs that God has to take a *second place*.

Your work "must" be done—your affairs "must" be attended to; and the Lord has to take what is left—if anything is left. You first persuade yourself that you have *no time*; and then follows *no inclination* to meet with God's people. And what then? Then you proceed to prove that you are right, and that you can enjoy God anywhere. But, my dear brother, *are* you enjoying God? He cannot be enjoyed at the expense of His truth. You cannot be enjoying God if you have given Him a second place. Reverse your process of reasoning; and speak on this wise: "God *must* be served; I must *seek first* His glory—the advancement of His Kingdom." Then you may speak of joy. But it is the very nature of joy to communicate itself to others. You could not keep it, if you would. Hence you are found where "kindred spirits meet before the Mercy-Seat." There is such a thing as making a sacrifice to meet with God and His people. Love will do this, and reckon it no sacrifice, and find itself no loser. This very night we saw a sister at the meeting, who, through the word preached, had got her difficulties removed, and been established anew in the faith. She had "arranged things" so as to get out to the meeting, if haply the Lord might have a word for her. And she was not disappointed. Let us make God's glory *our* business, and He will make our blessing *His* business. We readily grant that it is quite possible to be at a meeting when you should be at home in the path of undoubted duty. At the

same time it is quite possible, and we fear more common, to forsake the assembling of ourselves together when there is no excuse that will stand the light of heaven. We do not say that you should curtail your earthly duties, or even re-arrange them. It only needs that Christ have *His true place* in the heart. Then earthly duties shall drop into *their* place, almost without any effort on our part.

ALL HAIL!

LL hail! thou blesséd morn,
When all the saints shall rise,
And Christ shall them adorn,
To meet Him in the skies;

When bodies shall be given,
And fashioned like His own;
And, with Himself in heaven,
We'll dwell around the Throne.

No spot or wrinkle there,
Upon His blood-bought bride:
In heavenly glory fair
The saints shall be arrayed!

O with what joy I'll gaze
On Him who died for me—
Through everlasting days,
My Saviour's face to see!

W. M.

WE know that to the sinner there is no salvation apart from Christ. So, in like manner, to the believer there is no true joy apart from Christ. The attempt has been made to drink of the world's joy, and yet possess the Christian's peace. But all such attempts have been vain. Christ and the world have never yet come to an agreement.

"AS" AND "WHERE" THOU ART.

1 John iii. 2.

AS Thou art, Lord Jesus—
Spotless, perfect, fair,
Loved of God, and lovely,
Passing all compare ;
Rich in heavenly graces,
Wonderful and bright
With the untold glories
Which in Thee unite—
So, Thy Word has taught us,
Shall Thy people be,
When in cloudless brightness
We Thyself shall see.
O the bliss, the glory,
That shall fill each heart
When we shall behold Thee,
And be *as Thou art!*

John xvii. 24.

Where Thou art, Lord Jesus—
All the desert pass'd—
No cold world its shadow
On our souls to cast ;
Sin and sighing over,
Earth's last sorrow fled,
Wiped away for ever
Every tear we've shed—
There, Thy blesséd will is
That Thy people be,
To behold Thy glory—
Share it, too, with Thee.
O the joy of meeting,
Never more to part,
In the Father's presence,
Even *where Thou art!*

* * * * *

Even now, Lord Jesus,
We by God are seen
Like Thyself and with Thee—
Not a shade between ;
Like Thee in the sunshine
Of eternal love ;
With Thee in the heav'nlies—
The abodes above.

But we, till Thy coming,
Fill a double sphere,
There to catch Thy glories,
And reflect them *here*.
And for this, we pray Thee,
Daily grace impart,
Till the world shall see us
As, and where, Thou art.

W. B.

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Vol. IV.

REVIVAL TIMES.

GOD could have saved sinners at a uniform rate of so-many per day. But it has pleased Him to take another course. If we are to judge by that which has been, it is clear to us that *special seasons of revival* have been the chief means through which the Lord has been pleased to refresh His heritage and add to the number of His own.

These special seasons of revival often come unexpected—at least to the many in Israel. The “instrument” may be a brother belonging to the place. But more usually he is some labourer from a distance—one who has gone forth to do nothing else than preach Christ to saint and sinner.

When such labourer is a man of God—not only furnished by God, but yielded up to God—a revival time is looked for; and seldom is it looked for in vain. There are various reasons for this. If a true man of God is known to be coming to a place, a spirit of prayer and expectancy at once springs up in the hearts of all who are longing for the Consolation of Israel. Then, a heaven-sent man arrests attention. His testimony is with power. In it the backslider hears the

trumpet call to repentance; the sinner is made to feel that the Kingdom of God is come nigh; while believers as a whole are allured to a closer walk with God. There is a general waking up among the saints. A gospel preacher, delivering God's message night after night, has a wonderful effect upon the saints. Indeed, in a very few nights he will produce an effect that all the “ordinary means” had failed to bring about. Saints are then *dug* out of their seclusion. They hear a sound of good things; and through curiosity, or through the clamourings of conscience, or both combined, they find their way to the meetings. They at once feel that they are breathing a new atmosphere. The very air around them seems to be tremulous with a strange undefined power. They see intense earnestness written almost on every face. They feel like men awaking out of a long slumber. But they are awake at last. They recognise the Great Shepherd's voice. They respond to His call. They chide their own foolishness in falling asleep—in getting cold and worldly. But it is all past now. There is a fresh dedication of the temple. They behold the Master anew, in the glorious perfections of His character. They recognise

Him once more as the Chiefest among ten thousand; and they wonder that ever their eyes turned away. Thus, the waking-up goes on, until the revival tide of God's almighty power carries everything before it. In such times souls are born; saints renew their espousals; while there is a hewing down of idols that had resisted all the testimony brought against them. All hail to such revival times! We want more of them. Yea, we want them in such rapid succession, that ere one tide has fallen another shall have risen. Thus, going "from strength to strength," there shall be no opportunity to settle down on our lees—no time to get cold—no chance to join affinity with a Christ-rejecting world. So be it, Lord. And unto Thy Name be glory. Amen.

—♦—

WHATEVER you are in the chariot of the Lord's work, do not be a dead weight on the wheels of progress. They are of all men most miserable who are constantly grumbling, and ventilating their grievances. The only effect they produce is to make some others as uncomfortable as themselves. On the other hand, the joy of the happy soul will communicate itself to those around. Love and enthusiasm are contagious. But so, alas! are grumbling and discontent. Which class of seed are we sowing?

—

YOUR words and exhortations may have very little effect. But your life—your manner of speech—the spirit you are of—are all telling for good or evil.

ADDRESSING A SMALL MEETING.

IT does not take a man of great faith to become enthusiastic while addressing a gospel meeting that is crowded to the door. But if the meeting is a small one, with only a few of the unsaved present you soon find out whether the preacher is a man of faith. If he gets "carried away" with his subject, and can preach to five persons as joyfully as to five hundred, you are pretty safe in concluding that the revival fire is burning in that man's soul. His eye is upon the great unseen One. He regards not the wind of unfavourable circumstances, nor the clouds of active opposition. Conscious of the presence of God, he is but little affected by the absence of many. Such a preacher rises to the occasion. He lives not upon the breath of numbers. He draws his joy from a higher source than "a large and appreciative audience." His soul has been ravished by sweeter music than the approving "hum" of a crowded meeting. Crowded meetings are a welcome sight, no doubt. But he does not find his rest in these. The secret of his power lies beyond that which is seen and temporal. In spirit he dwells far away among the things unseen and eternal. He is more concerned about delivering God's message than securing man's applause. To such a preacher a small audience is no argument for losing heart. Such a so-called "disappointment" is to the man of faith but an intimation of the will of God.

ORDAINING ELDERS.

A RECENT writer, in referring to "the Brethren," says the defect apparent to him is, that they do not give a right place to the various offices in the body, such as pastor, teacher, &c." If he is speaking of saints gathered simply into the name of the Lord, we can only say, in our friend's own words, that we "maintain the truth that all believers are anointed by the Holy Spirit priests unto God, and accordingly they are competent for any ministry they display a gift for." Our friend, however, seems to think we should have *an ordained ministry*—that pastors, teachers, &c., should be chosen and officially set apart. But set apart by whom? *The Churches* have no authority to ordain pastors and teachers. That is a thing *entirely unknown* in the New Testament. Then who is to do the ordaining? We wish to be shown the men, or body of men, who are invested with power to ordain. Until we find these men we refuse to acknowledge man's ordination. This argument may be considered "weak and unscriptural." If so, it will be all the easier to show that a man-ordained ministry is of God. It is contended that where pastors, &c., are not appointed, there is a want of liberty in some meetings, and an undue license in others. But that simply shows how imperfections can be found in the practical working out of any system, however perfect and scriptural that system may be. If, in carrying out God's order of things, we find that order abused, are we


therefore to *abandon* God's order? Nay, verily. Because Gospel testimony affords opportunity for hypocrites to make a loud profession, that is no argument for us to lay aside the Gospel, or to *invent a new one* that will effectually prevent sham professors from coming to the front. No Gospel worker argues in that way. He keeps steadily to God's Gospel, no matter although there may be imperfections connected with the work. In the same way we keep steadily to God's order of things—we thankfully receive the evangelists, pastors, and teachers, whom God gives. We do not attempt to *make* them. It is only God who can do that. It is He that fits them, and sends them, and inspires them with the heavenly fire. We can neither make nor meddle in the matter. The God-sent ambassador is responsible to the One that sent him. If you give a man a hundred pounds to invest for you, that man is responsible *to you* for what he does with the money. Why? Simply because he got it from you. In like manner the heaven-sent pastor is responsible to God for how he uses his gift. Why? Simply because he got it from God. No doubt we have the "risk," as it is called, of men standing up to minister whom God has not fitted for that work. But such is no fault of God's order: it is due to man's presumption. Moreover, if God's order is being faithfully observed in that company, there will not be wanting a Priscilla or Aquila, who will take such offending brother aside, and expound the Word to him more perfectly.

But if you are to officially set apart men to be pastors, teachers, &c., what guarantee do you give that you have ordained the right men? What if you ordain the wrong men? What if you pass by men whom God has anointed to that work? By official ordination you set a public mark on certain men, and virtually say, "These, and these alone, are the heaven-equipped messengers." You may then sit down to rejoice under their shadow. But lo! perchance it turns out that, like Samuel when he said, "The Lord's Anointed is before Him" (1 Sam. xvi. 6), you have made a mistake. Eliab, your chosen one, is not the chosen of God; and the unthought-of David turns out to be the Lord's Anointed! You thus see that in seeking a device to cure one evil, you create far more serious evils, and thus (to use our friend's words) "the Spirit's prerogative of inspiring whom He will, is obstructed by the inventions of man."

In carrying out the scriptural order of God's House, difficulties will doubtless arise. But if there were no difficulties, where would be the need for faith, and patience, and skilful handling? If you want to be entirely free from difficulties, you have simply to select the most lifeless system of worldly religion that you can find. *There* you have everything regulated by hard-and-fast rules. The preaching, praying, and singing, are done as if by machinery. No difficulties arise—the religious machinery does its work; and there is no "risk" of any Elijah rising up to disturb the ancient reign of

lifeless formalism. But, let a company of believers embrace the New-Testament order of a Church of Christ—let them seek to carry out what they find written in the Word; and at once difficulties will arise. But, mark this, in God's path any difficulties that arise can be adjusted by simple faith in God and an appeal to His Word. When some difficulty springs up—when some brother thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing—certain minds at once rush to the conclusion that the order of God's House is at fault. But there is no need whatever to draw any such inference. The matter is just a little trial of faith, requiring, it may be, a more perfect acquaintance with the Word, or a little faithful testimony from one apt to instruct.

OVER YOU IN THE LORD.

CRIPTURE tells us to know them that are over us in the Lord (1 Thess. v. 12). But how are we to know them? How am I to know who are the overseers in that Church of God? Scripture furnishes the answer. It does not *name* the men; but it gives a *description* of those whom I am to acknowledge as over me in the Lord. Scripture does not say, "Know them whom the Church has appointed to be elders." God deals with realities. When He says, "Know them that are over you in the Lord," He gives certain *marks*, so that you may know at once to whom He refers. We are to know them that *labour* among

us—that admonish us (1 Thess. v. 12). We are exhorted to remember them which are the guides—who have spoken unto us the Word of God (Heb. xiii. 7). We are told to obey them that have the rule over us, and to submit ourselves, for they *watch for our souls* (Heb. xiii. 17). God has given such a description of His overseers, that they can scarcely fail to be recognised. (1) The true overseer, as we have seen, is one who *labours*. He is not a mere figure-head—an ornamental elder, whose chief work consists in attending oversight meetings and theorising as to rule in the Church. No. He *labours*. While others are airing their ideas as to how the work should be done, the true overseer *does it*. (2) He *admonishes*. We first saw him labouring generally among the saints. But, if we are departing from the truth, we find him coming to us personally and *admonishing* us as to the error of our ways. (3) We find him *speaking* to us the Word of God; and (4) *watching* for our souls as one that must give account. Do we recognise such men by that description? With the greatest of ease. The marks are unmistakable. What does the Lord say of such men? He says I am not only to *know* them, but to *obey* them, and to *esteem* them very highly in love for their work's sake. "For their work's sake," mark you—not for the sake of their office; for they have none. An overseer is not one who has an office: he is one who *does a work*—the work of shepherding the flock. You thus see that we are to acknowledge those who *do*

the work. We have no warrant to bow down to mere officialism. But we are distinctly told to esteem and honour those who are doing the work of shepherds in the church.

MUST HAVE GOD WITH US.

IF you are in a church built according to the scriptural pattern, and if the power of God is not there, you will find that you cannot carry out the order of God's house. You need not attempt to carry out divine principles apart from divine power. There is not a more helpless company of people in the world than a company of believers seeking to carry out the scriptural order of a church of Christ, while they have relapsed into a state of worldliness. Truly, like Samson shorn of his locks, they are weak as other men—yea, perhaps weaker; for Israel of old, when out of communion, were a more helpless people than even the surrounding nations. They might make their boast in the Ark of God; but, if they had not God's *presence* as well as God's Ark, that very symbol of the divine presence would bring down God's judgment (1 Sam. vi. 19). Yea, the Ark might pass completely out of their hands (1 Sam. iv. 11). Thus it is in many cases to-day. Truth held out of communion will be truth that we find it very troublesome to keep, and truth that must sooner or later slip completely out of our fingers. Our God is a God of reality; and if we think to

carry out the order of His house while we are at ease in Zion, we shall find that we are tampering with edged tools; and that to our own confusion.

With a church according to some worldly pattern, the case is entirely different. Spiritual power may be at the lowest ebb. Yet the congregation goes on "prospering." Such a church is so constituted that it can go on quite satisfactorily *without God!* There may not be a converted soul within its pale. From the clergyman down to the church-officer, spiritual death may be reigning. Yet the whole thing goes on, and the annual report of that congregation declares it to be in a flourishing condition! You thus see that man's system of religion can be carried out, even by the unconverted—the undoubted enemies of Christ. But in God's system, *living* men and women are needed—people who have been *born again*, and who are seeking to be in subjection to Christ as Lord. What a difference between God's order of things and man's order of things! Man's order of things has shut out God, and therefore can go on without Him. But, in the scriptural order of worship, God is acknowledged—His rule is owned. Thus it comes, that His gathered saints cannot get on without Him. They may get on without "great men," and with very little earthly substance. But, of all people in the world, they feel that they cannot get on without God. Like Moses of old, they are found saying: "If Thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence" (Ex. xxxiii. 15).

A FALSE REFUGE.

BEWAIL your own declension as much as you please; but never attempt to justify yourself, as some have done, by taking refuge in the decrees of God. "What *is* to be *is* to be," is a theory that may suit the blind fatalist, who is a stranger to grace. But such a sentiment ill becomes a child of light. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 Thess. iv. 3). It is no part of God's will that you should be a servant of sin. If you are in a low spiritual condition, then know this, that you are running right counter to Scripture and the God of Scripture. The predestination of God's Word does not teach that you may sin, and then solace yourself by saying that the thing *had* to be. The thing *had not* to be. The predestination of Scripture teaches quite a contrary doctrine; for those whom God did foreknow, He also did "predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 29). So, if you *will* take refuge in predestination, you see that it does not make God the author of sin. It distinctly teaches that the great purpose for which you have been called, is that you may be *delivered from sin* and *conformed* to the image of God's Son.

IF God's precious truth is held in an easy or careless way, the result will soon be an unholy familiarity with eternal things. It is sad to reflect that many who profess a great acquaintance with the Scriptures, seem to tremble less at the Word than even the Christless worldling!

REFUSING FALSE OVERSEERS.

IN a church gathered together according to scriptural principles, there is a circle within a circle. There is (1) the circle of the church itself, embracing all in the fellowship; and (2) the circle of oversight, consisting of those in the fellowship who are fitted of God for the work of shepherding the flock, and who are doing that work. We have been showing, on another page of this number, that it is the Lord who sets apart His own shepherding ones. But the question may arise: "What are we to do, if men take the position of overseers while they are manifestly neither fitted nor called of God for that work?" Our answer to that question is very simple: *Refuse to acknowledge them.* "Ah!" says some one, "you have the power to *reject*, but you have no power to *appoint*. Is that not strange?" No, we reply; it is not strange at all. Scripture will furnish us with ample illustrations on this point. Samuel the prophet was divinely called and fitted for his work. Israel was never consulted in the matter. Jehovah appointed him; and it was Israel's happy privilege to acknowledge the prophet's rule. Thus far, all is clear. But, in 1 Sam. viii. 1, we find Samuel attempting to do a work which only God could do. He makes his sons judges in Israel. Although a good man, Samuel made mistakes; and it has been well said that "the mistakes of good men are the greatest." What was the result of this appointing of his sons to be

judges? The result was simply this, that Israel rose in rebellion against the new rulers. The people were quite willing, as they had always been, to acknowledge Samuel's rule. But they were not prepared to acknowledge the rule of his sons. The people at that time were not in the best condition of soul. But they had sufficient discernment to perceive that Samuel's sons were not the chosen of God. And they gave their reasons for their rejection. They went straight to Samuel and said, "Thy sons walk not in thy ways" (1 Sam. viii. 5). We thus see that although they had no power to appoint Samuel, they had the right to reject his sons. In other words, while we have no power to *appoint the true*, we are perfectly warranted to *reject the false*. Israel did it in the case of Samuel's sons; and we never get a hint that they were wrong in so doing. Indeed, it is perfectly clear that they were right; for they were simply rejecting those whom God had rejected.

But we shall also find an illustration from the New Testament, and thus in the mouth of these two witnesses—one from the old dispensation and another from the new—every word shall be established. In the Spirit's message to the "seven churches" we find the Church of Ephesus commended for its faithfulness in rejecting false apostles. These are the words: "Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars" (Rev. ii. 2). In spite of their waning love, the saints in that city could detect the messengers


who had never been sent of heaven. It was not sufficient that men appeared, saying, "We are apostles—we are sent of God." The Ephesian church turned round to them and said, "Where are your credentials?—where are the marks by which we shall recognise you?" They "tried" the men who *said* they were apostles. They weighed them in the balances, found them to be liars, and rejected them forthwith. Some may look upon this as presumption. But God does not call it presumption. Indeed, He selects it for special commendation. It was one of the few "redeeming features" in a church which was fast losing the bloom of its early love.

You thus see that although the church of Ephesus had no power to appoint apostles, they had the power to reject those who claimed to be apostles, apart from the call of heaven. In the same way the saints have the right to "try" those who say they are overseers. We are not *compelled* to acknowledge the rule of a brother, merely because he attends an oversight meeting. If he does not bear the marks, we have simply to refuse to acknowledge him. If he bears the marks, it is at our peril if we reject him. When these two things are done—when the false is rejected, and when the true is accepted and esteemed—the result is, that the inner circle of oversight is a clearly-defined company, easily distinguished from the "rank-and-file" of the saints, and as truly acknowledged as if set apart with the most imposing ceremony.

SAMUEL FAILS TO DISCERN.

ALTHOUGH Samuel was a good man, and mighty in prayer (Ps. xcix. 6), it is remarkable how signally he failed in the matter of discerning who was, or was not, the chosen of God. He made his sons judges, apart from the divine call. Their utter failure might have taught him the needed lesson that the Lord fits and sends forth whom *He* pleases: and that man may not meddle in the matter. Nevertheless, we find Samuel anticipating God's call in the selection of the chosen king. The Lord sends him to anoint one of Jesse's sons; and when Eliab the first-born appears, the prophet at once concludes that the future king is before him. But the Lord had not chosen Eliab; and Samuel has to suffer something very like a rebuke for his undue haste in seeking to determine who was the chosen of God (1 Sam. xvi. 7). Strange that Samuel should have selected the very man who in a short time was found resisting the Lord's anointed! (1 Sam. xvii. 28). But this only illustrates the folly of our attempting to set apart the Lord's ambassadors. The prophet clung so tenaciously to the rejected Saul, that the Lord had to say, "How long dost thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him?" Samuel, in the case of Eliab, was running too fast: in the case of Saul he was running too slow. Happy they who wait only on the Lord, and are content with whatever He is pleased to give.

NO FIRE ON.

 CERTAIN believers have been compared to a locomotive engine with the machinery all in working order, and a good supply of water in the boiler, but *no fire on*. Such are the believers who have a great amount of head-knowledge, and are thoroughly posted up as to the latest discoveries in Bible truth, but who seem to be utter strangers to the fire of heaven. Like the engine of which we have been speaking, they have *everything except the fire*. "One thing" they lack; but how important is that *one thing*! The locomotive with everything except the fire is simply an inert mass. It may make a good show, and have an imposing appearance. But so far as *servicing its day* is concerned, it is only a piece of lumber.

We do not see that it is much different with the believer who has a vast amount of "head-knowledge" as it is called, and is yet as cold as an iceberg. We suppose you have met in with believers of that class. Their general knowledge of Scripture is considerable. They profess to be well up in doctrine, and have something to say, more or less, on "all mysteries" (1 Cor. xiii. 2) connected with God's Kingdom. But you feel no glow of warmth accompanying their words. There is *no fire on*! The truth falls cold and powerless. Their theology is like the stars: it is high and clear; but it gives no heat. Believers of that sort will set nobody on fire. Their ministry will not arouse you to "con-

secration pitch." Neither will it bring you down to the valley of self-judgment. Believers who are great in knowledge, but devoid of heat, will only produce fruit "after their kind." Like will produce like. The frozen-up believer, boasting his knowledge of the law, will never succeed in raising his fellows to a higher platform than he himself occupies. A glib tongue and a fair command of Scripture may give you a certain influence among believers. But, if the heavenly fire be not burning in the soul, your influence will not be for God. The sacrifice may be good. *But what if there is no fire?* We must have the fire—fire that shall burn up the dross of fleshly strength, and energise every faculty of the soul with power from the right hand of the majesty on high.

We are aware that there are some who speak of head-knowledge as if it were something to be shunned. But we can only say that we have never fallen in with the brother who knows too much. If head-knowledge be compared to the water in the boiler of a fireless engine, we would ask, What use would the engine be without water in the boiler? You would never think of running off the water. No. You say, "Let it remain—we cannot do without it. What we need now is *the fire*." Thus it is with many a believer well up in doctrine and general knowledge of Scripture. We do not want him to empty out a single particle of divine truth. No. Let him keep it all. We simply want to see it *set on fire*; and then it will become *living*

truth, or "living water" if you will, carrying life and refreshing wherever it flows.

Cold truth is utterly powerless to reach a cold heart; and as for warm hearts they will refuse to respond to the clammy touch of a lifeless ministry.

Again, if we make *everything* of the fire, and *very little* of truth and doctrine, we shall soon find that zeal without knowledge is not a heaven-ordained means whereby saints are to be built up on their most holy faith. God must have an intelligent service; and His people must give an intelligent testimony. Where we find brethren well up in their Bible, and acquainted with the foundation doctrines of Scripture, while they are at the same time on fire for God and souls—we give thanks to heaven for such men. Their number is none too large in this evil day. Without the fire they would be mere dictionaries of Bible knowledge; and without the knowledge they would be only fitful and uncertain lights—contending for nothing save the liberty to walk in the light of their own fire. But, possessing both the truth and the fire, they are found burning as well as shining. They are *furnished* for God's service—whether it be to tell sinners of Christ—to lead enquiring saints into the way of truth—or to bring the Word to bear on difficulties that may arise in the church. Such are the men that are needed—men great in love and sound in the faith—steadfast, unmoveable—men by whom, like their great Master, *grace* and *truth* are ever coming.

JOTTINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

WE do well to remember that all the words in this epistle are addressed to those found together in a church of God; in the light of which, how very thrilling are the opening words of chapter two—"If there be any consolation (that is, *exhortation*) in Christ"! And O! how much there is in Him, both as calling upon us to imitate Him, as well as encouraging and sustaining us amid our conscious shortcomings.

"IF ANY COMFORT OF LOVE."

Who can tell what solace there is to a heart in which the love of God is shed abroad!—enlarging that heart, until the feet are swift to run the way of His commandments; which obedience brings about that *love of complacency* of which the Lord Jesus spake in these words, "I do always those things that please the Father."

"IF ANY FELLOWSHIP OF THE SPIRIT."

What devotedness of delightful companionship and intimacy is here told out, whereof Rom. viii. 26, and Heb. ix. 14 speak.

"IF ANY BOWELS AND MERCIES"—

Those compassions that so befit the chosen of God to manifest; and which, when manifested by those in churches of God, shall be unto the fulfilling of the Apostle's joy, that

They be of one mind—
Having the same love—
Joined in soul—
Minding the one thing.

Which four graces are as the blossom of the bud found in (1) The exhortation that is in Christ ; (2) The comfort that is in love ; (3) The fellowship of the Spirit ; (4) The bowels and mercies put on at the bidding of God. These four kinds of bud and blossom are found again in the ripened fruit of (1) No one doing anything according to rivalry or vain-glory ; (2) But each in humility of mind accounting the other better than himself ; (3) Each looking not on his own things only, but also on the things of others ; (4) And all crowned by letting the mind that was in Christ Jesus be in them. And all this unto fulfilling the will of God by implicit obedience to His commandments, supported by patient trust in Him amid all that He is pleased to permit. It is only while bearing such fruit that we can humble ourselves to walk with God—to do justly, and to love mercy.

He who goes on fulfilling that which he has received in the Lord, may find much to thwart him. Yet he ever seeks to rest in God's faithfulness, and to say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." With him who *will* obey God, self can be of no account. Hence that emptying of oneself, and being obedient even unto terrible sufferings, and this with delight, as did Jesus, who is now Lord of all. In connection with His humbling, obedience, and exaltation, God hath so wrought, that in the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow—

Of *those* in Heaven, and
Of *those* upon the earth, and
Of *those* under the earth ;

each tongue of whom shall confess that Lord Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father. This bowing of knees and confessing of tongues (*things* have neither the one nor the other) will be co-extensive in duration, which is a solemn commentary on the awful truth of man, as man, existing eternally, whether *in* Heaven, with its glory ; *upon* the new earth, with its grace and bliss ; or *under* the earth, with its condemnation in the "Lake of Fire, which is the second death."

J. B.

WONDROUS LOVE.

THE Saviour's face of love and grace
My weary soul has found ;
The wondrous love of God above
Doth in my heart abound.

He quells my fear and draws me near—
How sweet His words of love !
He tells me He will come for me,
To dwell with Him above.

Lord Jesus, come, and take me home,
Unworthy though I be ;
I never sought Thee as I ought :
'Twas *Thou* that soughtest me.

And when I rise above the skies
I'll sing eternally,
To endless days, the worthy praise
Of Him who died for me.

JANUARY, 1889.

B. C.

IT is only as we sit in judgment on our own corruptions that we can rightly bewail the backsliding we may see around us. It is only he who goes forth from the Gilgal of self-humiliation that can profitably deal with the evils in his brethren.

CONSCIENCE SILENT.

“**M**Y conscience did not trouble me in the least.” So said a professed believer after spending an evening in an unconverted company. She seemed to be perfectly satisfied that everything was right, seeing her conscience did not make any alarm. But everything was wrong. Her conscience had become hardened. Departure from God had been going on; and by gradually descending stages she had reached the plain of carnal security—that fatal region where the pulse of conscience scarce seems to beat, and where the world that lieth in the Wicked One seems not so bad a world after all! What was the result? Was she the means of drawing any of that unconverted company nearer to heaven? Alas, no. On the contrary, the world soon brought her down to its level; and then even her profession was given up. Therefore we would say, “*Beware of the testimony of a hardened conscience.*” When some servant of God delivers a message against worldly-conformity in one of its many shapes, he is frequently told with the utmost complacency: “My conscience does not upbraid me at all; I feel the utmost liberty in doing this.” Thus conscience has become *another Bible* to some people; and if that “other Bible” remains silent, they flatter themselves that all is well. But how did conscience become silent? It became silent through continued neglect of its warnings, like the alarm-clock that soon gives its alarm

in vain, if you pay no attention to its voice. Conscience will become silent through a careless walk, a prayerless closet, or an “unthumbed” Bible. It is quite possible to silence the voice of conscience, and then to sit down with the greatest of composure and say, “Now, conscience is not saying a word against my worldly-conformity, as it is called.” But what does the word of God say about it? Is the testimony of the written word against you? Then, seek not to make it appear that you have got a new revelation from heaven. What is wanted is a new turning to God. The downward path of departure is being trod. You may say that your conscience is at ease in the matter. But that is the very reason why conscience must be aroused out of that deadly sleep. It was said of Ephraim: “Gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not” (Hos. vii. 9). When Samson was shorn of his separation locks, “he wist not that the Lord was departed from him” (Jud. xvi. 20). Therefore let the question be asked, “O Lord, is it so with me?” It is one of the most deadly symptoms of departure from God, when we have departed from Him and *know it not.*

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THROUGH affliction and trial we often learn lessons which we would not have learned in any other way. When we refuse to be drawn to the Master's feet by the pleadings of love, we shall have reason to be thankful if we are driven there by the rod of affliction.

UNLESS HE IS ON FIRE.

AT a conference of believers a brother gave a "report" of a remarkable revival that had taken place in a town some thirty miles off. After telling us how marvellously God had wrought, he said: "Now, we want help. But let no preacher come down yonder unless he is *on fire for God*. If you are not on fire, stay at home." Some may think that this was taking high ground. But we do not share that opinion. When revival is going on in a place, it is a serious blow to the work when a brother from a distance drops in to speak, and is *not* on fire. Being "a stranger" he is asked to address the meetings. But it is soon apparent that he is "out of touch" with the work that is going on. Everybody seems to be on fire except himself. Yet he is expected to keep the fire blazing and cause it to spread all around! The very man who of all others should be on fire, delivers himself in a languid and easy tone. He lacks the boldness that comes from confidence in God. He lacks the earnestness, love, and enthusiasm, inseparably connected with a revival time. "The wrong man," you hear the godly say,—*"the wrong man at this time."* But we don't believe he would be the right man at any time. Cold, matter-of-fact preachers will neither kindle a fire nor keep a fire burning if it is already kindled. What a blessing it would be if such preachers remained at home until they were set on a blaze by fire from the

heavenly altar! We do not say that we have got too many preachers; but we do say that every preacher who has not the fire of God burning in his bones is one preacher too many. It is men of fire we want.

THE WORD "HELL."

IT is said that the French government has drawn its pen through the word "God," wherever it occurs in their school-books. "Popular" preachers would seem to have done the same thing with the word "Hell." They have explained away the place. Therefore they do not use the word. Even among some so-called "evangelicals" the word "Hell" is being avoided. It is not deemed a fitting word for "ears polite." It is spoken of in a cautious way as "the place where God has forgotten to be gracious." Now, we have no objection to a variation in the wording. But if we avoid the word "Hell" out of deference to the popular taste, we have virtually become pleasers of men. The wrath of God is as clearly revealed in Scripture as the mercy of God; and there is just as weighty a testimony concerning Hell as concerning Heaven. We question if you will ever find a genuine revival in which the truth concerning Hell has been suppressed.

THEY only have wisdom to judge of God's ways who have patience to wait His time.

PREACHING ABOUT HELL.

IF you are preaching "Hell-truth" to the unconverted, be sure that you preach it with a *broken heart*; and be sure you tell *the other side*, viz., What God has done for the sinner. These two "points" are often neglected—the result being that the unsaved audience is roused against the truth, sometimes to the pitch of fury. The preacher may try to console himself by saying, "Of course, that's just the Devil raging: he always rages when there is faithful testimony for God." This may be a convenient way of explaining why the word is rejected. But before any one can claim such a consolation, he must see that he has given attention to the two "points" to which we have referred. Some preachers seem to have a very congenial theme when they are speaking about Hell. They picture its horrors with all the Scripture at their command; and, when Scripture fails, they draw on their imagination for the rest. The unsaved are mercilessly "shaken over the pit;" and the preacher's tone leaves the impression that he for one will not be sorry that the Christ-rejectors get their deserts. What is the effect of such preaching? The effect is simply to make people rage, and drive them away. But do not make the mistake of supposing it was the truth that drove them away. It was the *preacher* that scattered them. The cold, hard, hell-fire Gospel is one of the most repelling things in the world. But let the Gospel of Christ be proclaimed

—let God's love be told out, while the truth concerning Hell is spoken of with something of the tenderness of Him who wept over Jerusalem—and we shall see a different effect. We have heard "the wrath of God" so preached from a tender heart, and linked with a free Gospel, that the unconverted were solemnized and bent under the power of the Word. This may not be *always* the case. But if they rage, let us make sure that they are roused by *the truth* and not by *the messenger*. He is a wise man who winneth souls; and nowhere is his wisdom more needed than in speaking of the wrath to come. There is no use of adding needless offence to the offence of the Cross. We have been told of a Gospel meeting which an Evangelist held in a certain town some years ago. At the close of his address he called upon the unsaved to stand up and "acknowledge their father the Devil." We need scarcely say that no one stood up; and we are not surprised that one man walked out, and was not seen in a Gospel meeting for years afterward. A little "sanctified common sense" would be a wonderful help to many a fisher for souls.

—♦—♦—♦—

THERE may be a sudden burst of enthusiasm in the Lord's service, while there is very little grace in the heart. It is only through abiding communion that we can be "always abounding." It takes more grace to go on quietly with God at all times, than to "run well" at times of special blessing.

SOME PLEASING ATTRACTION.

WE are never in greater danger of being allured from the path of communion than when we are met by some pleasing attraction which is not expressly forbidden by Scripture. "No harm in this," is often said: "plenty of good believers go in for this sort of thing; and manage to keep up a profession too: I can do the same." Thus worldly wisdom reasons. If it were some gross sin that presented itself, we would reject it with horror. But it is altogether different. Indeed it can hardly be called sin at all. Where, then, can be the harm? It is true that we could find sufficient Scripture to show that the thing is not convenient, nor expedient, nor fitted to help us in the path of communion. But general principles of Scripture have very little effect on our hearts if the manna of heavenly communion has become light bread to our taste. When the fire of communion is burning low, the believer is ready to be taken up with any of the hundred-and-one attractions that are waiting to fill the eye and the heart. If we are taken up with Christ, and satisfied with Him, we will be suspicious of new attractions. Our question will not be, "I wonder if there is any harm in this." We shall rather be found asking, "Wherein lies *the good*?—Is this thing from above or from beneath?—How will it affect my spiritual prosperity?" Such are the questions that naturally suggest themselves to the believer who is "all for Jesus."

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W. S.

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THE

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Vol. IV.

THE ADVANCING TIDE.

THERE is no use in disguising the fact that a strong tide of worldliness is rapidly setting in among many of God's saints. Many a believer is doing things to-day which he would never have dreamed of doing ten or fifteen years ago. Ahab at that time was seen in his true colours; and a clear line of separation was drawn between that which was of God and that which was of man. Worldliness was hewn in pieces. Worldly-conformity was mercilessly stripped of its covering of hypocrisy, and shown up in all its nakedness. Separation was the order of the day; and with great power God's people gave witness to the truth they professed to obey. But time has wrought its changes—at least in the case of not a few. Ahab is being courted now. It has been discovered that he is not a very bad man after all! The world is being viewed as a far better world than it was once thought to be, notwithstanding the plain statement of Scripture that "the whole world lieth in the Wicked One"! The great enemy of Christ saw plainly that far too clear a line of separation was drawn between the saints and the world. And

he also saw plainly that before he could carry out his purposes, he must *blot out that line of separation*. This is the great work that Satan has been attempting to accomplish; and he has been only too successful. Yea, so successful has he been that not a few professing the name of Christ have been loud in declaring that the line of separation was too clearly defined, and that it should be toned down, so that separation might commend itself to the popular taste. This was the very thing the Devil was wanting; and if he can get professed believers to proclaim his doctrines, he knows that these doctrines are sure to spread. If he can get "great men in Israel" to propound his misty, no-separation theory, he feels that his battle is more than half won. A Jehoshaphat is worth far more to him than a thousand of the rank-and-file of Judah. Therefore we are not surprised that the old land-marks of God's Separation are being removed; and that, too, by men reputed to be great in Israel. The once-clear line of Separation is being toned down to commend itself to the times, and to suit all comers. The descent to the world's level may be gradual, but it is none the less sure. What is the cause of all this? Why is

the tide of worldliness rising? It is simply because *the tide of godly living is on the ebb!* Low life in Zion is the one great reason annexed to the worldliness that is raising its head on every hand. Some may tell us that it is simply "the advance of modern thought." If so, we want nothing to do with it, unless modern thought can be proved to be in agreement with God's thoughts. Others say, "We must move with the times." No, we reply: we must move *against* them; for the times are against God. So determinedly were they against Him that they slew His Son; and to-day they are endorsing that act by rejecting that same Son in resurrection. To move with the times means to move with a Christ-rejecting world—to court its approval—to rejoice under its smile. Is such our calling as heavenly men and women? Never. "Not of the world, even as I am not of the world," saith the Master. "I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (Jno. xvii. 14). Such is the line of separation drawn by the Master's hand. Do we say "Amen" to it? Or do we seek to explain it away, and make it mean something entirely different? We are called to go straight in the teeth of the world's wind, and right contrary to its popular currents. The writer of "The Sands of Time" has well said:

"I've wrestled on t'ward Heaven,
'Gainst storm, and wind, and tide."

Now-a-days it would seem as if believers were engaged in the desperate attempt to

get to heaven, sailing *with* the world's wind and tide, and without even a breath of persecution's storm. But the thing *cannot be done*. And the reason why it is attempted to be done, is simply that the heavenly joy has sunk so low, that the world's joy must needs be sought to fill up the empty void! There can be no other explanation of the increasing worldliness among professing believers. If we are drinking of the river of God's pleasures, we shall have no heart for the world's attractions. If Christ is satisfying the soul, that satisfaction cannot be intensified by a flavour of worldliness. If we are filled with the heaven-born gladness (Ps. iv. 7), we shall have no desire for the beggarly elements of the world's corn and wine. The mount of communion must be regained; the dew of youth must be recovered; the joy of early love must be again possessed. And then, in spirit "far above the restless world that wars below," we shall see that world in its true light, and value it at its true price. The world shall then wave its hand to us in vain. Yea, it shall be made to feel, and that right early, that instead of claiming us as its own, it must now recognise us as witnesses that its deeds are evil. We shall no longer be found sitting down on the world's borderland to consider how far down to Egypt we may go and still pass for separated believers. These days shall have passed away. The never-fading vision of a glorified though still rejected Christ at God's right hand, shall so fill our sight, as to blind us to all the world's glory.

A MESSAGE FROM GOD.

“**W**HERE are you going this morning?” I said to David ———.

“I am going,” said he, “to the inspector of police, to speak to him about his soul. It has been laid on my heart since three o'clock this morning to go to that man, and I must go: pray for me.” And away David went. Although young in the faith, David was bold as a lion in the Lord's service; and, when anything was “laid on his heart,” he had no rest until that thing was done. He knew nothing about the inspector of police, except that he had a soul that must be saved or lost. David became concerned about that man's salvation. He accepted this as a commission from heaven to go and tell the inspector about Jesus. David rang the bell, and was shown in. The inspector was at home, and pointed to a seat. “You'll be surprised to see me here this morning,” said David. “O no,” said the inspector; “No doubt you have a message.” “I have,” was the reply. “From the fiscal, I suppose?” “No,” answered David, “I have a message from God. I am sent to speak to you about your soul!” This was rather a surprise to the chief of the police in that town. But, struck by our young friend's evident sincerity, he listened as David unfolded the story of God's love. Before the interview ended, the inspector was on his knees, while David prayed that the Lord would bless the testimony to his soul's salvation.

I merely mention this as an instance of what individual faithfulness and a burning desire for souls will lead one to do. At the same time David's visit was not without its effect. The “Day” may declare that the inspector was clearly converted to God. But,

be that as it may, I know that he was ever afterwards most friendly to the revival movement. In a large population, embracing various religious elements, it was often difficult to carry on our open-air work. When some Caiaphas was clamouring for our suppression, we were often indebted to the inspector of police for a quiet hint how to “engineer” the work so as not to interfere with the traffic.

EARNESTNESS.

IF the Gospel preacher has not earnestness he has nothing. We do not say that earnestness is everything; but if you lack *that*, it matters little what other qualifications you possess.

We have heard Gospel preachers with good enough matter, and no lack of words; and yet they drawled out their message in such a listless and half-hearted way, that you would have been surprised beyond measure to find an awakened soul at the close of the address. When we hear a preacher of that sort, we cannot help wishing that some spark could be communicated to him, if haply it might set him on fire! How cold and commonplace he is! He does not speak as if there were the slightest urgency or danger. The hymn has just been sung, “Death is earnest—Heaven is earnest—Hell is earnest.” But the preacher does not seem to believe it. The very man who of all others *should* be in earnest, is not in earnest at all. He is evidently more concerned about having a good

address than having a soul in the net. Unsaved ones are there asking the question, "Who will show us any good?" But they ask in vain. There is nothing for them. Some of them may be more in earnest than the preacher himself! The text may be: "Escape for thy life;" but the address leaves the impression that the case is not at all urgent. What a pity that some one does not take the preacher by the collar of the coat and say, "What meanest thou, O sleeper?—Are you aware that souls are going down to hell, and that if they die without Christ they will be damned eternally?"

The preacher who is without earnestness has mistaken his calling. He may have some beautiful things to say—he may have nicely arranged "heads," and sweetly rounded periods. But if his matter does not pass through the fire of a burning earnestness for souls, it will leave no lasting impress on sinners' hearts.

A preacher who is in earnest for souls is rarely at a loss for a word. You certainly never hear him come to a stand-still for lack of matter. Love to the perishing has an eloquence of its own—an eloquence that never fails to find abundant material with which to tell its story. True earnestness will impress people that there is danger—that judgment and eternity are realities. The fact that *you* are in earnest about their souls will be to them a strong reason why *they* themselves should be in earnest about their souls.

But while we thus speak, let all

preachers beware of *counterfeited earnestness*. To "put on" earnestness for the occasion is the most contemptible hypocrisy under heaven. The man who is merely pretending to be in earnest about souls and eternity, really cuts a sorry figure. His dissimulation is visible to every person that has eyes to see. Unreal earnestness seems to have weight with nobody. It leaves even a more withering effect than a lifeless address; for the sepulchral voice of hypocrisy is worse than death itself. When such a preacher makes the hopeless attempt to work up a tear, as we have seen some do, the effect upon the meeting is simply to awaken a feeling of commiseration for the poor misguided "ambassador." And when the ambassador becomes an object of pity to his hearers, he had better leave off preaching. Between the eloquence of true earnestness and the whine of counterfeited zeal, a great gulf has been fixed; and it is well that it should be so. Earnestness is not a commodity that you can work up for the occasion. He that would have his preaching aglow with the searching fire of earnestness, has simply got to be in earnest for souls. If he is not in earnest, he must get his earnestness where Isaiah got his—by having his lips touched with a live coal from off the heavenly altar. When a man has his lips thus "touched," he does not need to *try* to be earnest: he *cannot help* being in earnest, whether he is on the platform or anywhere else. He has simply got to be real; and real earnestness cannot be mistaken.

People who never say, "I don't know."

SOME believers can never be told anything they don't know. You may unfold the most precious truth—you may bring out of your treasury things new and old; but everything is old to them. Their stolid countenance never relaxes into wonder. You never hear them say, "*Well, I did not know that before!*" They could not humble themselves to make such a confession. But do they never hear anything new?—do they never find precious treasure through the words of some ministering brother? Indeed they do. None are more ready than they to pick up every new thought. But they take care not to tell anybody that they are debtor to any man on earth. It would not do to admit their own ignorance. *That* must be carefully concealed. They must pass for wise men, at any cost. They hear brother So-and-so deliver an address. But they give no sign that they are getting anything fresh and new. They appear to be listening to the merest commonplaces. Nevertheless they are carefully observing the striking things, and quietly carrying away precious nuggets, to be beaten out at their leisure, and handed out in due time to the saints as ministry fresh from heaven! Their great aim seems to be to leave an impression that they are possessed of a remarkable store of knowledge. To say, "I don't know," might damage their reputation as *wise* men! Therefore the appearance of wisdom must be kept up.

But somehow such men never seem to leave any mark for God. They are so much bound up in their own little kingdom of self, that they never get into *touch* with their fellows. They are more concerned about airing their own knowledge than spreading the knowledge of Christ. They have yet to learn: (1) that they know nothing as they ought to know; (2) that a wise man is never ashamed to confess his own ignorance; (3) that it is only envy that refuses to rejoice when another is bringing precious treasure from the mine of truth; and (4) that we are not worthy to serve the Lord unless we can say with the Baptist, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

TOLD ABOUT YOUR FAULTS.

IF you do anything in the way of preaching, never be offended if some friend tells you about your mistakes. Some preachers cannot bear to have their imperfections pointed out. If you tell them in a friendly way that their address was so long that it became wearisome, and that a shorter word would be acceptable, they set you down as an enemy for all time coming! If you point out that it is desirable to have more *life* in their delivery—to deal sparingly in "I think," and to have a more frequent appeal to "Thus saith the Lord," they look upon you as having committed an unpardonable offence. We have generally observed, however, that preachers of real merit are never above

taking a friendly hint as to defects in their preaching. The more perfect a preacher is, the more ready he is to have his imperfections pointed out. A man of varied knowledge was asked how it came that he possessed such a fund of information on all subjects. He replied, "Because I have never been ashamed to acknowledge my own ignorance." He knew that he had a good deal yet to learn; therefore he was ever ready to learn, and ever learning. The preacher who fancies he has nothing to learn, and who cannot bear correction, is certainly to be pitied. He is not likely to get any friendly hints, seeing he rejects all testimony, except that which compliments him on his attractions as a speaker. Thus he is allowed to entrench himself in his own fancied perfections, while most damaging defects are permitted to go on uncorrected. Many a man thus lives and dies without ever suspecting how seriously his testimony is hindered; and all because he could not bear to be told wherein he was at fault. On the other hand, the preacher who will welcome friendly criticism, is gradually *losing* that which would hinder his testimony, and *acquiring* the very things that shall render him more thoroughly furnished for his work.

HE who is never wearied cannot know the sweetness of rest. He who never has a trouble, cannot taste the comforts of heavenly consolation. Life is made up of light and shade; and the deeper the night of sorrow the brighter is the morn of deliverance.

A GREAT WORK.

HE does a great work who does "the will of God." This is a restless age; and believers are to be met with who think they are losing their time because they are not doing some "great work." But "great work" for us may mean some little duty. What is "the will of God" concerning *me* for this present hour? That is the question for which I must find an answer; and in the answer I shall find the "great work" which the Lord would have me to do. The work may be humble and unobtrusive. It may be "thankless" so far as man is concerned. But if, in doing that work, I am doing the will of God, I am doing a "great work."

It reveals a restless, unsettled mind, when we are envying another man of his work, and wishing we could "shine" like him. Let us be firmly persuaded that such thoughts are not from above. No work can be "great" for me, if it is not the work to which the Lord has called me. If I am doing His will, I am doing His work, and the greatest work that it is possible for *me* to do.

"No service in itself is small,
None great though earth it fill;
But that is small that seeks its own,
And great that does God's will."

"Tribulation worketh patience." Many would fain learn to be patient; but care not for the school of tribulation, in which patience is most quickly learned, if most dearly paid for.

JOTTINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

“**A**LWAYS obedient.” How blessed is this possibility to every saint! “Always obedient.” What a glorious testimony to a church's manner of life is verse 12 of this second chapter. Hereby we may learn the abiding *principle* of salvation—which is,

OBEDIENCE.

The word here translated *obedience* is very interesting. It means the attitude of listening, so as to do whatever is spoken by Him who is Lord alone. We might compare Prov. viii. 32–36 as an illustration thereof. Hence, also, the word that is written—“Christ the Son of God became unto all them that *obey* Him the cause of eternal salvation”—eternal in this aspect, as telling out unbrokenness and continuity in the *experience* of salvation!

The Philippians had gladdened the Apostle's soul by their opened ear and willing heart, while he had been with them. Now, he would that, instead of lessening this zeal, they should rather, *much more* in his absence, WORK OUT their own salvation,—this, too, in the understanding that it was God who was

IN-WORKING

among them both to wish and to work for His good pleasure; with which may be contrasted Eph. i. 5, last clause: “According to the good pleasure of His will.” No aspect of salvation is sweeter than that which is to be known by the manner of obedience to the will of God

as expressed in the words, “Do all things apart from murmurings and disputings.” How much, again and again, has been lost by the below'd of God hesitating in their obedience. Hesitancy invariably leads to a falling into murmurings and reasonings—one very solemnly warning instance of which is recorded in Numbers, chaps. xi. to xiii. There, what they had heard from God was set aside by, and for, what they heard from their fellows, who spake of what they saw, and what they were; forgetful of what God had been to them as Saviour, and what as Lord He required of them to carry out. Murmurings make reasonings easy and forcible. But lo! at what a cost?—even the loss of that salvation which obedience brings and gives; which also makes those of the contrary part to be ashamed. Meanwhile, we are to manifest ourselves as blameless and sincere: the children of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, that err in their hearts, and know not the ways of God; among whom, notwithstanding, by mercy we seek to shine as lights, if peradventure some may be saved. All this, moreover, holding forth a word of life that in the day of Christ will show that running for, and labouring with us, has not been in vain; but that all has been to God's glory, and His servant's reward and joy, and our own profit as obedient ones. Then, if he or they who run and labour be offered upon the sacrifice and service of our faith, let them joy, and let us rejoice with them. The sacrifice of such is seen

in what they themselves endure and forego, as running to labour. Their service is shown in getting Timothy-like ones to draw near and know our state as churches of God, and tell the same to such as sacrifice themselves for the sake of our faith. How blessed the servant—how needful the service that genuinely *cares* for the *state* of the saints found together as a church of God!—the broad and clear and well-defined character of whom is, that *they seek not their own*, but rather the things that are Jesus Christ's. Wherefore, the concern of such Timothy-ones is to find out what the churches of the saints are to the Lord; for, after all, this is the true test of the state of a church—namely, the place that the things that are Jesus Christ's have among them. That is to say, whether their own things, the things of others, or the things that are Jesus Christ's, concern and engage them most. What comfort it is to have one of a like soul to enter upon such work! yea, how welcome the strengthening of one's hands by an Epaphroditus, who for the work of Christ refuses to value his own life!

J. B.

We do not acknowledge the title.

HAVING in a recent number referred to the term "Plymouth Brethren," we may say that we do not know any body of believers on earth who accept that name. We do not call ourselves by such a name. The world may call some of the Lord's

people "Plymouth Brethren." But, for our part, we do not acknowledge the title. We are simply brethren in Christ. We have nothing to do with the names that *men* may give us; we rejoice to own the names that *God* gives us. "If any man suffer as a *Christian* let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this Name" (1 Pet. iv. 16, R.V.). If you wish to know what we are, we have simply to say that we are *Christians*. You may say that we must have some name to *distinguish* us from other believers. But God has made no provision whatever for thus distinguishing certain believers from certain other believers. Indeed He has marked down as carnal, the spirit that would seek to "distinguish" by saying, "I am of Paul, and I of Apolos." In the early times they were simply believers, Christians, brethren, saints—names, mark you, which embrace *all* believers on the face of the earth. As members of the heavenly family, we cannot accept names or titles that embrace anything *less*. Man has invented names that embrace only a *section* of God's people; but we have no warrant from Scripture either to accept or acknowledge any such names. We refuse to stand upon such narrow ground. Yet, strange to say, we are called "narrow" because we refuse to acknowledge sectarian names, while we accept only the God-given names, embracing the *whole family*! Sectarian names will be unknown in heaven; and we do not see why any one should do them homage on earth.

PLENTY OF CORN.

GIVE saints plenty of corn, and they will not need the whip." Quite true, so far as it goes; but it only goes a certain length. The best corn in the world will not keep a horse from taking a wrong turning. Bit and bridle are required; yea, and if need be, the whip. We read of Jeshurun, that he "waxed fat and kicked" (Deut. xxxii. 15); and of God's ancient people that he suffered them to hunger (Deut. viii. 3), that they might learn to trust in Him.

In the estimation of some, "plenty of corn for the believer" means plenty of nice *comfortable* things from the word—teaching that deals in generalities—that bears you away into heavenly places, and never "interferes" with the walk of the believer on earth. But the believer's "corn" includes something far more than pictures of coming blessedness, and doctrines that speak of our being perfectly accepted in the Beloved. The Scriptures of truth, in all their length and breadth, are the believer's "corn." The "corn" *I need* may be truth as to my standing in Christ, or it may be truth as to my walk in the world. If a brother opens up truth as to our separation from the ungodly, some one may be heard saying, "Let the saints have plenty of corn, and they wont need to be told *that*." But, my dear brother, we reply, "*that is corn*." When Paul says to the Corinthians, "Be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing"—

that is corn. When the word of God warns you against worldly conformity—*that is corn.* When Scripture is brought to bear on our ways, showing that we are *not* to do certain things, *that is corn.* The believer's corn is simply the whole counsel of God—whether that counsel be sweet or bitter; and if we reject the counsel because it is bitter, we must remember that it is none the less corn; and in all probability the very corn designed of heaven for our highest blessing. If I am found hanging about the corners with the unconverted, my corn will likely be found about 2 Cor. vi. 17—"Come out from among them." If I am seen rushing with the world's crowd to one of the world's attractions, my true corn may be found in 1 Jno. ii. 15. If I have taken the side-path of carnal indulgence, the needed corn will likely be found in Gal. ii. 20, which we might call "Crucifixion truth." If I am given to jesting and foolish talking, my corn will be not far from Eph. v. 4, where such things are emphatically forbidden. But the different kinds of corn would make too long a list. We have said enough to show that the believer's corn is something far more than the "smooth things" desired by the people of Jeremiah's day. By all means let God's people have plenty of corn; but don't let them object if the corn is not what they expected it to be. Don't let them look down upon it as "light bread," or no corn at all, simply because it is "needed truth." All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is

profitable—for what? For having nice, comfortable meetings, and making every one believe that he is on the best of terms with heaven? Nay, verily. All Scripture is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” Reproof and correction are included in the heavenly corn just as truly as doctrine and instruction. We can praise God for blessed meetings; but meetings are only blessed in so far as there is subjection to God and to the word of His grace, whether that word build us up or break us down.

DOES NOT DEPEND ON QUANTITY.

DOCTORS are agreed that health does not depend upon the quantity of food we eat, so much as upon the quantity we *assimilate*. You may eat little; but if that little is assimilated—that is, if it becomes a part of yourself—you may be in perfect health. So is it with spiritual nourishment. In the present day there is no lack of food. There is any amount of teaching and preaching; while, of the making of books there is no end. There is doubtless a large quantity of chaff as well as wheat in that great mass of what is called “food for the wilderness journey.” Yet wheat there is—much wheat; and some of it very fine wheat, too. But it seems to convey very little nourishment! Why? Because the wheat is not assimilated. The hearer does not make the spiritual “food” a part

of himself. He either rejects the message entirely, or he applies it to some other person altogether, saying to himself, “Yes, that will just fit So-and-so.”

We make bold to say that godly testimony at the present time produces a very meagre effect—in many cases no effect at all! The testimony may be everything that could be desired—a veritable message from heaven. Yet, how few receive with cordial faith the message brought by the Lord's sent ones! The truth is, that the many in Israel are *not prepared to eat of the hidden manna*. There must be an individual humbling of ourselves before God. There must be a preparing of our hearts to seek Him. Splendid addresses will fail to deliver us. Beautifully spun-out truth will not avail us. Yea, of what profit shall be the heavenly manna itself, if we have no appetite for its rich and boundless store? Israel were a well-fed people in the wilderness. The manna (God's provision) never failed. Yet they murmured. Therefore, let us not find our rest in hearing gifted teachers. While we praise God for all whom He has sent, let us remember that each one of us is called to mortify our members which are upon the earth—to keep the body under—and so to yield ourselves unto the Lord that we shall be ever ready to receive His message, and to say, “Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth.”

IF, in painful circumstances, we cannot offer praise, it is time we were making confession.

SPIRITUALISING AGAIN.

A NEW periodical has just reached us from the United States. It would seem that its chief mission is to oppose the *water* of Baptism, and the *bread and cup* of the Memorial Feast. Everything is spiritualised. Water-Baptism is held to be a mere shadow of a bygone dispensation; and to break bread in remembrance of our absent Lord, is set down as a carnal ordinance! The spiritualisers in question speak as if they had made a wonderful discovery. But there is nothing new under the sun. It is long since the Lord's people have had to resist the spiritualising heresies. In the present instance these preachers do not seem to have anything new to bring forward. They are evidently groaning over the corrupt state of things in the world's churches; and in this they have our sympathy. When they quote an advertisement of a "courting entertainment for the benefit of the first Baptist Church in ——," we can easily understand why they are not impressed with water-baptism. When they tell us of a "grand pancake and valentine entertainment" in another church, and a "donkey party" in a third, we do not wonder that our friends indulge in some righteous indignation at such iniquities, perpetrated in the name of God.

But stay, brethren, we say. Why run to the extreme of spiritualising God's ordinances, because the world makes a caricature of our holy religion? There is nothing wrong with God's ordinances.

Man—carnal man—may *abuse* them. But that is no reason whatever why we should cease to *use* them. Let not one extreme drive us into another. When we see corruptions abounding on the right hand and on the left—when we see the name of Christ attached to the world's song, and nonsense, and flourish of trumpets—many are apt to rush to the conclusion, that what is needed is *some new thing*. But no new thing is needed. And still less do we need to throw aside ordinances as clearly revealed in Scripture as salvation by faith.

Our friends tell us of one sister who was baptised and used to break bread, but who is now seemingly taken up with the *spiritualising theories*. But this does not surprise us. When believers find out that they have not been living for God as they ought, they are often prone to blame everything but the right thing. Sometimes they blame the believers with whom they are associated. Not unfrequently they find, or profess to find, that it is in the form of church government the blame lies; and if some prophet arises to show that the cause of spiritual declension is entirely due to water-baptism and literal bread at the Memorial Feast, at once certain believers hail the news as a clear message from heaven. God's ordinances are there and then set down as the cause of failure; and it is confidently expected that to be delivered from *these* will ensure deliverance from all that is of man and the flesh! But we would just point out here that it is a *mark of false prophets to discover false*

causes of banishment (See Lam. ii. 14). When spiritual declension sets in, it is not a new set of doctrines that you need. It is a *new stock of spiritual power*. It is no doubt very convenient to find something on which to lay the blame of our own failure. But failure should be confessed—not excused.

Our spiritualising friends have never succeeded in making good their case. They appeal to Scripture, it is true. But the way in which they get rid of the hard passages is something wonderful. They evidently find a difficulty in Acts x. 47, 48, where Peter commands the household of Cornelius to be baptised with *literal water*. But the spiritualisers get over that difficulty by asserting that Peter was “*undecided*” as to water-baptism being necessary! People who will accept that style of interpreting Scripture are prepared to believe anything. So far from Peter being undecided as to the necessity for water-baptism, he *commanded* them to be baptised! It was in the Name of the Lord that this command was given; and the Apostle prefaced the command by the challenge, “Can any man forbid water?” Yet the whole passage is explained away on the supposition that Peter was *undecided*!


Spiritualising believers will no doubt have a number of followers. We have heard it said that no matter what kind of new sect arises, it is sure to have a certain amount of patronage. The apostle of the next new “body” has simply to arrive with the train and announce himself; and lo! you find

that *some* are ready to marshal themselves under his banner. The itching ear is a mark of the last time; and, when we look around, we can truly say, “It is the last time.” But we have little fear for those who are grounded and settled in the truth, and who are seeking in all humility of mind to adorn the doctrines of Christ—no matter how much a Christless world may have caused these doctrines to be evil spoken of.

A HOPELESS SEARCH.

NOTHING on earth can ever satisfy the heart where Christ has reigned. If you have been a mere professor of religion, you may throw aside one religion and take up another; and you may find the one quite as good as the other. But if you are seeking something to take the place of Christ, you are on a hopeless search. The worldling may go heart and soul into Egypt's pleasures, and profess to find a wonderful degree of satisfaction in these pleasures. But it is different with you, O child of God. You have drawn water from purer springs—you have tasted of sweeter joys. The world has nothing left for thee. May it be yours, therefore, henceforth to say

“Now none but Christ can satisfy—
None other name for me!”

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If thou wouldst enjoy thy mercies, be ready at all times to give them up at God's call.

THE EMPTY HOUSE.

IN Matt. xii. 44, we find an empty house. The unclean spirit has gone out. "What a blessing," you say. Yes; but Christ has not come in! There is an empty void in that house—or that heart, if you will; and that empty space will not long remain unoccupied. The house may be swept wonderfully clean. But it is *tenantless*. It is said that nature abhors a vacuum—that is, a space where there is absolutely nothing. If you empty a glass of water, the vessel is at once filled with *something else*. The surrounding atmosphere rushes in as the water rushes out. The vessel is still filled, but with air instead of water. So is it with the human heart. So was it with the man out of whom the unclean spirit had gone. The empty void left behind was an *aching* void—a void that clamoured for something to fill it. That void was soon filled. "Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first" (ver. 45).

We question if there is such a thing as a human heart that is absolutely tenantless. For a brief period it may seem to be so; but that is only the *transition* period—the little space taken up by the passing out of the old, and the coming in of the new. Professed believers may have the house emptied of the unclean spirit of fleshly indulgence. A clean sweep may be made of gross sins; and

you may view with satisfaction the great change that has been effected—a change for which you cannot be too thankful. But while the *demon of evil* has been cast forth to his true place *without*, has *Christ* been welcomed to His true place *within*? If not, there is an empty void. That void must be filled—shall be filled. If not filled with Christ, that void shall none the less be filled. Something will take the place of Christ. The worldly atmosphere around shall ere long clamour for admittance, and rush in through every chink and crevice, to fill up that vacant space which Christ should fill, and which only Christ can fill.

A professed believer cannot be in a more deplorable condition than when he has been delivered from the unclean spirit of gross sin, and yet has not given Christ the throne of the heart. If it is true that the Devil tempts every man, we believe it to be no less true that an empty heart tempts the Devil. Nor will it tempt him long. Thrones rarely remain long vacant; and the throne of the heart is no exception to this rule. A man cannot exist without having a definite *bias* in one direction or another. The current of his life is heavenward, or it is earthward; and the direction of the current depends upon the simple question, "Who is on the throne?" Is Christ reigning? Or are we satisfied with a merely negative Christianity—a Christianity that contents itself with saying, "I don't indulge in bad practices—I have swept the house of all the heinous sins?"

If we have got no further than that, we are on dangerous ground. If Christ does not occupy the house, that house is desolate; and a desolate house is a virtual proclamation to all the powers of evil that they may come and take possession!

“JUST SUFFICIENT PERSECUTION.”

A SERVANT of Christ said to us lately: “I found a nice little company of believers in the town of ———; and with just sufficient persecution to keep them as clear as a bell on the truth of separation to God.” Persecution in that case was a blessing in disguise; and perhaps that is true in every case. Where there is no persecution, the lines of separation seem to become fainter and fainter, until the world actually begins to patronise us! What a change! But the change is not in the world. It is still the same world that loves its own. If the world is patting us on the shoulder, we may be sure that we have come down to the world's level.

“THAT station of life is most desirable which has least in it to cumber the spirit, and to entice away the heart from Christ. Shall we not then rather desire to stoop with our Lord, than to rise with the men of the world? Every state in life has temptations; but these thicken upon us, and grow in seducing power, according as we rise in earthly honour.”

I SURRENDER.

(New Gospel Hymn, with Music).

KEY E.

M. 110.

m, - : - : f s, - m : l, - s	s, - : - : - : m, - : - : - : }
Long a re - bel, O my	Sa - viour,

r, - : - : de r, - f : m, - r	m, - : - : - : s, - : - : - : }
I have wand'r'd far from	Thee;

m, - : - : f s, - m : l, - s	s, - : - : - : m, - : - : - : }
Now I hear of bound-less	fa - vour,

r, - : - : de r, - f : m, - r	d, - : - : - : - : - : - : }
Bring - ing pardon unto	me.

CHORUS.

s : - s fe : s : l : s	s : - m : - }
I sur - ren - der, I sur -	ren - der,

r : - de r : f : m : r	m : - s : - }
O - ver - come by love di -	vine;

s : - s fe : s : l : t	d' : - s : - }
Thee, as Sa - viour & De -	fen - der,

s : - l s : f : m : r	m : - , f s : - }
I ac - cept, and I am	Thine.

s : - s fe : s : l : t	d' : - s : s : l }
Thee, as Sa - viour & De -	fen - der, I ac -

s : - d m : r	d' : - - : - : }
cept, and I am	Thine.

- 1 LONG a rebel, O my Saviour,
I have wander'd far from Thee;
Now I hear of boundless favour,
Bringing pardon unto me.

I surrender, I surrender,
Overcome by love divine;
Thee, as Saviour and Defender,
I accept, and I am Thine.

- 2 Oft I've heard the matchless story
Of Thy death upon the Tree;
Now I see its beams of glory,
For I know it was for me.
I surrender, &c.
- 3 Long my weary feet have hasted
In the path that leads from Thee;
Now, when years, alas! are wasted,
I surrender, Lord, to Thee.
I surrender, &c.
- 4 Thou for me didst come from heaven;
Died upon the Cross of shame;
Thou eternal life hast given—
Glory be unto Thy Name!
I surrender, &c.

W. B.

BRINGING THE ROOF DOWN.

IF I were to deliver what I believe to be the needed truth here, it would bring the roof down." "Very well;" we say, "let the roof come down!" There is an old saying: "Do the right, although the heavens should fall." What you have to be sure of, is that you have God's message. A brother once told us that when he stood up to speak at a meeting of believers, he saw by the faces of the people that they were not wanting his line of truth. So, he *took another line!*—rather a strange proceeding, if he was convinced that God had given him a message. Jeremiah was distinctly commanded to beware of the fear of man. "Gird up thy loins," said the Lord to him, "and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them" (Jer. i. 17). Professed servants of God would do well to lay this to heart. If you claim to have a message from God, and deliberately stifle that message because you see that it will not "take with the people," it may be well doubted whether you had any message. He will have a long "wait" who waits until the message of heaven is pleasing to the carnal mind; be that mind in believer or unbeliever. We must not withhold testimony though we see that it will be rejected. God will be glorified, even in its rejection. We find the Master saying, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye *receive not our witness*"

(Jno. iii. 11). His was a rejected testimony. Yet He did not cease to "speak" and "testify." But, although rejected by Israel as a nation, the testimony was not without its fruit (See Jno. i. 11, 12). There were *some*—small though that remnant might be—who received the message of God. Let this cheer the hearts of godly witnesses who are almost tempted to look upon their labour as fruitless. There will be *some* who shall approve the heavenly wisdom; for "he that is of God heareth God's words" (Jno. viii. 47).

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Vol. IV.

THE ABSALOM REBELLION.

First Paper.

IT is an unalterable law of the Kingdom that "as the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come" (Prov. xxvi. 2). This is just another way of saying that "there is a cause for everything." Certain it is, that the operation of cause and effect is nowhere more clearly seen than in the history of the Absalom Rebellion. The kingdom had been duly established in David's hand. Saul, his old enemy, was dead; and even the house of Saul, waxing weaker and weaker (2 Sam. iii. 1), had now vanished away. David was proclaimed king over all Israel (2 Sam. v.). The Ark had been brought up from the house of Obed-edom, and set in its true place (2 Sam. vi. 11, 17). Enemies were being subdued on all sides. David's history at this period was one great roll of victory. Why, then, is it that we so soon find him fleeing before a usurper—the kingdom torn from his grasp—and himself a fugitive in the wilderness? There must have been a cause for this. There *was* a cause; and that cause is expressed by one very little, but very

terrible, word—*sin*. David had fallen. He had grievously departed from His God; and just in proportion to the pinnacle of prosperity to which God had raised him, so was the depth of degradation to which he fell. The higher our privileges the deeper our condemnation if, against the light of heaven, we defile ourselves with the potsherds of earth. Moreover, David's exalted position in Israel rendered his fall lamentable to the last degree. We are expressly told that he gave "great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme" (2 Sam. xii. 14). Again, being a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. xiii. 14), David's sin stands forth in peculiar blackness. A dark object on a clear background is very conspicuous. It has been said that the sun eclipsed for an hour will draw more attention than by its clear shining all the year. So is it with good men. Their sins stand out in bold relief, and command the attention of all who have eyes to see. So was it in David's case. Israel knew, and the enemies of the Lord knew, what David had done. Jehovah's name was being blasphemed. Therefore judgment must begin at David's house. That judgment would be terrible; but not more terrible than David's sin.

Judgment might be delayed. Yet it would come. The wheels of retribution may move slowly; but they are as sure as the revolving seasons. Be he child of God or child of wrath, it is alike true of him: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7). David found it to be true in his sad experience.

But if there was a cause for the Absalom Rebellion, can we not also trace the causes that led to David's grievous departure from the Lord? We believe we can. 2 Sam. xi. 1 tells us that "it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem." In other words, while "Joab and his servants and all Israel" were away fighting the battles of the Lord, David was spending his time in idleness at Jerusalem! He was in his wrong place. It was the time when kings went forth to battle. Yet David went not forth. He was idle, while he should have been hard at work for God. He would no doubt satisfy his qualms of conscience by the reflection that the war was in good enough hands. With Joab as captain of the host, Ammon would doubtless be destroyed, and Rabbah was sure to fall. Thus David might reason. Yet all such reasonings could not justify his deliberate inactivity, at the very time when he should have gone forth to the help of the Lord against the mighty. David chose

the place of idleness. But he soon found, as thousands have found, that the place of idleness is *the place of temptation!* It was while he tarried behind in Jerusalem that he *saw*—and *lusted*—and *fell!* Had he been at the siege of Rabbah, "enduring hardness as a good soldier," Bathsheba would not have met his gaze, and the enemies of the Lord would not have had cause to blaspheme.

A great principle is brought before us here. We learn clearly, from this dark chapter in David's history, that it is a most dangerous thing for a believer to be idle—to have no definite work on hand for God. Let us never forget that Sodom's sin sprung from "pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness" (Ezek. xvi. 49)—a true parallel passage to David's tarrying at Jerusalem. We have little fear of the believer whose hands are full for God—who is "ready always" to go to the help of the Lord against the hosts of evil. If a believer's time is well laid out in the service of Christ, the Devil has, so to speak, very little ground to work upon in attacking that brother. We need not expect that Satan will cease entirely to tempt us; for even after our Lord's temptation in the wilderness we read that the Tempter left Him only "for a season" (Lu. iv. 13). At the same time, if we are treading God's path—doing His will—delighting in His service, we can count on Him for deliverance. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience," He says, "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation" (Rev. iii. 10).

“DO THYSELF NO HARM.”

A MEDICAL friend, in speaking to Christian workers, makes frequent use of the words, “Do thyself no harm”—claiming for that passage of Scripture a far wider application than to the jailer of Philippi (Acts xvi. 28). That is to say, we are to take due care of our bodies, and see that we do not wantonly injure that earthly tabernacle which Scripture tells us is fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps. cxxxix. 14).

It is to be feared that the taking care of our bodies is a rather neglected subject among professed followers of Christ. It seems to be an understood thing that the body has no connection whatever with the soul! Yet there could not be a greater delusion; as 1 Cor. vi. 15 conclusively shows. *Mind* and *matter* in the one person, are very closely related indeed. The one acts and reacts upon the other; and it cannot be otherwise. An unhealthy body is decidedly unfavourable to a peaceful mind. And even a supposed healthy body, pampered by “fulness of bread” and an unstinted supply of the luxuries of life, will prove a terrible drag upon spiritual prosperity. There is an old proverb that “some men live to eat, while others eat to live.” Let us be among those who eat to live. Each of us requires a certain quantity of food to keep the body in proper working order; and we are satisfied that the quantity in question is often much smaller than is generally supposed to be essential to health. If we think that

we can eat as much as we please and as often as we please, and yet glorify God, we are sadly mistaken. It does not take a very profound philosopher to find out that moderation in diet is conducive to clearness of mind and quickness of perception; while an unrestrained appetite will leave a languor upon the spirit that will render it unfit to receive delicate impressions, whether intellectual or spiritual.

Our bodies are *for God*. They are to be yielded up as a “living sacrifice.” It surely, therefore, becomes us to see that the body is left free and unencumbered by any inordinate indulgence; so that it may prove no drag upon the wheels of communion. There can be no doubt that unrestrained appetite *does* prove such a drag. On the other hand, they of simple tastes and frugal fare, unfettered by the influences of a pampered body—find the spirit free to soar away to the mountains of heavenly-mindedness—to labour in the yoke of service—or patiently to sit and hear what God the Lord will speak.

—♦—

If you are in doubt as to whether a certain sin is really sin or not, it is vain for you to expect deliverance from its dominion. The first thing to be clear about is, that the thing is *sin*—hideous and God-dishonouring sin. You need not sit down to ask if it is excusable. Does God call it sin? If so, then it is rebellion against the throne on high. *To be convinced of that* is a very powerful separating force between you and the sin in question. Many fall short of deliverance because they will not come to a clear, definite conclusion about sin, and call it by its right name.

OVER-WORK.

WHILE we have been considering the exhortation, "Do thyself no harm," as applied to over-indulgence, it may be well to look at the same words in connection with *over-work*. Even in serving the Lord, there is such a thing as going beyond the measure of our bodily strength; and the question is: "How far are we justified in doing so?" It may be difficult to draw a hard and fast line that shall meet all cases. Yet, we are persuaded that lines can be drawn somewhere. A few general principles can be pointed out, from which some "hints" at least may be picked up.

When God calls any one to special service for Him, we find that the instrument is always fitted for the work. If, as a brother once said, the Lord means a creature to fly, He provides it with wings. And if He means one of His children to endure the trying work of preaching Christ, we need not doubt that the needful physical strength will be provided for the work. Indeed, we have been struck, in reading various lists of "preachers' qualifications," to find that a good constitution was marked down as essential in every case. Some men seem specially adapted for the work of the ministry. Not only is there the ready and impassioned utterance, but there is an endowment of physical strength that shows clearly that "the back has been made for the burden." To such men preaching is a luxury; while in arduous labours for God they

seem to be merely breathing their native air. In their case the body is, so to speak, the happy help-meet of the spirit. Their zeal is undamped, their energies unhindered, so far as the body is concerned. In a word, they are men undoubtedly fitted by nature as well as grace for the work to which they have been called.

But we are not all constituted alike; and although preaching to some may be a luxury, yet to others it involves a serious waste of what doctors call "nervous energy." Some can go on constantly in the yoke of the preacher. In the case of others it would be simply a physical impossibility. Their constitution could not bear the strain; and (if we must say it) was never intended to bear the strain. The spirit may be willing—they may have it "in their heart" to give to the Lord a service separated to the Gospel. Yet, they will have sufficient tokens to show that there is not a clear call exclusively to that work. They do very well while saying a word for the Lord by a time. *That* is within the measure of their strength; and perhaps, if they made the experiment, they would find that it is more in keeping with the measure of their *gift*.

It is true that some labourers, compassed with infirmity, keep plodding on in the path of unbroken service for God. But in their case it may be questioned if the infirmity is in any way due to their efforts in the Gospel. Certain infirmities are unaffected by constant work in the vineyard; while other infirmities may be

actually relieved by moving about in active service for God. These, however, are exceptional cases. The rule would seem to be, that God does not require from us more than He has bestowed upon us. If He has not fitted us for the trying and arduous work of aggressive Gospel testimony, we may rest assured that there is some *other* work for which we are fitted; and it is for us to find out what that work is. We cannot agree with those who are evidently reckless as to how soon they may "use up the earthly tabernacle." While we do not believe in shirking God's service, we certainly believe in *husbanding life's taper*. We have only one life—we make only one journey through this wilderness world; and we *shall not come this way again!* Hence the solemn responsibility of seeking, so far as in us lies, to have every faculty of mind and body in such a condition that we shall be able to give to the Lord a hearty and vigorous service. The old proverb says that "there is no time lost in sharpening the scythe." Instead, therefore, of seeking to accomplish great feats of service, let us rather seek to be in such a condition of abiding communion, that a little effort will go a long way. An axe with a keen edge will do its work with very little expenditure of labour; and in like manner, if our dwelling-place is the secret place of the Most High, the keen edge of our testimony will do a mighty work, however few our words may be, and seemingly insignificant our service may appear.

THE ETERNAL SECURITY.

THE doctrine of the eternal security of the believer is certainly one of the most precious in holy writ. Yet no doctrine is more liable to be abused. If the eternal security is proclaimed and dwelt upon, then by all means let us have *the other side* of that truth. If we contend for the eternal security which God provides, let us no less contend for the *practical holiness* which God demands. Predestination is inseparably linked with a being conformed to the image of God's Son (See Rom. viii. 29). Seeing, then, that God has joined these two things together, let us beware lest we put them asunder. It is to be feared that the doctrine of election is being made to serve purposes which it was never intended to serve. It is being used as a pillow for easy-going professors to fall asleep upon. It is being used as a passport to heaven by some who had better be enquiring if the great work of conformation to the image of Christ is going on; for if that work be not going on, what right has any one to boast in the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer? Yonder is a believers' meeting; and the doctrine of the eternal security is expounded at great length. But there is not a word as to the *character* of God's elect ones. Conformity to the image of Christ is scarcely hinted at. The great *purpose* of God's electing love is left out of sight. What is the result? The result is, that worldly and self-willed professors are

built up—not upon their most holy faith—but upon their most unholy worldliness. They declare that the truth of the eternal security is most precious and comforting. They enjoyed the meeting remarkably. Yes; because there was nothing to trouble their conscience. They were sure, no matter what was their condition, that they were safe to all eternity. They had been fearing lest the preacher should come down upon some fleshly indulgence—lest he should have gone into the question of the state of the heart before God. But it was “election truth” pure and simple. Professors at ease in Zion therefore breathed freely, saying to themselves, “The bitterness of death is past.” There is much of this breathing freely, when only one side of truth—the *comforting side—is given*. But, let the other side be told—let the whole truth be out—let practical godliness besounded forth in harmony with God's electing love, and numbers would at once find that the bitterness of death is yet to come! *Chosen of God* is to them a precious text; but *Crucified with Christ* has no beauty that they should desire it. The “Confession of faith” they want is evidently a guarantee that they are certain of eternal blessedness in heaven, while they may have any amount of worldliness on earth. But Scripture teaches no such doctrine. God has graciously revealed the eternal security of His people. The doctrine of election is a precious one to all who love the Lord in sincerity; and we have no sympathy whatever with those who hold that you

may be in God's family to-day and lost for ever to-morrow. At the same time we must be bold to say that we have as little sympathy with the easy-going professor who, without the fruits of a godly life, is boasting that he is safe to all eternity. God's predestination was never intended to serve such a purpose. It declares its own character in unmistakable terms. What is it that we are predestined to? We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son. Scripture is perfectly clear upon that point. Then, let the doctrine of election, in all its length and breadth, be proclaimed; and we have no fear that it will promote carnal security. The truth of election, “rightly divided,” will make it clear that our God has no *comforting* truth for those who are being conformed to the image of the worldling.

—♦—

CALMNESS in trying circumstances may arise from one of two causes. You may be calm simply because you do not care how matters go. You may get credit for a wonderful degree of faith in God, while your calmness is the result of sheer indifference. On the other hand, calmness may be the result of faith in God. Faith is fully alive to the difficulties of the situation; and does not shut its eyes to the dangers looming up in the distance. But faith also beholds One towering far above all the difficulties and dangers of the way, and says, “It is enough—God is with us, and God is able: we need not fear although an host encamp against us.”

NO WANT OF DESIRE.

AT a recent Conference a brother remarked that there is no want of *desire* for a close walk with God. Any number of believers can be found who have a certain amount of longing to tread the path of abiding communion. "But," continued our brother, "what we want is the *heavenly energy* to *carry out* our purpose and have our desire *practically fulfilled*." This is just where the weak point comes in. It is easy to indulge in longings—to express desires, and to wish we were a different kind of believer from what we really are. It costs very little effort, and no mortification of the flesh to go that length. Such desires are born without a pang. Some sudden flash from the great fire of truth—some stirring passage in the address of an impassioned preacher—may so carry us away, that for a few brief moments we find ourselves saying, "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest" (Lu. ix. 57). The beauty of holiness enraptures the sight; and the desire at once springs up in the soul:

"O to be all for Jesus!—
Only to dwell with Him,
In the calm of that holy Presence,
Where the light can ne'er grow dim!"

Let us praise God for every such desire. But let us remember that we may go all that length, and yet not see our desire fulfilled. It is in the *carrying out* of our holy purposes—it is in securing the fulfilment of these desires, that the battle has to be fought. It is not enough merely to *wish* we were in the Jerusalem

of spiritual prosperity: we must set our face *steadfastly* to gain that spot. It is vain to *wish* to reach the mark for the prize of the high calling, if we do not *press* towards that mark (Phil. iii. 14). It is in that *pressing onward* that the world must be overcome—the flesh mortified—and the honours of earth contemned. This is where many fail in the great conflict with the powers of evil. They *wish*; but they will not *act*, in order to accomplish the fulfilment of their wishes. They find a certain satisfaction in these longings for holiness, and mark them down in their catalogue of virtues. But if right desires are not accompanied by resolute action, they shall be nothing better than the fruitless blossom that is the sport of every wind that blows. Balaam the soothsayer had some of the sublimest longings that are recorded in the sacred page (See Numb. xxiii. 10). Yet we know that as he lived, so he died. The younger son of Luke xv., on the other hand, not only said, "I will arise," but *he arose and went* (ver. 20). We have really no conclusive evidence that our desires for a separated walk are honest and genuine, unless we proceed at once to put these desires to the proof, and move heaven to have them fulfilled.

DEEP waters of affliction often lead to a deepened experience of the goodness of God. There is many a trial, reckoned grievous indeed while it lasts, for which we have afterward to praise God, saying, "Sweet trial, how I feared thee: yet now I find thou hast been the bearer of untold blessing."


THE THREAD BROKEN.

THE preacher must not only *take* the "grip" of his audience, but he must *keep* the grip. If he allows the thread of attention to be broken, he will find it a hard matter to mend the thread. He who would have an interested audience from beginning to end of his address must keep his hearers *well in hand*. He must have something to say—he must know what he is going to say—and he must speak as a man who believes every word he says. He must, moreover, have a *reserve* supply of matter and energy. He is not as a man who runs at the top of his speed, and becomes exhausted before he is half-way over the ground he intended to cover. He does not give out all his material, and expend all his energy, in the first half of his address, and occupy the other half in the hopeless attempt to recover the attention of his hearers while it is clear he has nothing more to say. No. The arrestive preacher knows when he has done—and stops there. Every preacher does not know when that point is reached. Some preachers do not perceive when they are done. They may have a message—they may have really something to say. And, if they had the wisdom to sit down when they had delivered their message, their words would have a powerful effect. But, then, they go on speaking when it is quite clear that they are merely *filling up time*. A feeling of weariness creeps over the meeting. The good impression

produced by the first part of the address, is completely wiped out, and there seems to be a general desire that the preacher would draw to a close. When the attention of an audience is at *that* ebb, it is full time the preacher sat down. If you are a ministering brother, we would say: Whatever your subject is—*be arrestive*, and stop while there is an *undoubted impression* on the people. Do not be tempted to give a long address merely because you see your hearers paying close attention. If you do, you may be compelled to draw to a painful close because you see that the people are wearied out. Some addresses remind us of the fat and lean kine that Pharaoh saw in his dream. We know that seven fat kine came up first, and were then swallowed up by the seven lean kine that followed after. Thus it is with many a refreshing word of seven sentences, or seven minutes. It is completely swallowed up by the "seven lean kine" that come afterward. This seems to be largely due to the temptation to give "a good, long address," under the delusion that the longer you speak the more likely you are to leave an impression.

NEVER treat sin as a trifle or a weakness. It is the abominable thing which God hates. You need not draw a picture of the "extenuating circumstances," and the justifying features. Sinning ones will do all that, and leave a good margin for what they call the weakness of the flesh. You have simply to echo what God says about sin.

A REPRIEVE TO THE FLESH.

T has been truly said that many look upon the Cross of Christ merely as a reprieve to the flesh, instead of seeing in it the sentence that *the flesh must die*. We all know what a reprieve is. Yonder is a man being led forth to execution. He is expecting death. To all appearance he is doomed. But at the last moment a messenger arrives in breathless haste with a pardon. The man is overjoyed. He had counted on death: yet he finds himself entering upon a new lease of life. Thus it is with many a professor of the Christian religion. When awakened to his lost condition—when in the deep waters of conviction—he saw one thing clearly; and that was, that the flesh must die—old things must pass away. He viewed conversion as a mighty change. As for the pleasures of carnal delight, and the vainglory of a worldly life, he saw that all these must go by the board, if Christ were to be followed. Thus far, all went well. The profession of conversion was duly made, and sentence of death was passed upon the flesh. But lo! a reprieve arrives. “From where?” you ask; “from the courts above?” “No; from the courts *beneath*.” What kind of reprieve is it? It is a reprieve to the flesh. The message is carried by some Mr. Worldly-wise-man, who tells the young convert most decidedly that there is no need whatever for the flesh to die! “There is no reason,” says the wily counsellor, “that you should be strait-


laced, and narrow-minded. Conversion is blessed—most blessed. But you can have *that* and everything the flesh counts dear, provided you only keep yourself respectable. Don't think of giving up the world. You can have the best of it nicely, and yet keep up a good profession of being converted to God: thousands are doing it at this very moment.”

Thus reasons Mr. Worldly-wise-man and his disciples, whose name is legion. The young convert is surprised a little at first. But the flesh from within gives its “Amen” to the fleshly counsel from without; and that young convert, who seemed to enter on the Christian path with the zeal of a heaven-born devotion, is soon found with little more than the sign-board of profession.

The mere profession that we were born again at a certain time can be no testimony to the present power of divine grace. What avails it that a fire was kindled a certain number of years ago, if that fire be not burning now? Worldly Christianity may reverse the sentence of death, and provide a reprieve for the flesh. But God has sent no such reprieve; and no such reprieve will be looked for or longed for by any one who is purposed in heart to live godly in Christ Jesus. “I am crucified with Christ” (Gal. ii. 20). Thus spoke the apostle of the Gentiles; and thus speaks every one who is being taught of the Father. But not only have we the sentence of death in ourselves, but the sentence has been carried out. *We have died with Christ* (Rom. vi. 2, 6, 8). In the Cross we see the old creation

done away (2 Cor. v. 17): in our Lord's resurrection we see ourselves with Him in the *new creation*; and in that new creation we know that all things are of God (ver. 18).

IF A MAN HAS ENEMIES.

F a man has enemies, you may conclude that he is a man with a definite "ring" about him—be that ring false or true. We say "false or true," because it is wrong to conclude that a man is bad, simply because he has enemies. On the contrary, a man with enemies is fully as likely to be a good man as the person upon whom everybody is smiling. There is a kind of confederacy in evil, in which men of fleshly tastes do not much oppose each other. Birds of the vulture type do not prey on their own species. Scripture itself recognises this principle. In Prov. xxviii. 4 we read: "They that forsake the law praise the wicked" (that is, "the lawless"). The lawless have no enemies among the good, for a good man cannot be an enemy, in the true sense of the word; and we have seen that it is not in the natural order of things for fleshly men to find enemies among those of a kindred spirit. Let us therefore be cautious how we mark one down as a dangerous character, on the ground that he is a man who has enemies. David seemed to be surrounded with them (See Ps. xli. 5; 1 Sam. xxvii. 1); while Saul, a true type of fleshly power, does not seem

to have had a single personal enemy. Mephibosheth was calumniated (2 Sam. xix. 27); Joseph was persecuted, almost to death (Gen. xxxvii. 26, 27); Moses was well-nigh stoned (Ex. xvii. 4); Micaiah was smitten and imprisoned (1 Kings xxii. 27); the righteous Abel was murdered (Gen. iv. 8). What deadly enmity manifests itself in every case, although all these men were treading the path of righteousness! Yet we have no record of personal enmity towards the wicked Ahab (1 Kings xxi.)—the scheming Haman (Esth. iii.)—the envious sons of Jacob (Gen. xxxvii.)—the Ziba confederacy (2 Sam. xvi.)—the covetous Gehazi (2 Kings v. 20)—or the blood-thirsty Joab (2 Sam. xx. 10). In all these cases the persecuted one is ever the righteous one. Therefore, let us not read Old Testament history in vain. We must not condemn a man because he has enemies. At the same time, you must not mark down an honest opponent as an enemy. Straightforward opposition is quite a different thing from the tongue of calumny. You may be opposed—determinedly opposed. But do not on that account conclude that you are in the right. You may be decidedly in the wrong—good man though you are reputed to be. You must be judged on your own merits. If you are living godly in Christ Jesus, you shall suffer persecution. If you are doing the wrong thing, do not be surprised if you have to *suffer opposition*. Never confound an opponent with an enemy. A candid opponent may be your best friend.

BREAKING UP CHURCHES.

“**T**HE Brethren” (so-called) are constantly coming in for criticism of some kind. Quite recently a religious paper referred to certain of them as those who “make it their aim to break up churches and to dishonour the Christian ministry.” Now, so far as we are concerned, we have no such aim. We have never set ourselves to break up the world’s churches—never. The task would be simply hopeless, even were we to attempt it. Moreover, we have received no “call” to such a work. But there is one thing we *do* aim at, and long to see. We long to see every saint of God delivered out of the world’s places of worship. We make no secret of our longings. We have no desire to sail under false colours, and *seem to be* what we are not. We long to see the godly remnant in the world’s churches gathered right out to the rejected Lord Jesus Christ. You may reply that we will never see that. Perhaps not—in our day, that is. Yet it *shall be seen*. Even *now* we are seeing it in part. Many of God’s people, taught of Him, are finding out that he has never told them to sit and worship with the Christless worldling. And not only are they finding this out, but they are obeying the call and going forth to own the Lord Jesus Christ as the great centre of gathering for His people. We praise God for this, and our prayer is still, “O Lord, deliver Thy people.” Our Lord prayed that all His people might be one (Jno. xvii. 20, 21). We

echo that prayer. Wherein, then, lies our offence? His people cannot be one so long as they are scattered among the world’s worshippers, as they are to-day. If our Lord’s prayer (“that they all may be one”) received its complete fulfilment to-morrow, what would happen? Why, every child of God in the denominations would rise up as one man and leave! There would not be a living soul left in them all! “Terrible state of things,” some may say—“a terrible breaking up of churches.” Perhaps. But, mark you, such would simply be the effect of our Lord’s prayer being fulfilled—“that they all may be one.”

WOULD THEY BREAK UP?

SPEAKING of the “breaking up of churches” by the withdrawal of the small remnant of believers that may be there, we may say that we have but little fear of the “breaking up.” In the general run of congregations the born-again element is small indeed—so small as to make no practical difference to the *working* of the church. It often happens, too, that the revival people in the congregation are looked upon as troublers of Israel. They rebel most emphatically against the preaching of smooth things to dead, unconverted sinners. They demand that the truth be proclaimed in all its length and breadth. The clergyman feels that this is an unwarranted interference with the established order of things. As matters

stand, the clergyman has two classes in his congregation—the worldly element and the godly element: in other words, the dead and the living—the converted and the unconverted. He finds himself with a problem before him; and it is this: “How is he to preach, so as to please *both* parties? The problem is not an easy one, by any means. The congregation must be kept together—if at all possible. Yet, if he preaches conversion and the new-birth, the worldly element in his congregation will rise in rebellion; and if he preaches smooth things to meet *their* case, the revival element will reject him as a mere time-server! In these circumstances it can easily be seen that the “revival” members would not be considered a great loss to the congregation. Perhaps their disappearance would be a positive relief! It must be a painful experience for a worldly congregation to have some Elijah rising up at the most inopportune moment to protest against a church bazaar or an ungodly concert; or to hear his withering denunciation of unconverted office-bearers; not to speak of undoubted enemies of Christ being in full communion in the church! The presence and testimony of a few of these Elijahs would be far more likely to “break up” the church than their absence would be. But when, through the clever arrangement of the ecclesiastical machinery, the devoted remnant are quietly muzzled and ignored, it is surely time the question were being asked, “What doest thou here, Elijah?”

“INVISIBLE ONENESS.”

WE are sometimes told that when our Lord prayed that His people might be one, He did not refer to a *visible* oneness, but simply a oneness of heart. But we differ entirely from that view. Certainly the oneness of heart was the great thing; but it was not everything. A single reference to Jno. xvii. will make this clear, even to the superficial reader. In praying for the oneness of His people, our Lord says: “That they all may be one . . . that the world may believe” (ver. 21); “and that the world may know” (ver. 23). The oneness, you thus perceive, was to be of such a *visible* character that the world could see it, and thus be led to *know* and *believe* that Jesus was the Sent of God. Scripture thus makes it abundantly clear that the unity of Jno. xvii. is visible—so visible, that it is to be manifest even to the world itself.

NOT OVERWHELMED.

THE man of faith may have much to try him; but his faith shall never be without its reward. His faith shines out in this, that he “refuses” to be overwhelmed by calamity or disappointment. An Ahithophel, because he cannot get his own counsel carried out, may go away and hang himself (2 Sam. xvii. 23). But the child of faith calmly waits on God, assured that storms and disappointments are part of the wilderness discipline. “When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job xxiii. 10).

DEPARTED.

(On 12th June, 1889. Aged 17.)

OUR Mary's gone!—How soon our tale is told!
 Yet who shall tell what these short words unfold!
 'Neath yonder sod we know her body lies;
 And yet it seems as through these tear-dimm'd eyes
 We still were gazing on that gentle face,
 To watch its changing light—its shadows trace;
 Or bending down, as if perchance to hear
 The voice that now no longer greets our ear.

We saw her fade, as fades a radiant flower
 Whose life is touched by some mysterious power.
 And as each day we watched that lonely bed,
 And smoothed the pillow for that weary head,
 We saw her eye grow dim and lose its light,
 As softly sinks the evening into night.
 In loving arms we held our dear one there,
 Till, borne away upon the wings of prayer,
 She gently passed from all this scene of pain
 To Jesus' arms; and O to die was gain!

She knew that blessed One—His very name
 Had often soothed that weary, wasted frame;
 For she had told us of the happy night,
 When o'er her heart was shed a glorious light:
 By faith she heard the Saviour's voice so sweet,
 And found Redemption's joy at Jesus' feet.

"Meet me in Heaven," she said, "my mother dear,
 And father—brothers—sisters, standing here:
 I'm going home—the glory mansions wait;
 I'll look for you at yonder shining gate."

* * * * *

The summer sun was sinking in the west;
 'Twas eventide, when nature seeks its rest;
 "The Glen" was hush'd—no sound broke on the air;
 And strangely sweet the stillness resting there!—
 When Mary breathed on earth her latest sigh,
 And sped to realms of endless bliss on high,
 Where Heaven's fair morn with tenfold light doth shine;
 Nor death nor sickness mar that happy clime:
 Where suns ne'er set—where darkness cannot fall,
 And Christ, the fairest One, is all in all!

MAYBOLE, 17th June, 1889.

WHAT LESSON HERE?

TRIALS sweeten the promises.
 If there were no affliction,
 what need would there be for
 consolation? If we never were
 crossed, where would be the need
 of patience? It is here that blessing
 is often lost. We meet some dis-
 appointment—some Marah of bitter
 water in the wilderness; and we
 chafe under it, and think it strange
 that such a thing should happen.
 But happy for us if we at once come
 to the conclusion: "*The hand of
 God is in this.*" Many may see
 only man's hand. But the child of
 faith, looking beneath the surface,
 will see the operation of the Father's
 hand, and say, "I wonder what
 lesson the Lord would teach me in
 this?" However bitter the trial
 may be, it is designed of heaven for
 my highest profit. It may lay me
 in the dust; but, if so, I may rest
 assured that such an experience is
 needed for the humbling of pride.
 The clouds may be black; but they
 are laden with fertilising showers.
 If we would take everything as from
 the Lord, we would find afflictions,
 disappointments, buffetings, all work-
 ing for us a far more exceeding and
 eternal weight of glory. Often we
 seek into God's purposes, instead
 of bowing to His will. "What
 I do," the Master says, "thou
 knowest not now; but thou shalt
 know hereafter."

MOULDING PUBLIC OPINION.

A PROPERLY conducted paper—be it devoted to heavenly things or earthly things—is one that seeks to *mould* public opinion. There are many papers, however, that simply seek to *follow* public opinion. They see what the people want, and they speak accordingly. It is the same with preachers and teachers. The popular man is he who can see what the people want, even before they know that themselves. He forecasts the future for a few months—he makes a tolerably correct estimate of how the stream of public opinion is going to run; and then he preaches the very thing which he sees the people are bent upon having. With the man of God it is vastly different; for “he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God;” and we know that *God’s words* do not change to suit the changing times. The man of God is a distinct *moulder* of public opinion. He cares not what people may like. He declares what God has spoken. People may make up their minds not to have God’s way of things. Yet the man of God does not alter his course. He does not throw aside his mould—the imperishable record of eternal truth. He has no cause to plead: his cause is God’s. Men may reject the message. But the ambassador loses nothing—except it be the smile of popular approval; and that is nothing, if he be conscious that he is doing the will of God, and seeking with singleness of eye, to please the Lord Christ.

JOTTINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

“**R**EJOICE in the Lord” (chap. iii.). Wondrous resource for him that had the care of all the churches, as well as for them of Philippi, to whom he declared that, to write the same things was not irksome, while for them it was safe. Surely if such writing were safe for them, it can be no less safe for us! The swoop from verse one to verse two is most awe-inspiring—the height and depth of which are well fitted to bring about no confidence in flesh and all confidence in the Lord. Read carefully from, “Rejoice in the Lord,” down to a threefold call to “Beware”! This, too, because for you “*it is safe.*” But what if we heed not the call in its twofold direction of “Rejoice” and “Beware”? The Rejoicing in the Lord comes in again at chap. iv. 4, unto which we leave our jottings on this and proceed in chap. iii.

Beware of the dogs, then. These are commonly to be found without. The safety of churches lies in being aware of the dogs because they are dogs. Beware of *bad workmen*. These, alas, are often found within. A good man may be a bad workman. Churches of God to-day seem slow to awake out of sleep in this particular, by which cause Satan brings about a very Helkath-hazzurim time (2 Sam. ii. 12–16), where peace and life should otherwise prevail and be manifested. Moreover, these “bad workmen” are such because of a

wrong using of right material—even a wrong-dividing of the word of truth. Lo! what a clamour of voices there is to-day! and with the sound, O! what discord! Surely we may yet cry amid our tears, in hope that God may pity (2 Sam. xvi. 9-12).

Then last, though not least, we are called to "Beware of the Concision." These are the *opposite* of the Circumcision. The Concision trim and pare—that which to flesh is not painful, while to fleshly eye it is attractive. The Circumcision neither trim nor pare, but cut *in* and *around* UNTIL the severance is clean and complete. The Concision walk in the way of the mind of the flesh. The Circumcision walk in the way of the Spirit. These are illustrated in Ex. viii. 25-28; x. 7-11, also ver. 24-26. And, after all, we are the Circumcision (even the severed-off ones) who, by the Spirit of God worship, and in Christ Jesus boast, while we deny all flesh our confidence. The word translated "worship" here, is used in the Scriptures to express not so much what is commonly told out in the word "worship"—namely, "a giving to God;"—but rather, *obedience* to the *whole*, as contrasted with obedience to a *part*, of the will of God concerning us. Perhaps Matt. iv. 10 is as simple and striking a Scripture as we have at hand to set forth this interesting difference. "Thou shalt worship" (that is, give to) "the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou *serve*,"—the word *serve* being the same word as that in Phil. iii. 2 translated *worship*. See also Heb. ix. 14: "to

serve the living God." We may further jot that the rejoicing or boasting which is the idea in this word *rejoice* of verse 3, is not in the service, nor in the effects thereof, far less in ourselves as the workers. It is in Christ Jesus alone, to the exclusion of all confidence in flesh, whether it be that of ourselves or of others. And this becometh us, for all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of it as the flower of grass. The one withereth, and the other falleth away. Whereas, "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
J. B.

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"ONE HOUR IN THE GOLDEN
SUNLIGHT."

HE was a plain, simple brother, and knew but little of the great "lines of truth." But he was evidently being taught of God. No sooner had he been converted than he came clear out to the rejected Lord Jesus Christ, and confessed His name by word and by life. He called to see me one night; and in the course of conversation remarked that he was bless'd with wonderful manifestations of the Lord's presence. "I have had to pass through deep waters," he said; "but *the Strong Man* is with me; and He can do with *the other man* as He pleases." I was refreshed to behold such simplicity of faith. Here was one with only a meagre knowledge of truth: yet he was well acquainted with "the Strong Man;" and, as he said himself, "*that's everything.*" He knew that "the other man" was powerless in the presence of the Holy One of God. "I have the Master very near," he continued; "I had Him for an hour there—*one hour in the golden sunlight!*"

I felt that God was speaking to me. I have listened to eloquent speakers and

to great addresses. But the words of that simple brother had a power and an eloquence that, to me at least, had never been excelled on the platform. He spoke as if he were glad to meet with one who could lead him a little further on in the path of truth. But I felt that *he* was the "minister" on this occasion, and that I was the one who was being ministered unto. So I let him speak on. He had no idea that he was preaching to me. But his message went all the surer home on that account; for testimony has never a more powerful effect than when it makes no pretensions. My simple-minded brother made no effort to produce an effect. He toiled not, neither did he spin, to leave an impression. Yet an impression was left, although he knew it not. He seemed like one who was *thinking* aloud; and his words were the undoubted expression of what was really going on in his heart.

"One hour in the golden sunlight!" What high, poetic imagery is there! How did he select such chaste and beautiful words to tell where he had been that day? There was no selection. The untutored eloquence of love taught him what to say. Love has rarely a stammering tongue. Hypocrisy and

dissimulation may fence about with hesitating speech, as if fearing in an unguarded moment to reveal their true character. But love has no assumed character to keep up. A stranger to what men call "policy," she scorns alike the artificial stiffness of unreality and the honied sweetness of flattery. When love speaks, you feel certain that the words are simply telling out what is going on in the heart; for love cannot behave herself unseemly. She may use the most striking figures of speech—she may make professions of the highest allegiance—she may speak of her Beloved as "the chiefest among ten thousand." Yet you feel there is no exaggeration. Yea, perhaps the half hath not been told, even when some loving heart tells of being "one hour in the golden sunlight"!

SUSPICIOUS OF EXPERIENCES.

SOME believers look with suspicion on the brother who has an experience and dares to say anything about it. They look upon experiences as mere sentimentality if not bordering on hypocrisy. They do not want to hear a word about *communion experienced*. They are quite agreeable to have it expounded, and preached about, and set forth as a theological theory. But whenever some brother stands forth and says, "I know what that is; for I have tasted it," at once their suspicions are aroused. It does all very well to *sing*; "O the pure delight of a single hour," &c.

But you must not *say* anything about that hour! Now, we differ entirely from these believers. We rejoice when we hear—not the voice of hypocrisy, but the voice of reality, saying: "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." And we do not think it is a very hard matter to distinguish between reality and hypocrisy. The true brother is real "all round." You find him even, and consistent, and simple, and child-like. But the hypocrite is made up of angularities and inconsistencies. You find him straining out the gnat to-day, and swallowing down the camel to-morrow. His "whine" is not ill to detect; and the telling of his experiences is truly a weariness of the flesh, so far as his hearers are concerned. But all tellers of experience must not be marked down in the same catalogue. There is many a simple heart that *must* tell out the Lord's goodness—that *must* testify to the blessedness of communion; simply in obedience to the law that an inward fire must find an outlet or damage the vessel. We all know that in the hour of sorrow the vessel would almost break, if we could not find some sympathetic ear in which to breathe our trials. It need not, then, be surprising if in the hour of holy joy—in seasons of special communion—we should long to speak of the goodness of the Lord. Yea, there are such seasons when we do not well to hold our peace.

THEY are free from restlessness who find their rest in God.

PUTTING THE DAMPER ON.

A PREACHER once asked a young brother to help with the Gospel meeting one Lord's-day night. The "helper" spoke first; and to such purpose that a distinct impression was left on the people. Indeed, it was too distinct for the elderly brother who was in charge of the meeting. Instead of rejoicing that the word was with power, he made it manifest that *he* was not at all pleased. He followed with prayer; but it was not a prayer for blessing on the word preached. "We would remember, O Lord," he said, "that eloquence has no weight with Thee. The word may be preached with great plainness and much seeming power. But Thou hast said, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord.'" In plain words, he grudged to see the interest that had been aroused; and his prayer was just a round-about way of telling the audience to pay no attention to that young man's plain-speaking! Truly envy is a rottenness of the bones! Under its withering inspiration, men cannot bear to see another's testimony carrying conviction to sinners' hearts; and under the hypocritical guise of praying to the Lord Almighty, they must needs point out that the brother's power was not from above! They seem to be afraid lest some one should believe the message! They therefore proceed to "set things right," as they would call it; the result being that a damper is put upon the whole meeting!

WITNESSES AGREEING.

FROM what we have just said about one brother depreciating another's preaching, it is clearly desirable that preachers on the same platform should enjoy each other's confidence. When this is the case—where happy fellowship exists—each is found rejoicing to hear the Master's voice through his brother. Love not only casts out fear, but it expels envy and suspicion, and all of that kindred. Whether it be a Gospel meeting or a believers' meeting, nothing has a more salutary influence on the people than a cordial agreement between the "witnesses" who bear testimony. In the mouth of even two such witnesses, every word has some chance of being established. But if one stands up to throw suspicion on what another has said, the effect can be neither good nor pleasant.

THE TEST APPLIED.

GIDEON'S army underwent a wonderful "riddling" ere it was ready to fight the Lord's battle. He set out with 32,000 men. After opportunity had been given to the faint-hearted to return home, his company of fighting men numbered only 10,000. But even this 10,000 must undergo a further reduction. So far as profession went, they were ready to do valiantly for Jehovah. But He who trieth the reins knew the material with which He

had to deal. In all that mass of profession the Lord saw that there was only a small remnant upon which He could depend. "Bring them down unto the water," He said unto Gideon, "and I will try them for thee there" (Jud. vii. 4). A testing time was at hand. "The water" would try them. Down the people came. Those who were in no great hurry for the battle of the Lord, took it leisurely, and went down on their knees to drink. But the men who were truly on the Lord's side had no time to get down on their knees to drink. A little sip would suffice—caught in the hand as they passed on their way. The number of the men who thus "lapped" was only three hundred. Yet that was the company chosen of God to go forth to battle with Midian. The Lord made it manifest who were His chosen vessels. The remaining 9,700 were sent home, every man to his tent; and by the 300 tested ones the Lord wrought a great victory in Israel.

It is clear from the overthrow of the Midianites that the God of Heaven is not dependent upon numbers. One of the world's great military men has said that God is always on the side of big battalions. But Scripture does not say so. On the contrary, it pours contempt upon the arm of flesh and its big battalions. There may be only three hundred men to meet the host of Midian and Amalek, and all the children of the East—like the sand by the sea-side for multitude. But *God* is with the three hundred; and all is well. We are living

in a day when numbers are boasted in, and pointed to as an evidence of strength and prosperity. But let some "water" be reached—let some testing time come, by which the Lord proves those who are truly for Him; and lo! what a sifting there would be! Perhaps we would witness as serious a reduction in numbers as Gideon saw that day when he brought his army to the testing place. The test was a very simple one—the mere taking of a drink of water. But to the observing eye it is the "small things" that tell where the heart is set. People who are merely keeping up a decent profession of Christianity are generally watchful enough in the great things. It is in the small things that they are found off their guard. Their true character leaks out ere they are well aware of it—perhaps unknown to themselves, like Judas when he protested against the waste of ointment on the plea that it might have been sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor (!).

If the Lord gives prosperity in numbers *and in power*, let us praise Him. But if power is on the wane while numbers are increasing, we shall have reason to be thankful if the Lord bring us to some water—some river of death to the flesh—where He shall try us; and make manifest whether we really are what we profess to be.

—♦—♦—♦—

GOD'S ministers seek not to bring or keep souls to themselves, but to lead them to God. This is the test of service. Does it lead to God, or take the place of God?

NO LIGHT WORK.

IT is no light work to be out as an evangelist for God. A great deal—often too much—is expected from one who thus goes forth to be spent in preaching Christ. He is, generally speaking, expected to have as much life about him as will set everybody in motion. He is supposed to be a man of so much fire that the Lord's people will be in a blaze a few days after his arrival. Faith may be at a low ebb among the saints—no one looking for the Lord to work. Yet the evangelist must be strong in faith, giving glory to God. He has not only to do the preaching, but he has often to do the believing for the whole company. Everything falls upon him. If the effort is not a success he will very likely come in for a good share of the blame. If the effort is successful—a great work done—he is in danger of being killed with flattery. Sometimes he is toiling in the trough of the sea of despondency: at other times he is on the crest of the wave of success. Happy for him if in these diverse circumstances he seeks divine grace to reach the desired haven of self-abasement—the true preparation for launching out again into the deep. When we consider the cares and anxieties and tossings to and fro, incident to the work of an evangelist, we cannot say that his work is the “easy job” that some represent it to be.

How slow we are to see in the furnace of affliction the tokens of a present God!

MORE GRACE NEEDED NOW.

ONE of the Lord's labourers said to us lately: “I need far more grace to maintain communion *now* than when I was working at my earthly calling.” In other words, when a man gives up his secular occupation, and goes forth to do nothing but preach Christ, he finds that he must have *special grace* for that work. In all likelihood he will be assailed with greater temptations than ever he has met before. Therefore he must have supplies of grace such as he has never had before. There is a common idea that brethren who do nothing but preach, must find it a very easy thing to tread the path of communion. But there could not be a greater mistake. They are exposed to many special dangers. They at once find themselves with a deal of time on their hands. What are they to do with it? If it is not used for God they will very soon be at ease in Zion. If it is not filled up for God, the great enemy will very soon *fill up the blank!* Then there is the tendency to listen to gossip—to give ear to evil-speaking, and take a side in some church controversy. Besides all this, there is the tendency to be puffed up with the dignity of being in “the ministry.” Wherever the evangelist goes he is received as “a prince and a great man in Israel.” He is treated as a person of very special importance; and all eyes are towards him. Many a labourer has been swept off his feet by this consciousness of his own importance. It is only a

special supply of "the grace of humility" that can keep God's servant in the low place in such circumstances. Little wonder, then, if special grace is needed by those who go forth to the special work of preaching Christ—be it to saint or sinner.

ANTICIPATED TROUBLES.

T has been said that our heaviest troubles are troubles in anticipation—troubles that we see, or fancy we see, looming up in the distance. Often they never come; and those that do come are frequently found not to be so overwhelming after all. When trouble comes to the child of faith, there also comes grace for trouble's day. But grace is not given in advance. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deut. xxxiii. 25). We never get strength to-day to bear to-morrow's burden. A brother once said, "I never cross a mountain until I come to it." Yet how often we cross and re-cross our troubles before they have reached us; to discover afterwards that a little faith in God would have saved us a world of fruitless anxiety. There was great concern as to who would roll away the stone (Mark xvi. 3). But when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away! Thus the Lord is ever coming in to the help of His elect in their wilderness journey. To our impatient hearts His coming may often seem delayed. But let us be assured of this, that He is *never behind His time*.

"IF HE HAD A BEGINNING."




T is about the oldest thing I remember. I was a little boy running about with my hoop at the time. But I suddenly ceased my fun to consider rather a strange question for one of tender years—"How can God be eternal?" I ran the eye of my imagination back through centuries of time; but I could not reach *the beginning!* Then I took another sweep over cycles of ages, into the dim distance of the past eternity. But still I could not find *the beginning!* I felt certain I would reach the beginning, if I could only *go far enough back.* To have the question settled, I went into the shop, where my uncle's foreman painter, an old man, was at work. "Jamie," I said, "I cannot understand how God had no beginning." "O well," he replied, "*if He had* a beginning, who was it that *began Him?*" The old man's answer set every doubt at rest. That was my first and last question as to the eternity of God. I saw at a glance that He was eternal, and that it could not be otherwise. *If He had a beginning, then who created Him?* I saw at once that this would lead to an endless tracing up to find a "first cause;" and that the great First Cause must be eternal. Having expressed myself satisfied with Jamie's reply, I resumed my play; and from that day to this I have never had the slightest difficulty with the question, "Is God eternal?"

REDEMPTION truth is often attended with a certain degree of popularity. It is different with *crucifixion* truth. Many rejoice to hear that Christ died for them; but they do not care to be told that they have died with Christ. It is easier to say "Christ is mine," than to say "I am Christ's."

THE ABSALOM REBELLION.

Second Paper.

 seemed no easy matter to awaken David out of his sinful sleep. He was rapidly going from bad to worse. Each stage of departure was deeper than the one that had gone before; for backsliding, like the grave (Prov. xxx. 16), never says, "It is enough." One step in departure from the Lord is sure to lead to another and a worse step. Yea, one step is used as an excuse and justification for the next step. All was going smoothly in the carrying out of David's will concerning Uriah's wife. But one man stood in the way; and that was none other than Uriah himself. What if he would return from the war? David resolved that Uriah should never return! Terrible passage in David's history! Yet we cannot pass it over. The great Historian has left it on record. When we see even a David lending himself to such terrible iniquity in order to carry out the desires of the flesh, what heart-searching it is fitted to work in us! How needful the warning to avoid *the appearing of the bud* of evil; and to hate even the garment spotted by the flesh!

Uriah must be got out of the way. And yet that delicate matter must be managed in such a way as to arouse no one's suspicions. David must have an accomplice in this deed of blood. In Joab, the captain of the host, he finds the very man who shall suit his purpose. Time had been when the king groaned over Joab. "These men, the sons of

Zeruiah," he said, "be too hard for me" (2 Sam. iii. 39). But Joab is none too hard now. He is the very man for the occasion; and he is at hand. It is remarkable how many helps are at hand if you are treading a downward path. If a Jonah is fleeing from the presence of the Lord, he finds a ship waiting to sail for Tarshish (Jonah i. 3). The Jews, thirsting for the blood of the Son of God, find a Judas ready to betray Him; and David, bent on Uriah's destruction, finds a Joab prepared to carry out the work without a single qualm of conscience. We sometimes sing of "the hindrances we meet, in coming to the Mercy Seat." But, in departure from God, the hindrances are few indeed. Ships are ever ready to sail for Tarshish; and Joabs are ever at hand to be confederates in evil.

David writes the fatal letter to Joab; sending it by the hand of the very man whose life it devoted to destruction! (2 Sam. xi. 14). But who shall tell how that letter weakened David's hands in dealing with Joab's crimes in a later day! The wickedness of his captain ere long cried aloud for vengeance. But how could David take up the sword of judgment against the man who held that fatal letter, and had carried out the plot against Uriah's life? Little wonder that his arm was paralysed. And, alas, it is to be feared that there are many paralysed arms among the saints of God to-day—arms that, it may be, at one time could take up the sword of truth and hew Agag in pieces. But it is different now.

Agag escapes. The flesh is spared. Joab walks at large, unjudged as an evil-doer—yea, acknowledged as a great man in Israel; until some Solomon arises, before whom he shall surely begin to fall (Compare 1 Kings ii. 5; Esth. vi. 13).

The deed of blood was accomplished, and word was duly sent to David that Uriah was no more. None, save the two who were in the dread secret, would know anything about it; for "the sword devoureth one as well as another" (2 Sam. xi. 25). David would breathe freely. He had nothing to fear from the arm of flesh. But he had not reckoned upon the arm of heavenly retribution. In favour with heaven although he was, he had yet to learn that the Lord will *judge His people*. Let no one think that because he is a child of God he can therefore sin and yet escape the judgment of heaven. On the contrary, he who sins against light has a greater responsibility than the man who has never known what the light of God is.

Although not always the case, it yet often happens that a man rolling iniquity under his tongue as a sweet morsel, will be most eager and merciless in his judgment of others. David furnishes us with a striking example of this. The prophet is sent to him with the message of judgment. The story of the little ewe lamb is told, and all that the rich man had done. "And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die" (2 Sam. xii. 5). How

indulgent we are to our own flesh!—how furiously we come down upon the sins of others! How true it is that it is only they who are applying the sword of self-judgment to their own ways that can rightly deal with the sins of another. But the time had come when David must be brought face-to-face with his iniquity. The deception could go on no longer. If he was deceived himself by a hardened conscience, he must be undeceived. "And Nathan said to David, *Thou art the man!*"

THE BITTER WATERS.

NO sooner were Israel delivered from the power of Pharaoh, than their joy was turned into sorrow. For three days they could find no water. And when they found it, they could not drink, it was so bitter. This led to murmuring. Then the Lord directs Moses to the healing tree—beautiful type of the Cross, that sweetens all our troubles. In due time Elim is reached, with its twelve wells of water and three-score and ten palm trees. The bitter waters are now forgotten; and all is seen to have been of God. Our wilderness experience is very much what we make it. If we receive bitter and sweet, as alike coming from the hand of God, we shall find Elims all along the way.

W. G. S.

THEY seek in vain to live for God, who will not die to their own self-will.

THE EYE OF FAITH.

THE great difference between the world and the believer is this:

The believer *sees* what the worldling does not see. *Faith* makes all the difference; or the *eye of faith*, which is the same thing. "We see Jesus," as saith Heb. ii. 9. The world sees Him not. The last the world saw of Christ was on the Cross. They never saw Him again! The world knows Jesus only as one who is dead, and whom Paul and others declare to be alive (See Acts xxv. 19). But the world has never seen Jesus in resurrection. After He rose from the dead, we know that He continued with His own for forty days. But during all that time He was *invisible* to the unconverted! Not one of them beheld the Risen Jesus. They went after their business the same as if He were not here; and when He ascended they never missed Him! The world is just the same to-day as it was then. The world knows not—sees not—the Risen Son of God. Therefore the worldling finds, or seeks to find, his paradise here. He knows no better. He has never beheld a fairer scene. He has never tasted a sweeter, purer joy. But the child of faith has found a richer treasure, and has beheld a fairer scene. "Sweeter sounds than music knows have charmed him in Emmanuel's name." It is simply a matter of comparison. The child of faith puts the world into one scale, and an eternal weight of glory into the other scale, and then writes over the earthly

glory, "*Not worthy to be compared.*" The worldling, on the other hand, has no eternal weight of glory with which to make a comparison, and finds his all below.

"HOW SHALL WE DO?"

WHEN Elisha, in Dothan, was surrounded by the Syrian army, his servant was in great fear. An host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. There seemed to be no escape. "Alas, my master!" he said, "how shall we do?" (2 Kings vi. 15). But the prophet was calm and unmoved. Why was this?—for a reason there must be. Elisha was composed, because he *saw* something that his servant did not see. "And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." What a wonderful difference it makes—a little peep into the great unseen! The young man feared no more. If we just had our eyes open to the things unseen, how lightly we would esteem much that now makes a fair show in the flesh! The Syrian horses and chariots may make a great noise and an imposing appearance; but the man of God sees another host there which the Syrians do not see. Elisha's servant may tremble. But he only needs his eyes opened to bring about a great change of mind. And that is all that we need, too.

THE OUTER COURT.

IN times of spiritual declension Christ gradually disappears, whether it be in the conversation of believers, or in the public ministry of the word. Ministry goes on: there is as much of it as ever—perhaps more than ever. But it occupies itself with “the outer court of the temple.” If Christ is seen at all, it is at a great distance. Reasonings and speculations take the place of “healthful teaching;” and when this is so, Christ becomes a stranger in Jerusalem (See Lu. xxiv. 18).

But let the tide rise—let the mists be rolled away—let a revival time come; and Jesus at once takes (or rather, *gets*) the highest station. Ministering brethren then find that outer-court teaching will not meet the need of longing hearts. “Greeks” (Jno. xii. 21) are now heard crying, “Sir, we would see Jesus.” Mary is found refusing to be comforted, unless she sees her Lord. The cold, distant ministry of the outer court will no longer avail. The inner court is therefore boldly entered, and the beauties of Christ are unfolded to the expectant hearts of a people whose highest desire is only to *know Him*. Jesus is now the theme. Hearts are burning again; and every one is wondering why He was not the theme all the time!

WHILE we pray for the oneness of believers here, let us praise God that division shall not be for ever. All His people shall hear His voice at last.

CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THEY make a serious mistake who suppose that Christ is only to be found in the New Testament. During His journey to Emmaus with the two disciples (Luke xxiv. 27), we read that “beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things *concerning Himself*.” The Old Testament is full of Christ, if we only had the eyes to perceive Him there. The two disciples were simply entranced by such a wonderful opening up of the Scriptures; for we find them afterward declaring, “Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way?” (ver. 32). Why did their heart burn? *Because they beheld Christ in the sacred page*. Mark you, they had not yet recognised Him in person, their eyes being “holden, that they should not know Him” (ver. 16). But they beheld Him as revealed in the Old-Testament Scriptures, and they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. This must ever be so, when Christ is unfolded to the eye of faith.

If there were more real pointing to the person of Christ, there would be more burning hearts. The true minister will make it his chief business to *unfold Christ*, whether in Old or New Testament Scriptures; and true disciples will ever be “glad” when they see the Lord (Jno. xx. 20).

THERE can be no excuse for disobedience; God's *biddings* are *enablings*.

CALM AND BRIGHT.

FATHER, life's angry waves are rolling high,
I fail to realise Thee always nigh,
The clouds of earth oft hide from me Thy
And oft Thy loving hand I cannot trace. [face,

At times it seems so hard indeed to see
That Thou art guiding, caring still for me ;
Rough is my path, and stormy is my way,
And yet it leads to everlasting day.

Father, support Thy child—Thy trembling one,
And keep me by Thy power till life is done ;
Though oft I come with heart oppress'd to Thee,
May I ne'er doubt Thy changeless love to me.

Is it not calmer, brighter, on before?—
O is there not some quiet and peaceful shore ?
Yes, there is waiting now for me above,
A Heav'n of rest—my Father's home of love.

* * * * *

Father, life's waves are rolling high no more ;
'Tis calm and bright ; the storms for me are o'er :
Thy loving hand was guiding all the way,
And midnight darkness Thou hast turned to day.

And now it is no longer hard to see
That every moment Thou didst care for me :
Each trying hour, 'mid all that caused me pain,
I know Thy presence did my heart sustain.

I praise Thee for the faith, while sad and lone,
That brought me helpless, sorr'wing to Thy
throne ;

For e'en on earth I know that Thou hast giv'n
Each child of faith a sweet foretaste of Heav'n.

And then a "Rest" remaineth—glad and free,
Where I shall gaze on Him who died for me.
The crown He gives, I'll cast it at His feet,
And oft the story of His grace repeat.

E. J. I.

WHEN a child of God takes an unbelieving
step, and God suffers it to succeed, this is one
of the sharpest corrections he can be visited
with (2 Chron. xvi. 2—9).

TESTIMONY IN THE WILDERNESS.

JOHAN the Baptist, as we learn
from Jno. i. 6, was "a man sent
from God ;" and we believe this
is true of all ministers of Christ. Although
he exercised his ministry *in the wilder-
ness*, many went *out to him*, and were
baptised of him in the Jordan, confessing
their sins. We learn here that when a
man is a burning and a shining light for
God, and bears a message from Heaven,
he will find people even in the wilderness,
whose hearts the Lord has prepared for
the word.

W. G. S.

GOD IS FAITHFUL.

JAN waiting on the Lord that morning"
(said old Captain C——), "I was
praying for my boy, who was far off
on the sea, unsaved. I was conscious that
the Lord was hearing prayer ; and the
message I seemed to get back was this :
'According to your faith be it unto you'
(Matt. ix. 29). My heart had just been
cheered by the exceeding great and precious
promises of God, when the telegraph boy
came over the ship's side and handed me a
red envelope. I feared that something had
happened ; for I saw it was a telegram. But
I knew that God was over all, and He was
faithful. The message contained only six
words : 'Ship *founded—everything lost—all
saved.*' 'Praise God!' I exclaimed, 'it
matters little about the goods : my boy will
have *another chance.*'"

THEY who seek forbidden streams, virtually say
that Jesus has *not* satisfied.

UNTIL HE IS TRIED.

YOU cannot very well tell what grace a man possesses until he is *tried*. Some believers pass through life with not much to try them. Circumstances are favourable, and they are thrown but little in the way of temptation. It is comparatively easy for them to tread a virtuous path; for, the less temptation there is to step aside, the less "merit" there is in keeping the straight path.

Others, again, seem to have been chosen in the furnace of affliction. They have had to wage a fierce conflict with temptation, or fight, it may be, a weary battle with hostile circumstances—constraining them to cry out, like one of old, "All these things are against me" (Gen. xlii. 36). If you or I had been tested in the same way, could we have borne the strain? With that question before us, we do well to remember the injunction, "Be not high-minded, but fear." We are debtors to grace, even for the favourable circumstances that may attend our lot. You may be looking down upon some brother who is now "without a testimony." But perhaps you would at this moment have been in his condition if you had been called to pass through his fire! "Then," you say, "is he to be justified?" No, we answer: nothing can justify sin. There is no excuse for our "giving up in despair," while grace is abounding. We simply wish to point out that not one of us has room to boast. We are called to rejoice—but it is "with

trembling" (Ps. ii. 11). It only needs a little of *the fire* to let us know our frailty.

THE TEMPTATION OF PROSPERITY.

YOU may be praising God that you have been mercifully delivered from the fires of fleshly temptation. But, if you only knew it, you may have reason to praise God for deliverance from *great earthly prosperity!* Such prosperity has proved as withering to many a child of God as any fleshly attraction could have been. There can be no doubt that many a saint is enjoying a measure of communion to-day, which would not have been his if he had been exposed to the temptation of overflowing barns. The Lord sees what we have grace to bear, and mercifully shields many of us from the temptation of having too much of this world's goods. We may not thank Him very heartily for it now. But the day is coming when we shall praise Him for what He has withheld, no less than for what He has bestowed. You will find cases in which the believer with increasing earthly prosperity yet keeps an undimmed light burning for God. But in the present age it is to be feared that such cases are not the rule. Nor is the temptation to Mammon-worship anything the less, although its victims loudly declare that earthly prosperity is to them no temptation whatever! He is twice snared who is in the toils and knows it not.

JOTTINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

“**N**O confidence,” and “all confidence,” with the consequent result of *Loss* and *Gain*, are the chief points dealt with in chap. iii. 4-8.

Paul might also have had confidence in flesh. Indeed, if any other thinketh he hath whereof he might have confidence in flesh, let such know that Paul had more.

What an attractive yet deceiving and vain form flesh can take! What an opening of the eye of the heart by God Himself must be necessary unto refusing all confidence to the flesh when found or possessed in such a form! Circumcised in the right time; of the stock of Israel (Remember Romans ix. 4, 5 in this connection); of the tribe of Benjamin, which had a goodly heritage (See Genesis xlix. 27, and Deut. xxxiii. 12); an Hebrew out of Hebrews. Truly a wonderful pedigree, and yet only LOSS where retained instead of Christ, or even with Christ. Concerning the Law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, behold its vehemence—“Persecuting the Church,” as to which compare Galatians i. 13, 14. Then last, though not least, regarding the righteousness in Law, blameless. All these, once *gain*, now accounted loss for Christ. Yea, and everything is reckoned as but loss, excepting such as gave the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, for whom he suffered the loss of all; and this too, be it marked, apart from regret. These still he

accounted as but *offal*, that is, dog's-meat, as this word “dung” simply means. How intensified this makes the warning, “Beware of the dogs”!

Moreover, the Apostle so exercised himself, lest he might be hindered from *gaining* Christ, or be kept from *being found* in Him without his own righteousness which was of Law. Rather did he seek to be found in Christ Jesus his Lord, having the righteousness which is by faith of Christ, for He is the object of the believing heart's trust; which righteousness is also out of God, for He is its blessed source; while the channel thereof is upon the Faith—climaxed by the quickening of the Spirit of truth, who also is the Holy Spirit of promise. We thus have the worthlessness of man's righteousness, which is of the Law (and the Law is not of faith!) set over against the righteousness which is possible to man from God, through the Word, by faith of Jesus Christ, regarding which the

Description by Moses

in Rom. x. 5, and the

Description by David

in Rom. iv. 6-8, with much profit may be compared. Having seen by verse 8 *how* Christ is *gained*, and from verse 9 *how*, when gained, one should seek to be *found* in Him; now in verse 10 we learn the necessity of that gaining and finding unto *knowing* Him, and (knowing) the power of His resurrection, and (knowing) the fellowship of His sufferings; all the while being made conformable to His death, and this, if peradventure one may come unto the OUT-RESURRECTION

from among dead ones. *This* out-resurrection is an out-one because it is not within the range of resurrection common to the purposes of God unto the dead in their graves. J. B.

TWO KINDS OF POWER.

THERE is a clear difference between *moral power* and *spiritual power*. Many a man wields a moral power over his fellows, while he is utterly destitute of what is known as spiritual power. Moral power is simply the power of mind over mind: spiritual power is the power of God manifested through some human channel, and acting upon the heart, whether it be of saint or sinner. Many an unconverted preacher wields a wonderful power over his hearers. The people acknowledge him—cling to him—rejoice under his ministry. Undoubtedly he has a certain power; but it is only the power of mind over mind. Some may be inclined to look upon it as spiritual power. But there is no need to come to such a conclusion. Unregenerate men are not the chosen channels of power from on high.

But we will go further. Even in the case of a converted preacher, his power over others may be moral rather than spiritual. It all depends on the condition of his own heart. A child of God is not at all times a child of faith. In his service he may put such confidence in carnal weapons and eloquent preaching, that he is utterly bereft of spiritual power.

Power, of a kind, there may be. Yea, superficial observers will likely be heard exclaiming, as in the case of Simon Magus, "This man is the great power of God" (Acts viii. 10). But he that is spiritual shall discern whether the power is from on high, or merely the effect of a superior intellect and a fluent tongue. We occasionally hear it said: "He is a brother of great influence." This, however, may mean very little when weighed in the balances of the sanctuary. To what does he owe his influence? Is it to the fact that he is a spiritual man? Or is his influence due to his reasoning power and his social position? In the matter of "influence," the coming Day will doubtless declare that many that are first shall be last, and the last first. In God's sight our power with man is the exact measure of our power with God.

SPIRITUALLY-MINDED RULERS.

WE must remember that it is not always the most spiritual men that take the most prominent position among God's people. You see certain brethren who seem to be pillars. They take the leading part in everything; and you naturally ask the question, "Are these brethren men of God?—of good report, and men whose example you would be safe to follow?" If you get a clear and decided "Yes," then we can only say, "Happy is the people that is in such a case." But if the answer is a decided "No," then there is something

seriously wrong. Fleshly-minded men are wofully out of their place in assuming the leadership of God's saints. What is needed is, for some godly brother or brethren to be faithful witnesses in the matter, and to say graciously yet firmly, "We will not have you to reign over us." There can be no doubt that many a ruler among God's people owes his position to what the world calls "cheek." He has *pushed* his way in. While others were questioning their own worthiness, he boldly rushed to the helm of affairs, without a single misgiving as to his own qualifications. "Is he a spiritually-minded man?" may be asked. "O no," is the reply; "on the contrary the saints are groaning over his fleshly ways, and praying that the Lord will put him in his true place!" To this we say, "Pray on." But perhaps more than prayer is needed. We know a company of believers who, after waiting on God, had to give their united testimony against a professed leader, before he would desist from inflicting his rule upon the saints. The path in this matter is clear. If your rulers are men of God, be thankful. Strengthen their hands, and acknowledge them as undoubted gifts of Heaven. But if fleshly men have seized the reins of power, let the godly in Israel take the matter into the presence of the Lord, and then calmly testify to "Samuel's sons" that they do not bear the marks of heaven-sent rulers. This may be hard for some to do. But it will not be a very hard matter for those who are walking in the presence of God.

BEHAVETH NOT UNSEEMLY.

IN regard to worldly-conformity it may sometimes be difficult for the believer to draw the line, and find chapter and verse telling him to go "thus far and no farther." But there is one principle which, even by itself, will keep him from acting in such a way as to cause others to stumble over him. That is the pinciple of *love*. We are expressly told that love "doth not behave itself unseemly" (1 Cor. xiii. 5). In a day of increasing worldliness it is well to remember this. There are many believers who, though not "mighty in the Scriptures," are yet great in love; and their manner of life takes its colouring from the atmosphere in which they dwell. Love teaches them not only to please the Lord Christ, but to consider the consciences of their brethren, and the evil effects that may result from setting a bad example. Many say: "I'll do as I like." But love never says this. Love ever plans for its beloved; and we know that "love edifieth" (1 Cor. viii. 1). But where love is on the wane, there will be unseemly behaviour; because *self-seeking* will then come in, whether in conformity to the world or in conformity to something equally bad. While others may be hunting up a salve for the conscience in some doubtful thing, love will, in a Mordecai spirit, be seeking the true wealth of the saints, and speaking peace to all the heavenly seed. Therefore let us provoke, not to worldly-conformity, but *to love*.

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Vol. IV.

ONE BESETTING SIN.


“**I**F I could just overcome this one besetting sin, I believe I could dwell in the atmosphere of perpetual communion.” To this we would reply that it is questionable—very questionable. Many have succeeded in overcoming one besetting sin, only to be assailed by some more subtle temptation. Some have escaped the rocks of sensual indulgence, only to be engulfed in the quicksands of self-complacency and spiritual pride; while others, elated with their victory over a peculiar besetment, have settled down upon their lees, and lost all appetite for the things of God. Their last state is, if anything, worse than the first. Once upon a time they were doing battle with temptation, and earnestly seeking the aids of heavenly power to help them in the evil hour. But now they seem to be satisfied with their condition. No more “earnest seeking” now. The thought suggests itself to them that they are not so dependent upon God now as once they were; and they accordingly act upon this suggestion! We have heard of a believer waking up to find that, after overcoming certain inward corruptions, he had scarce

any desire whatever for heavenly communion! What was the cause? It was due to this, that he had “settled down” after his victory. He fancied that he did not need the Lord so much as he used to do. Jericho had been taken: and a mere fraction of the besieging force was considered sufficient for Ai (See Josh. vii. 3). But that believer was left to discover his own weakness. He soon found himself confronted by a new enemy, viz., ease in Zion—scarce any desire whatever for the things of Heaven! “O God,” he cried, “give me back the storm of temptation, sustained by Thy grace, rather than this death-like calm; for Thou art not here!”

At the same time, we are convinced that it is the will of God we should neither be the servants of sensual appetite, nor the victims of that deadly indifference so rife in this evil day. But, if such a deliverance is to be ours, we must remember that a man cannot be expected to rise higher than the mark he sets before him. To set yourself to the overcoming of some particular besetting sin, however good your purpose, is not a high enough aim. Frequently one sin is resisted simply because it is troublesome and puts us “out of conceit”

with our supposed attainments in grace. But God's glory must be considered; and His glory must be *first*. Not only one sin, but *all* sin, must be resisted. Yea, there must be a complete surrender. Christ must be all. And just as the greater includes the less, so shall the "greater blessing" of abiding communion bring every lesser blessing in its train. We do not need so much to have some special spiritual enemy subdued unto us, as to have *ourselves* subdued unto Christ. While He reigns on the throne of the heart all our spiritual enemies must be beneath His feet.

MUSINGS IN A RAILWAY TRAIN.

 WAS sitting in a railway train when I was introduced to brother ——. I looked up, and we exchanged a brief greeting. But the compartment was full, and the train was moving; so nothing more was said. Yet in the brief glance I had taken, and in the few words I had heard, I seemed to understand my friend as well as if I had known him for years. There are some men to whom you are specially and irresistibly drawn. You cannot explain very well how it is. There is a certain *something* about them that attracts—a magnetism of heart that does its work, although they make no studied effort to please. Such was my new-found friend. "Yes," I said to myself, "a man with a big heart, and a sanguine, buoyant temperament—a happy man—

one who enjoys the Gospel he tells to others—one who is accustomed to shut his eyes to 'unfavourable circumstances,' and plod on as if the millennium were to be ushered in next week. Not a very eloquent preacher, I would say, but one whose heart will draw, before the people have time to consider whether he is eloquent or not."

Thus I mused as I sat in the corner of the carriage; thinking upon the secret affinities by which heart is drawn to heart in spite of every barrier raised up by the ingenuity of man to keep asunder those whom God has joined together. My brother did not see "eye-to-eye" with me, as we say. I never saw him before; I have not seen him since; I may never see him again—until that day when all the children of the heavenly family shall hear the Shepherd's voice. "Another Jonathan," I said to myself; "and very pleasant hast thou been unto me, short as our acquaintance has been." A few minutes sufficed for our railway journey. Yet chords far down in the heart were vibrating now to the touch of a new hand—responding to the sound of a kindred voice, and bearing witness to that great brotherhood of saints, of whom it shall yet be said—

"Ten thousand are their voices,
But all their hearts are one."

MANY are like the Jews of old, in looking for a Messiah who is to be exalted, rather than one who is to pass through the valley of humiliation, and be the despised and rejected of men.

THE GOSPEL NOT WANTED.



CERTAIN "army," professing to carry on work for God, was in the town of P——. The "officers" in command were supposed to preach the Gospel. But in reality they did nothing of the kind. They simply harangued the people; and, with "Amen volleys," and scenes at the "penitent form," provided such an entertainment that the place was filled every night. The army leaders, to show their liberality of spirit and give themselves a little rest in the work, invited outside believers to occupy the platform occasionally. This plan wrought well enough if the new preacher could keep up the character of the "entertainment," by putting on an appearance of intense earnestness, and generally saying and doing such "lively" and ridiculous things that the "interest" would be kept up. One night they called on brother R—— to take the meeting. He was a good man—a true soul-winner, although at that time his eyes had not been opened to the truth of Separation unto God. On ascending the platform he gave a powerful Gospel address—solemn, searching, and arrestive. "Surely," one would have said, "the army leaders will be delighted with the occasional help of such a man!" But no. It is true that he had preached the simple Gospel—and in power, too. But *that* was not what they wanted. The brother was plainly told that *that* sort of preaching would never do for their meetings! We need scarcely say that

he never occupied the "army" platform again. His experience of "army" work led him to the conclusion that the Gospel that Paul preached was really not wanted at "army" meetings. What was wanted was the sensational appeal and the Amen volley, with a sufficient amount of something laughable to keep the "interest in the meetings" from going down. But if there was no room for the Gospel of God, we fail to see how there could be any room for the God of the Gospel.

We may just say that we have never changed our opinion as to the so-called "army" work in the Gospel. We formed that opinion many years ago by a simple appeal to the great unchanging standard of Scripture. The Word has not changed: therefore our opinion still remains unchanged. We have observed that "army" work as a rule seems to live only a certain number of months, or years, in one spot. The plain truth is, that it gets *worked out*. The "light-bread" of humour and sensationalism must fail sooner or later to satisfy the longings of the human spirit. We have whole tracts of country before our eye in which the "army," once strong, is now almost extinct. People simply get tired of the incessant clank of the "army" machinery. In a certain large town a number of wealthy believers joined heartily in the work. But it was not long until every one of them withdrew from the whole thing. They thought it desirable to apply the "foot-rule" of the *Word* to the new movement; and they

discovered that the work was not carried on upon Paul's lines at all; and as for Paul's Gospel, it was conspicuous by its absence. We may just point out that these searchers of the word discovered *at last* what they might easily have found out *at first*, if they had simply tested the movement by Scripture.

In speaking recently to a brother returned from abroad, we asked how it was that the "army" had lived so long in the town where he had been. "Well," he replied, "there is a very shifting population there; so that the army proceedings are a constant novelty to a goodly number. No sooner is one company of people tired out, than another lot is ready to take their place. If the population had been steady, the army could not have survived half the time."

A brother, who had gone forth to the rejected Lord Jesus Christ, was induced to go to the army meetings, concluding that the Lord must surely be where there were such crowds of people (!). He was at once called upon to help in the work. The "ladle" was put into his hand, and he was asked to go round for the collection! But such a proceeding struck him as being so utterly alien to the spirit of the Gospel, that he at once laid down the "ladle," and declared that the Lord had never called him to *that* work. He discovered that the Lord's voice was not in the earthquake of crowds, and brass-bands, and hallelujah volleys; and we need not say that he had no further experience of the "army." This asking of money from the ungodly to carry on

the Lord's work is not the least evil in "army tactics." But, as a matter-of-fact, the "army" *must* have the money of the ungodly, else in very great measure it would cease to exist. The collection is in a very true sense the most important feature in the whole proceedings of a meeting; and "officers" have special instructions to see that *this* department of the work is thoroughly attended to! But just fancy going out to the street corner and sounding forth that grand invitation of Isaiah lv. 1: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath *no money*; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk *without money, and without price.*" Yet, no sooner have the poor ungodly been got inside than the collection ladle is held before them, saying in silent but powerful language, "*Where is your money?*" It is really lamentable that children of God can be found defending a practice that is so completely opposed to the precepts of Scripture, as well as to every sentiment of the new nature. According to some professed labourers in the Lord's work, it would seem as if the God of Heaven is so scarce of money that He must needs go a-begging, and plead for money from the servants of the Devil in order to carry on the work of the Lord almighty! But God has never said so. Scripture gives the lie to such a thought. "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help" (Isa. xxxi. 1). We are to remember them who have gone forth, "*taking nothing of the Gentiles*" (3 Jno. 7).

THE GOSPEL OF THE DEVIL.

NOT long ago a foreman in a public work—a professed believer—was arranging some matter with a number of the men, when, in order to give more emphasis to his words, he commenced to curse and swear. One of the men, who made “no profession,” remonstrated with his foreman. “I thought you were saved,” he said: “how then can you swear in that way?” “O,” replied the professor of religion, “I’m saved, whether I swear or not. The Bible says, If you believe, you’re saved: I believe, and I’m saved. The swearing makes no difference to that.”

Now, it is well to point out that the Gospel which that man believed was *the Gospel of the Devil*. He had evidently never known what the Gospel of the grace of God really is. Scripture plainly declares that the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teaches us “that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit. ii. 11, 12). Grace never teaches us to make light of sin. Its teaching has quite an opposite tendency. The man who is under the teaching of grace will *deny* ungodliness and worldly lusts. The very Gospel that has saved him from Hell will give him a *detestation* of sin.

In the early days of the church we read that believers were multiplied. In the day in which we live, it would seem that *professors* are multiplied. Rival

religious sections are straining every nerve to have “a successful work,” and to increase the number of their adherents. The result is, that converts are being manufactured in alarming numbers. The Gospel is being shorn of its native dignity. Sinners are being invited to come to Jesus, as if they were conferring a great favour upon Him by so doing. The elements of a John-the-Baptist ministry are awaiting. Stern, trumpet-like calls to repentance are few. The *comforts* of conversion are dwelt upon; while the exceeding heinousness of sin gets a very scant attention. The happiness of the believing sinner is proclaimed; but the demands of a holy God are left out of sight. In fact, in many cases the Gospel, bereft of all that *makes* it the Gospel, is like Samson shorn of his locks—utterly powerless to deliver. But although this mere shadow of a Gospel is powerless to deliver, it is not powerless to make professors. It makes these without number, as it makes them almost without effort. It is as easy to say “I believe—therefore I’m saved,” as it is to say, “two and two make four.” The “mathematical Gospel,” if we may use the phrase, will make as many converts as you please, provided the preacher is a clear-headed man who knows how to arrange its “heads.” What is the fruit of this mathematical Gospel? The fruit is simply “mathematical converts”—that is, people who can coolly turn round and tell you in the most matter-of-fact way that they believe and are saved, and that is an end of the matter! But

saved from *what*? We firmly believe in justification by faith. We know of no other terms of salvation than those proclaimed to the jailor of Philippi: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." But when we see a man claiming to be saved, and yet sinning with a high hand, we would ask, "What does he mean by professing to be *saved*?" He is manifestly not saved from the love of sin; and, if a man is not saved from *that*, it is vain for him to boast that he is saved from Hell. Let him beware how he lays the flattering unction to his soul that he is going to a heaven of holiness while he is living a life of ungodliness. Salvation from wrath to come is only one department of the great salvation. He harbours a fatal delusion who fancies he is saved from Hell while he is not saved from the hell of carnal indulgence. The great purpose of our Lord's coming was to destroy the works of the Devil (1 Jno. iii. 8), and to *save* His people *from their sins* (Matt. i. 21). The carnal professor of the religion of Christ would have all the husks of earth, and yet all the joys of Heaven. Any Gospel will suit him that does not trouble his conscience. Like the demoniac of Mark i. 23, he cries, "Let us alone," whenever you bring the word of Christ to bear on his fleshly ways. But we do not believe he should be left alone. Let God's messengers cry aloud, and spare not. Let the fearless proclamation of God's truth sweep away every refuge of lies. Let the Gospel in all its breadth and length be told out to

the perishing,—let *the* Truth in all its searching power be applied to the naked conscience of those who profess the name of Christ; and you will soon have an atmosphere in which the hypocrite shall find it very inconvenient to dwell. Hypocrisy abhors reality; and wherever the reality of heavenly power is found ruling the day, the hypocrisy of carnal profession must hide its head, and retire into the congenial shade of darkness.


By the good hand of our God upon us, we intend to give no countenance to the Devil's Gospel—"Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. iii. 4); in other words, "Sin as much as you please, and you are quite safe, no matter what God says." Such seems to be the Gospel of the Devil—a Gospel as far from the Gospel of Christ as darkness is from light. It must be told out with no uncertain sound that the Gospel of God is a *Gospel of purity!* The God with whom we have to do is a God of holiness; and the Gospel that does not bear "Holiness to the Lord" on its fore-front, is not the Gospel that has come down from Heaven. Day-and-date and chapter-and-verse, however good these may be as testimony that we have passed from death unto life, are not infallible proofs, by any means. Indeed, they are no proof at all, *if Christ be not manifest in the life*; and we know that wherever Christ is, there shall be *war with sin!*

—♦—♦—♦—

THE flesh is never more detestable than when it assumes the garb of spirituality.

THE ABSALOM REBELLION.

Third Paper.

HE first time that Absalom comes prominently before us is in connection with the plot to assassinate his brother Amnon. Doubtless that brother (or half-brother, rather) had been guilty of a heinous crime (2 Sam. xiii.); and as no steps were seemingly being taken to deal with the evil-doer, Absalom determines to take law into his own hand, and avenge his sister's disgrace. The plot was carefully planned and carried out. At the invitation of Absalom all the king's sons were brought together to a feast—a sort of family gathering; and at the given signal his servants rose and slew Amnon. In the light of after events it may be questioned if regard for his sister's honour was the *only* motive that actuated Absalom in this matter. By getting an elder brother out of the way he rid himself of one who might have disputed his claim to the throne, and thus upset the designs of his ambition. But, be that as it may, the high-handed assassination of Amnon at Baal-hazor, not to speak of the treachery by which it was effected, could not pass unnoticed. Absalom realised this himself. It would have been dangerous to have sought the king's face. Judgment might there and then have been carried out. But if time could be gained, the circumstances might gradually be forgotten, and the whole matter "hushed up." Therefore Absalom seeks his safety in flight.

Thus three years pass. And then we read that the soul of David "longed to go forth unto Absalom" (2 Sam. xiii. 39). There was no longing to deal with him for his crime—no longing to carry out the judgment of God in regard to the death of Amnon. Three years could make no difference in the case. If Absalom had done right at that time, why was he not at once received into the king's favour? But if his deed of blood cried aloud for retribution, then the mere lapse of three years could not hush the voice of judgment. Time may do much. It may gradually sap the life out of an old grudge, and throw the mantle of oblivion over some feud of bygone years. It may "tone down" some unpleasantness that had long existed between brother and brother, and may cause many an angry word to pass completely out of remembrance. When time has this effect, it is doing a good work, if we may so speak—its own proper work. But time cannot reverse God's judgment of that which is evil. The mere lapse of years did not make Absalom an innocent man. Had the sword of justice found him that day he fled to Geshur, it might have gone hard with him. But three years have passed away, and lo! he is allowed to return, almost as if nothing had happened! We do not read of his repentance, nor of his confession. Yet he is received. He is kept at a distance, it is true (2 Sam. xiv. 24). Yet that distance is soon bridged over. By an ingenious device he secures the services of Joab

(2 Sam. xiv. 30), and is brought once again into his father's presence. But we watch in vain for a single word of reproof from the king. He "kissed Absalom." That is all we are told of the interview; and restoration seemed to be complete. But it was only a seeming restoration. Absalom was still the same proud, unbroken man. We read elsewhere (Luke xv. 11-24) of an erring son, who also received the kiss of reconciliation. But in his case we hear him say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." But the elements of repentance and confession were completely wanting in Absalom's case. We know that "the work of righteousness shall be peace" (Isa. xxxii. 17). But righteousness (the right thing) had not been done, and therefore peace was out of the question. There might *seem* to be peace; but it was only the deceitful calm that heralds the coming storm. The sentence had gone forth from the prophet's lips: "The sword shall never depart from thine house;" and David, by failing to judge evil in his own family, was unwittingly preparing the instrument for the carrying out of that sentence. The day was near when that very son whom David had kissed back into his favour would seize the throne itself, and go forth with blood-thirsty sword to compass the death of his own father! Such was the fruit of an unrighteous reconciliation. David had to learn that a man cannot take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned (Prov. vi. 27); while we have to learn

that our kiss of reconciliation will avail nothing, if righteousness and peace have not first of all kissed each other (See Ps. lxxxv. 10). "The wisdom that is from above is first *pure*, then *peaceable*" (Jas. iii. 17).

We may also learn here what a strong tendency there is to indulge an unrighteous compassion for our own kindred. Some people will not see iniquity in their own relations. Absalom gets the kiss of reconciliation because he is the king's son; but, if he had been some other person's son, the sword of vengeance would have searched him out from Dan to Beer-sheba. This flesh-and-blood compassion resulted in a great rebellion in Israel; and it has been bringing forth fruit after its kind in all times down to the present day. When evil has been committed, there is a very prevailing sentiment among professed believers to-day, and it is this: "If the evil-doer is my son, or my brother, or some connection of our family, then we must defend him and justify him up to the last point. But if he is no relation of ours, then by all means let him be dealt with, and made an example of." May the Lord deliver us from such partiality, and grant us that singleness of eye which shall make us true sons of Levi; for we know that in the day when God commanded the sword of judgment to be drawn, Levi "said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children" (Deut. xxxiii. 9).

REPLY TO "THE REAPER."

IN the *Reaper* for August (page 151), a number of reasons are given why certain believers do not see their way to "join the Brethren." Now, we have no particular love for controversy. On the contrary, we are positively reluctant to differ from our friends. But when our friends see fit to oppose what we believe to be the Truth, they must not look upon us as unfriendly because we seek to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3, R.V.).

It seems that certain believers, members of the Ayrshire Christian Union, are unable to connect themselves with "the Brethren" (so-called); and the editor of the *Reaper* gives a number of reasons why those members of the County Union stand aloof. We need not say that we regret that there should be anything to hinder a greater manifest oneness among the people of God in Ayrshire, or anywhere. We have rejoiced to hear of the progress that separation truth was making with prominent brethren in the Union; and we had hoped ere long to see the day of a great "exodus" in Ayrshire, in which there would be a casting aside of every man-invented name, and a gathering to that One Name which God delights to honour. But, be that time near or distant, it is at all times needful that the trumpet give forth no uncertain sound. It is one of our maxims that "the Lamp of Truth, the more you shake it, the more it shines."

We therefore proceed to deal with the *Reaper's* strictures upon "the Brethren." If we passed these unnoticed, enquiring souls might be seriously misled, while others might think that our church-position would not stand looking into.

EXCLUDING from FELLOWSHIP.

The *Reaper* says that the Brethren "exclude from fellowship many whom Christ has received." We are not aware of such a thing. If an application for fellowship comes from one whom Christ has received, and who is walking godly in Christ Jesus, we *receive him into the fellowship with open arms!* What the *Reaper* may mean is, that some believers have desired to be received *to the Table* "for a day," and have been refused. But that is a very different matter. We have no power to receive "for a day," for the simple reason that we are told to receive one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God (Rom. xv. 7); and we know that He did not receive us *for a day*. Again, there is no such thing in Scripture as "receiving to the Table." But there is something far deeper, and that is, *receiving into the fellowship*. Sitting at the Table is one of the privileges connected with fellowship; and, just as the greater includes the less, so does fellowship include the breaking of the bread, and a great deal more. It seems to us that there is something cold (apart from it being unscriptural) in the application for a mere seat at the Table, while there is no desire to be received into the fellowship. "O no,

dear brother," we reply; "We have something far better than that for you. We shall rejoice to receive you into the fellowship; and then the bread and the cup will come as a matter of course, with the various privileges and responsibilities that pertain to a church of God in Christ Jesus."

THE HOSTILE ATTITUDE.

The *Reaper* says that, as a rule, we take a hostile attitude to all work for God not done under our own auspices, and that the "County Unions" have been condemned almost as severely as the churches.

We must say we were not aware that we took up the hostile attitude referred to. It is not fair to say we are hostile to a work, because we do not give it our support. We believe in the scriptural injunction, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." It does not say, "Whatsoever some other person finds for you to do." We seek to do the work to which we believe God has called us, and in the way which we believe to be in accordance with Scripture. As to other workers, going upon different lines, we take up no hostile attitude. To their own Master they stand or fall. If it is in our power to reach some of those workers, we may take the liberty of pointing out where they are at fault, just as the *Reaper* has done in pointing out what it considers to be the defects of the Brethren. In regard to "sticking to one's own work," we rather think this is the rule all round (including Union

believers); and we do not see that any fault can be found with it.

THE COUNTY UNIONS.

We must plead guilty to the charge that we do not believe in County Unions. We cannot say that we have ever believed in them. Our opinion has not been determined by choice, or by taste, but by the unchanging principles of Scripture. We can understand the position of the Presbyterian brother. If we do not agree with his principles, we can at least respect his consistency. He believes in his church—works in connection with his church—and rejoices in the prosperity of his church. But the Ayrshire Christian Union is not a church; it has no church government—no church responsibility. It does not gather converts into the fold of a church, for it has no such fold into which to bring them. What, then, does it do with them? It gathers them into the fold of *the Union*—enrols members, and appoints "delegates." We search for this "Body" in the New Testament; but we cannot find it. Moreover, in the County of Ayr there are many gathered-out companies of believers owning *Christ as the only centre of gathering*. But the Ayrshire Christian Union has virtually set up *another centre of gathering!* This may sound strong language. But test it, and see. In yonder village there is a company of believers who have gone forth to the Lord Christ, acknowledging the gathering power of the Holy Spirit, and owning no name but the Name of the

Lord Jesus. But, as time rolls on, the Union holds meetings in that village, establishes a branch there, and gathers believers into its own membership. A *second* circle of believers is thus formed. But if God gathered the *first* circle, who gathered the *second* circle? After God has gathered a company of believers into that Name which is above every name, can we conceive of Him gathering a second company on the principle of a County Union?

We love our Union brethren none the less, although we thus speak. We do not doubt the purity of their motives, or the earnestness of their purpose. Nevertheless, we must bear witness to the Truth. God gathers His people unto the one great Name which He declares to be *above every name*; and if we are led of God we will surely gather with Him. When we were told of how a number of believers in a certain village had been at once enrolled in the Union, and a branch of the Union formed there, we could not help saying: "Well, if that is the New-Testament principle upon which God gathers His people together, we want to be in the Union too." But we find no vestige of it in Scripture. We search in vain for the Union of Samaria, or of Judea. The only Christian Union known to the New Testament is a company of saints gathered by the Holy Spirit as a Church of God in Christ Jesus.

We occasionally see posters intimating a meeting under the auspices of the Ayrshire Christian Union. But what fault have our dear brethren with the

name of Christ? Why not say that the meeting is under *His* auspices? Is *His* name not sufficient? If so, then why speak of any other auspices? If we have Christ for the centre of union, we need no other centre.

THE CHARGE OF EXCLUSIVENESS.

Members of the Union say they cannot share our exclusiveness, and that they want to be free to recognise a brother in Christ, and to cherish towards him feelings of love and regard, no matter what his church or non-church position may be. To this we give a cordial "Amen." There are believers outside our circle, whom we love as truly as any with whom we are "in fellowship." In obedience to the truth there is nothing to hinder this love. Yet some seem to think that you cannot cherish it and yet tread the path of separation unto God! The *Reaper* clearly implies that, among the Brethren, you cannot cherish feelings of love to other believers. This is simply a misrepresentation. We love our brethren none the less that we love God's Truth and honour the more.

The *Reaper* says: "When a man refuses to listen to the evangelist who was the means of his conversion, because the convert had subsequently joined the Brethren, we can only pray to be delivered from such a narrow and unchristian spirit."

Now, this is a most misleading statement, although to many it will doubtless appear an unanswerable argu-

ment. We do not refuse to hear the man who was the means of our conversion. But if he chooses to work in unscriptural associations, are we bound to go and hear him? And if we do not go, are we therefore to be set down as narrow and unchristian? Even at the risk of coming under such a condemnation, we are not prepared to sacrifice the truth in order to please one whom we may have much cause to esteem. Even the Apostle Paul did not require a slavish approval of everything he might do. "Be ye followers of me," he said, "*even as I also am of Christ*" (1 Cor. xi. 1). This principle is sufficient to guide us; for we know that the man who is a follower of Christ has his steps ordered by the Word.

WOMEN MINISTRY.

We are told that we shut out the ministry of women, upon which the Lord is setting His seal. The subject of women ministry is a large one. Nevertheless we may say here that we joyfully accord to woman the sphere of service which Scripture assigns to her; and that sphere is not so contracted as some seem to think. But, in the face of clear Scriptures to the contrary, we cannot see that the Lord has designed her for the same sphere as the man. We may be told that in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female (Gal. iii. 28). And neither there is—"in Christ Jesus." But it does not say, "*In the Church*, there is neither male nor female." In the church *there is* male and female; and we dare

not go against the clear distinctions that God has drawn. We may be told that the Lord is setting His seal upon women ministry (we presume in its widest sense). But this argument is not by any means conclusive. The Lord may bless the ministry of a godly sister *in spite of* the fact that she is in her wrong sphere. But who will tell us how much more manifestly the seal of God would have been upon her labours if she had kept her ministry within its God-appointed channels? Moreover, God is Sovereign; and He may often seem to us to be blessing methods, while He is simply blessing *in spite of methods!*—two very different things. He would not deprive His thirsty people of the refreshing draught although a Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips. A superficial observer might have said: "The Lord used Moses at the Rock." Well, in a certain sense He did. But it would be more correct to say that the Lord refreshed the people in spite of man's failure, and afterward dealt with Moses for acting contrary to the revealed will of God in that matter. It is therefore dangerous for us to take tokens of blessing as an infallible seal of God's approval—especially if we are running contrary to any "Thus saith the Lord." The people of Matt. vii. 22 claim the seal of the Lord's approval in that they had prophesied and cast out demons in His name. He did not contradict them. They had evidently done all they said. Yet He never knew them! Let us learn from this, that it is not God's

sovereign will, but His *revealed will*, that must be our guide in all things.

We have thus taken up the *Reaper's* objections, so far as we understand them. We trust that our brethren in the Union will take in good part what we have said. We are not contending for "our cause;" for we have none. We are simply seeking to bear witness to the Truth: and we have not spoken without giving our reasons. We speak as unto wise men. Judge ye what we say.

THE ECHOED LAY.

"O THE joy, the joy of knowing
All my sins forgiven!
O the blessedness of going
To a home in heaven!

"O the rest, the rest of giving
All, O Lord to Thee!
O the deep, sweet calm of living
For eternity!

"O the peace, the peace of dwelling
In the Holy Place!
O the happiness of telling
Others of Thy grace!

"O the pleasure of obeying
Now Thy love's behest!
And at last to hear Thee saying.
'Enter into rest'!"

Thus I mused, not feeling lonely,
Though no friend was near;
For my heart yearned to be only
For *His* glory here;

When a gentle voice aroused me
(*T* was the Master's own),
Saying, "Have not I espoused thee?—
Thou art Mine alone:

"Glad, I see thy spirit yearning
To be all for Me;
For My heart is ever burning
With deep love for thee.

"Loving thee I came from heaven—
Died to make thee Mine;
And the glory to Me given
Shall be also thine.

"Thou art My peculiar treasure,
And My special care;
Heaven shall want an endless pleasure
Till thou shalt be there."

Then the merry brooklet dancing
To the tuneful breeze,
Kissed by playful sunbeams glancing
Through the waving trees,

Having caught the happy measure,
Echoed everywhere:
"*Heaven shall want an endless pleasure
Till thou shalt be there.*"

Long with eager ear I listened
To that echoed lay,
Till the far-off ocean glistened
In the sunset's ray—

Till with love and joy unbounded,
All my being glowed;
Joy that on His joy was grounded—
Love which from Him flowed.

Now *my* love, *my* joy, *my* blessing—
All is lost in *His*,
And my heart, Himself possessing,
Ever joyful is;

For that echo still is ringing
In my gladsome soul;
Gleams of heavenly radiance flinging
On the nearing Goal—

Breathing love surpassing measure,
And unceasing care—
"*Heaven shall want an endless pleasure
Till thou shalt be there.*"

JOTTINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

IN the twelfth verse of Chap. iii. the apostle makes it very plain that he had not yet *attained* to the possibilities of Christian experience; which, by the way, let no one confound with the experience of Christians. Neither was he already perfected as he might be. These very facts explain why he so earnestly pursued or followed after, *if also* he might apprehend, or enter into, the purpose for which he had been laid hold of by Christ. Indeed, he is careful to repeat that he did not reckon himself to have apprehended this. Nevertheless, he was not discouraged. Rather, he bestirred himself; and one thing he did. That "one thing" may seem a small thing to have done. Yet, our readers may be astonished and profited by seriously considering if this oneness of purpose really characterises *their* way of life. The apostle, then, did one thing to reach the goal of apprehending that for which he had been apprehended by Christ. Forgetting the things that were behind, and stretching forth to those things which lay before his view, as possibly reachable, he pursued—pressed, or followed after—**ACCORDING TO THE MARK**

FOR THE PRIZE

of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The idea in the word rendered "high" here, is "*above*." It is the same word used in the passage, "Ye must be born again," or from above.

This exercise the apostle enforces on such as are perfect; that is to say, those who are ripened or matured in sensible understanding (comp. Heb. v. 14) of what is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning them; while, if in anything ye be contrariwise minded, God shall reveal even this to you. Still, whatever the grade of mind, or growth be, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same. Please compare the Revised Version for wording of verse 16. This sixteenth verse gives room for the most intense exercise of *individual* faith and conscience, with corresponding liberty in the Lord! The seventeenth verse as strongly commands the most strenuous endeavour for those who are linked together in a church of God, as brethren, to be


IMITATORS TOGETHER

of the apostle! Yea, we find him saying, "*Mark* them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." Thus marked for recognition and kindred privileges, he would that such should be as plainly known, to be cared for and companied with, as he would that they who cause divisions and offences *contrary to this doctrine* should be marked, and turned away from. Let it be well noted that this marking is required by the Lord from the gathered-together saints in Churches of God. Moreover, many so walk, that concerning them he declares, with tears, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ, the end of whom is destruction—the god of whom is their belly—whose glory is in their shame;

and who, withal, are minding the things upon the earth. Whereas, our citizenship is in Heaven, from whence *also* we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change the body of our humiliation, fashioning it like unto the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself. Because of which, as dearly beloved brethren, He would that the saints should SO stand fast in the Lord.


J. B.

CHRIST IN OUR BRETHREN.

HE next thing to seeing the Lord Himself, is to see Him in His members. If we are walking in the fear of God, we will ever rejoice to see Christ in another. We read in John xx. 20: "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord"; and we, too, shall be glad in beholding the Master's spirit, though it be in the humblest of His members. What *grace* is ministered when Jesus is manifest in these mortal bodies! We sometimes hear preaching that leaves very little impression on us; but we are never unimpressed when we behold Christ in a brother. He may not agree with us in some things. But if the Master's image be reflected there, we find ourselves saying, "It is enough." If he has anything to tell us—any hitherto neglected truth—we are prepared to listen; for *grace* and *truth*, held in even balance, must ever command a hearing. If, on the other hand, our brother of the

Christ-like spirit requires to be instructed more perfectly in the things of God, how graciously he receives the word! If he discusses the point, there is no fleshly contention—no ruthless wounding of an adversary. Where grace reigns, grace triumphs; and where Christ is manifest, the flesh is seen to be hideous. Christ manifest in some brother or sister has had a far more powerful effect on us than the most fluent addresses we ever heard. In the case of some preachers, we have missed their matter through being captivated by their spirit. In the case of others, we have forgotten their whole address, while retaining the most lively recollection of the power and simplicity of the man of God, through whom the Master almost seemed to breathe!

FRIENDLY DISCUSSION.

REAT ends may be served by friendly discussion, even on doctrinal points. But when such discussion waxes warm, the sooner it ceases the better. We have observed that discussion carried on with ruffled spirits generally widens the gulf it was designed to bridge over. Each goes away not only convinced that his line of things is right, but determined to follow it out *more* firmly than ever! Zeal kindled up by fleshly inspiration is running at Jehu pace to do what it conceives to be the Lord's work. But grace ever finds a "more excellent way" of reaching the same goal.

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THE CRY FOR REALITY.

THERE is a cry all around for more *reality* in the things of God. We are so accustomed to handle the most precious truths of Scripture, that they are in great danger of becoming common; and it is to be feared that in many cases the result is—*high doctrine and low life!* Whenever we cease to hold the truth in power, the truth will at once cease to hold us. The form may be observed—meetings may be attended—the ordinances of the Lord may be carried out. There may be every outward appearance that all is going well. Yet, in spite of all this, not a few of the godly in Israel are mourning the growing lack of *reality*.

When the Lord first opened our eyes to the great truths of *Separation* to His Name, *Death and Resurrection* with Christ, and His *Coming again* to take us to Himself, what a glow of heavenly fire burned in the hearts of those on whom these truths dawned like some new revelation from the Throne! The world, with all that is of the world, was seen to be lighter than vanity. Everything was judged in the light of "the glory that surrounds the throne." What a separated

people the Lord had then! They were declared, even by professing Israel, to be too narrow; to be strait-laced, even to fanaticism, not only in their views, but in the tenacity with which they followed the Lord in the various details of everyday life. It had been customary to keep religion "in its place," and not to allow it to have any bearing on our doings in the *six* days of the week. But at the period to which we refer, the Lord's people, newly awake to the dignity of their heavenly character, broke down these ancient barriers, and stepped forth into the large and goodly land of a communion with the Father, that embraced seven days out of every week. Their word was with power; their terror fell on the people of the land.

But why conceal the fact that it is different now? That it is different, no one will venture to deny. Certain, at least, we are of this, that all who long for the Consolation of Israel, and are praying for a flood-tide of His heavenly power, will not think we are raising a false alarm. On the contrary, they will bid God-speed to every effort calculated to bring back the Lord's people to the devotion and obedience of their early love. Once upon a time these "separated

people" were reputed to be so fond of God's Word that you would even find the Bible on the counter and at the desk. Surely the Word was precious in those days! But now so much time is required to keep posted up in what *the world* is doing, that the Bible has to put up with a second place. Death-and-resurrection truth has somehow fallen into the background, and the call to separation from evil is not so often heard as of yore. Therefore, we praise God when we hear the cry for a revival of heavenly power.

We want reality in our meetings; we want reality in our family relationships; we want reality in our individual walk; —in short, we want that our whole manner of life shall be in keeping with what we profess before God and men to be—*dead, buried, and risen with Christ*. We are convinced that God wants reality. And why should He not have it at our hand? Why should we not be what we seem to be? If we have made up our minds that we are not going to be parted from our idols, then it would surely be better to pull down the flag of our profession. But there is a more excellent way—a far more excellent way. It is to humble ourselves before God, and cry to Him that His power may be manifest among His people. Let us unite in pleading with Him to come in and take full possession of every one who professedly owns His name. Then we shall have *reality*. There shall be a real blessing. We shall in deed and in truth be people of *one book*; yes, and

of *one heart*. Our sun shall then with "seven-fold brightness shine." Are we willing? Are we crying to God that it may be so?

PRAYERS, LONG AND SHORT.

VERY little is said in the Scriptures about long prayers; and even that "little" is not in their favour.

In Matt. xxiii. 14 we read of those who "for a pretence make long prayer." Long dreary prayers are generally associated with times of spiritual dearth. Such prayers do not seem to serve any special purpose, except it be to import a feeling of drowsiness into the meeting, and cause others to long for the prayer to draw to a close. At the same time we must point out that the chief element in a long prayer is not so much the time it occupies, as the dreary impression it leaves on the meeting. A man in whose bones the heavenly fire is burning is not likely to cause people to look much at the clock while he is praying. In short, dreary prayers are long, no matter how short they are. You may have observed that as prayers decrease in power they often increase in length. And you will also have observed, that when the Lord is refreshing His heritage with a plenteous rain, prayers are shorter, and many more brethren are led to pour out their hearts before God. This is what we want to see.

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 WE need grace to die as well as to live. He must die daily who would truly live unto God.

THE ABSALOM REBELLION.

Fourth Paper.

NO sooner has Absalom secured the king's favour than he prepares the way for being king himself. His eye is upon the throne. Nothing less will satisfy his restless ambition. He might seem a humble man during the years of his banishment. But if he did not attempt to seize the throne *then*, it was merely because he had not the power. And even now, when he is in the king's court again, he must proceed warily. A single rash step may upset his whole plans. He must make sure of his ground. The first precaution he takes is to secure *the favour of the people*. He feels that he must stand well with *them*. Accordingly we read that "Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment. . . . Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man that hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. . . . So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel" (2 Sam. xv. 2-6).

The true character of the usurper shines out in all this. He first persuades the people that there is a serious *want*

in connection with rule in Israel; and then he sets himself forth as the only man who can truly supply that want! While the seeds of rebellion are being thus sown, he takes care, by his kisses and his flattery, to make himself the most popular man in Israel.

These have been the exact lines upon which Absalom's successors have ever gone. Whether it be in the Kingdom of Israel or in the Churches of God, the Absaloms are sure to be found nursing a discontented spirit—calling attention to imaginary evils, or exaggerating those that already exist. Their name is generally legion; for they are many; and they are always "against the government." It matters not who are administering rule in the Church, Absalom sees, or affects to see, grave abuses which cry aloud for redress. New rulers may arise; but they, like their predecessors, are set down as physicians of no value. In fact, no rule can be to Absalom's mind, unless he himself is at the helm of affairs.

But the way to the seat of power must be prepared; and Absalom effects this by *ventilating his grievances*. We are always suspicious of the man who goes about pleading his own cause; and we are doubly suspicious when he proceeds to exalt himself by speaking evil of his brethren. Such is an unfailling mark of a low cast of mind. Men who cannot rise by their own merits are often found attempting to rise by trampling upon the merits of others. They do not openly expose the evils they profess to mourn. They carry on their work by whispering

— tale-bearing — evil-speaking. “He that doeth truth cometh to the light” (Jno. iii. 21). But the Absaloms choose the cover of darkness; for their deeds are evil. Thus the leaven works, until believers, once simple-minded and happy in the Lord, wear a cold, suspicious look. You wonder at the change. You dig down a little in order to find a cause; and lo! you discover that, instead of the sincere milk of the word, they had been drinking in the evil-speaking of some Absalom, longing to let his power be felt in the Church! Let us therefore remember the admonition, “Take heed what ye hear.” There may be much to mourn over. But the true mourner is easily known. While he bewails the condition of his brethren, he is willing to have his own name blotted out, so that God’s people may be blessed. Witness Moses as he pleads for Israel (Ex. xxxii. 32). The true shepherd giveth his life for the sheep—ever willing to spend and be spent for the flock of God. But the place-seeker has no notion whatever of giving his life for the sheep. He has his eye on the place of power; and deep down in his heart of hearts he is saying, like Absalom of old, “*Oh that I were made judge in the land!*”

In Absalom’s character we learn that the man who covets a place of rule to which God has not called him, is conspicuous for two things: he is a flatterer openly, and he is an evil-speaker secretly. Wherever you find the flatterer, you will in the same person find the evil-speaker. While he flatters some, he traduces

others. You may meet the flatterer, and take him for one of the most eminent saints on earth. His words are smoother than butter (Ps. lv. 21); but war is in his heart. If you have aroused his envy, you will find no trace of it in his words; for he is a master in the art of dissimulation. Yet, no sooner has he turned the first corner of the street than he is busy pouring his “tale of woe” into the ear of one of the simple in Israel, and declaring that *you* must be resisted at all hazards! Such is the flatterer—a worthless character at best; while those who are seduced by his flatteries are little better, as Absalom found to his cost. The flatterer always flatters *for a purpose*. He must have “value received” for all his honied words. But if you will not be charmed by his music—if you reprove him to his face—he will at once throw off the mask; and you will discover that his words are like the piercings of a sword (Prov. xii. 18). It has been remarked that none can handle “the scourge of the tongue” like the one who is given to flattery. Truly the tender mercies of the flatterer, like the tender mercies of the wicked (Prov. xii. 10), are cruel.

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THE reality of our devotion to Christ comes out in our doing things that can be seen by none but Himself. The mere time-server puts down a goodly sum on the subscription sheet that goes before “the public;” while, if no one knows but God, the sum is small indeed, if anything at all.

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A MAN may know the Word and not the Lord, but none can know the Lord but by the Word.

THE LOWLY HEART.

YOU may exhort believers to take the low place; and you may say a great deal on the blessings that are sure to follow. But a believer cannot take the low place unless he, first of all, have the lowly spirit. You must go to the root of the matter. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit (Matt. vii. 18). Make the tree good; and its fruit will be good. Some speak as if it would be "Paradise regained" in certain quarters, could a few prominent individuals only be induced to take the low place. But it will do no good for you to get these individuals to *change their place* if you do not get them to *change their mind*. There is such a thing as taking the low place in a very high spirit. Assumed humility is the worst kind of hypocrisy. The spirit of the lowly is what is wanted; and the spirit of the lowly can only be found in the presence of the lowly One. In other words, no one can take the low place except he who is dwelling in the Master's presence. Let God's people be brought *there*; and you will not need to tell them to take the low place. The man who is dwelling in the secret place of the Most High—drinking the sweets of heavenly communion—will take *the right place*, whether that place may seem, in the eyes of others, to be the low place or not.

At this point some will very likely say: "But we thought that one in the path of communion was sure to take such a very low place that *all* would see

it, and admire such humility." But that does not follow. *Some* will see it. The spiritual eye will discern the true gold of heaven; while the fleshly eye will very likely treat it as the base coin of earth. Instead of seeing humility in such a brother, some will mark him down as a pattern of spiritual pride. But an illustration from Old-Testament history will best set forth our point. In 1 Sam. xvii. we find that David, fresh from his anointing (xvi. 13) as well as his twofold victory in the wilderness (xvii. 36), appears in the valley of Elah. Strong in faith, giving glory to God, he does not see why the uncircumcised Philistine should defy the armies of the living God (ver. 26). He offers to go out single-handed to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Nor was he thrusting himself forward, as if to keep out some other man from doing battle with Goliath. For forty days (ver. 16)—the probational period of Scripture—the giant had defied Israel. For forty days he had presented himself morning and evening, saying: "I defy the armies of Israel this day" (ver. 10). Full opportunity had thus been given for any man in Israel to do battle with the giant. Therefore David could not be accused of supplanting any one. Yet he was looked upon with an evil eye. Although treading the lowly path of confidence in Jehovah, his faith was marked down as pride, even by his own brother. Verse 28 tells that "Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few

sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart." We learn here that the man who treads the path of communion may not command the esteem of *every one*. David found discouragement from an unexpected quarter. "I know thy pride," said his brother. What an unwarranted condemnation of one who was conscious he was only doing the will of God! But so it has ever been. The carnal eye cannot discern the heavenly unction. The carnal mind can neither understand nor tolerate the doings of God through His chosen vessels; for the carnal mind "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. viii. 7). Eliab not only refused to meet Goliath, but was displeased that another—a younger brother—should *presume* to do what he had failed to do. But God giveth no account of His matters. He maketh choice of "whomsoever He will" to carry out His purposes; and it is for us to seek the anointed eye and the exercised heart, whereby we may recognise His sent ones, and perceive that which is of Him.

Eliab has his successors—men who, failing to do, or not fitted to do, a certain work, are yet loud in proclaiming the pride of the man whom God has sent to do it. Like the Jewish leaders, they will not enter in themselves, and those that are entering in they hinder. Nevertheless, Wisdom is justified of her children. They that are taught of God will hear Wisdom's voice, and perceive the hand of Him "whose goings forth have been

from of old, from everlasting" (Mic. v. 2). Israel was not without those who could take cognisance of the heavenly unction. There was one at least who, in the presence of Saul, bore witness to David, describing him as "a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and *the Lord is with him*" (1 Sam. xvi. 18).

AT HIS BEST.

YOU have dropped in to see brother A—, and you find that he is just giving one of the family a pretty sharp cut with the tongue. "Not very like a Christian profession," you say to yourself; "in fact I have found him out: I see now that he is a complete hypocrite after all." And you go away with the air of a man who has made a discovery. But you are drawing far too strong conclusions from your discovery. You have seen brother A— *at his worst*. That is all; and you entirely overlook the fact that neither his best nor his worst truly represents brother A—. Perhaps the next one who called on him went away with an entirely different impression. It may be that he found brother A— bitterly lamenting that the flesh had got even a momentary advantage; and mourning, in sackcloth and ashes, the very thing from which you were drawing all your uncharitable conclusions!

Again, at the prayer-meeting you hear

brother B—— pray. It seems such a humble, earnest prayer, that you rush at once to the conclusion that brother B—— is living in the third heaven. You fancy you have made a discovery. But stay a little. It may be that you have simply seen brother B—— *at his best*; and we know that his best does not give a true representation of the man. He *may* be what he seems in the prayer-meeting to be; but then it is very easy to be at your “best” in the prayer-meeting. You see you are again drawing a very sweeping conclusion from very meagre evidence. Some men offer up a long and fluent prayer, and yet live a very inconsistent life. If you never saw or heard of them except in some meeting of believers, you would look upon them as eminent saints. But go down to the world after them. Follow brother B—— out of the prayer-meeting door; and in a very few minutes you begin to wonder if that is the same brother you believed to be in the third heaven of spiritual experience. “Really, this is terrible,” you say; “I have been drawing my conclusions too fast.” Yes; that is just what you have been doing. When you base your opinion solely upon a man's professions of devotion, you may afterward discover that you have been simply putting a premium upon hypocrisy. And if you mark down a man as everything that is bad, simply because you have found him at “his worst,” you may find yourself looking with contempt upon one who knows more of the lowly spirit than you do yourself.

LED OF GOD.

WE have often heard the expression, “I was *led of God* to do such a thing;” and we readily admit that there is a leading of God. Yet, it is to be feared that the words, “I was led of God,” are often used in a careless and formal way, while after-events may plainly show that God had not been leading in the matter. God's leading has at least two marks: (1) It leads you to act in accordance with Scripture; and (2) it leads you to act in accordance with the Spirit of Christ.

God's leading never runs contrary to the written Word. We dare not expect Him to make a new revelation that shall run counter to the revelation He has already given in the Scriptures of Truth. Therefore, if any man say, “I am led of God,” and then run contrary to the written Word, let such man know that he is the victim of a deceived heart. God ever leads along the lines of truth.

Again, even when you have the testimony of Scripture that you are doing the right thing, you must see that it is done in the right spirit. Many a right enough thing has been carried out with fleshly energy, although accompanied with the solemn profession, “I was led of God.” But God never leads by the way of the flesh. When He leads, He provides the needed energy; and that energy is heavenly unction—not fleshly power. No strange fire shall ever ascend into His presence. “The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

MUST GO THROUGH THE FORM.

THE first stage of backsliding generally tends to close the believer's mouth as a witness. A brother with a sensitive conscience feels that it would be nothing less than hypocrisy to pray, and preach, and give out hymns, while he is in heart away from God. But there is a deeper stage in backsliding, in which—strange to say—the professed believer seems to be possessed of wonderful energy. He makes himself one of the most prominent men in “the work.” He is ready both to preach and pray; although it is clear to the spiritual that he is not in a condition for either the one or the other. He evidently feels he is in a bad state. But it would never do to let this be known. Therefore he is careful to take due part in the meetings. This, he fondly hopes will be sure to keep up his character as a man of God. No one will for a moment think that anything can be wrong with the inner life of one who makes such a creditable outward show! At least he lays this flattering unction to his soul; and soon fancies that he is not so bad after all! But if he succeeds in deceiving himself, he fails to deceive those with whom is the secret of the Lord. If the living water is flowing, God's saints will rejoice. But if it is merely stored-up water, kept for special occasions, and doing the same duty over and over again, it will have no effect upon the godly, except to cause them to cry out for the real thing.

We remember seeing a pamphlet

called, “The Mystery of Iniquity, in praying and singing hymns.” We did not read it; we only looked at the title. But we have no doubt there is ample room for a good few chapters on this form of iniquity. It is simply marvellous how some men can go through what is known as “the forms of religion.” They have been accustomed to take part in meetings. Therefore they *must go on*, no matter what condition of soul they are in. If they were silent, some one might infer that they were in a bad state; and this would never do! Man must be deceived, even although God be dishonoured!

Such men flourish from two causes. (1) They flourish because they are *allowed to flourish*. Faithful and godly testimony would either silence them, or it would help to make them manifest. But such testimony is awaiting. One is hindered by a false humility from interfering; while another feels that he is not in a condition to deal with the matter! (2) Such men flourish because of the low state of spiritual life among the Lord's people. Dead prayers and half-hearted ministry would find it hard to “live” in a revival atmosphere. The saints of God, by virtue of a new heavenly anointing, would utterly reject the false, and demand that they shall have either the true or nothing at all. Mere place-seekers would find it a very hard time; for the Ark of God would, if we may so speak, be brought into the very presence of the Dagon of hypocrisy; and Dagon would be sure to fall.

WE ARE NOT SURPRISED.

THE *Reaper*, in its September number, has still something to say as to the so-called "Brethren." On this occasion, however, the editor is saved the trouble of taking the sword himself. He simply inserts a letter from some one who professes to speak "from long experience among brethren;" and, as a result of that long experience, he comes down severely upon those with whom he had been formerly associated.

We need scarcely say that we are not at all surprised to see such a letter. It is well known that there are not a few professedly outside the camp who have very little sympathy with the great separation truths bearing on church-fellowship and going forth to the rejected Lord Jesus Christ. How these believers found their way outside the camp it is hard to understand; and it is still harder to understand why they *remain* outside the camp. They are constantly finding fault—bemoaning the evils among professedly separated believers, and extolling the excellencies of those who do not profess to be separated to the Name of the Lord at all! Then they will speak of "*you* brethren," as if they had no connection whatever with those they are addressing. Yet they partake of the same bread and the same cup! Now, we have no objection whatever to such believers holding their own opinions. But we say this, that if *we* held the same opinions we would not remain for a single day among so-called Brethren.

We believe this is the straightforward way of acting. There may be much to mourn over; and we praise God for every true mourner. But when a brother professes to be *in* the fellowship, and yet speaks and acts as if he were in some *other* fellowship, we cannot see that he is acting a consistent part. If his body is where his heart is not, he is simply a dead weight on the wheels of progress, so far as concerns the fellowship in which he professes to be.

When a brother of that kind leaves the fellowship of gathered-out believers, and carries away an evil report of the land (as he generally does) a certain section of Christians give him the right hand of fellowship at once; and his testimony—be it written or spoken—is accepted as the latest authority upon Separation Truth! A great point is gained when they can say, "Here is what So-and-so declares about the Brethren; and he knows them; for he speaks from long experience." But we do not think that Separation Truth will suffer much, or has ever suffered much, from opposition of that kind. Such testimony is always received with a certain amount of suspicion; and this feeling is increased when the opposer shelters himself under the cover of anonymity, as the *Reaper* correspondent has done. Mr. Gourlay we know; Mr. Caldwell we know; the editor of this Paper we know. But who is "H"? This much seems to be clear, that he is *not* among saints gathered to the Name. We can scarcely conceive it possible for one to write as he

has done, and yet to be even in nominal fellowship "outside the camp."

We need not take up the several charges in H's letter. He seems to have been in a very unhappy condition himself; or, it may be, that his lines, from some cause or other, have not fallen in pleasant places. He therefore concludes that "the whole thing" must be a failure. He has accordingly left it, and is now expressing his opinions in the shape of a wholesale condemnation, root and branch, of believers who have gone forth to the rejected Lord Jesus. But if he has been in a discontented mood, or (to be charitable) if he has come into unpleasant contact with his brethren, he must not fancy that all concerned are ready to leave the position to which God has called them, simply because "H" has condemned it. We have not so learned Christ. There are restless spirits — with many good points, no doubt — who, like the Athenians of old, are ever seeking after some new thing. While they are off upon that search, we seek grace whereby we may "strengthen the things which remain" (Rev. iii. 2).

The issue before us is a very simple one. If our church-position is according to Scripture, then we do *not* need a new church-position; for that would be an unscriptural position. The remedy is not to be found in that direction. If jarring sounds are heard within the family circle, it is poor counsel to advise the members to break up the family and set up house upon some new principle. Yet this is the very counsel that some are

giving at this time in the affairs of the church. But, let it be carefully noted, these advisers are utterly unable to define the "new thing" for which they are longing. They condemn "the Way" which we have found clearly revealed in holy Writ; but they cannot show a more excellent way. Indeed they have nothing whatever to put in its place. They cannot be called the apostles of a new theology; for they have no new theology to propound. We may be wrong in certain points (we do not profess infallibility); but we have *convictions*. So far as our church-fellowship is concerned we are convinced that we are treading the path which the Lord has commanded us to tread, and doing the thing that He has commanded to be done. Are the "thousand-and-one" believers who share these convictions to throw them up, and embrace they know not what, and drift they know not where? This would be surely letting fall the substance, and clutching at the shadow! We may need revival from the presence of the Lord—yea, we are longing for a flood-tide. But we have never learned from Scripture that such a revival time will be hastened by our "breaking up" and scattering to the four winds. Revival times are none the less, but all the more, likely to be found in the path of obedience. In the way of Thy commandments, O Lord, we shall wait for Thee.

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It is one mark of growth in spirituality, to be more afflicted by the pleasing, than by the distressing, temptations of Satan.

NOT IN KEEPING.

FROM Ps. cxxxvii. we learn that God's ancient people refused to sing the Lord's song in a strange land. They called upon their right hand to forget its cunning, and their tongue to cleave to the roof of the mouth, if they preferred not Jerusalem above their chiefest joy. This is touching. But it is instructive as well as touching. We learn even from these children of the captivity that *anywhere* will not do for the Lord's song. In the things of God one thing must be *in keeping with another*. Everything must be in divine harmony. The Lord's song in a strange land! "Never," replied the true Israelite, longing for the courts of Zion; "I refuse to sing." It is clear that these ancient captives had considerable "light." They had a keen perception of what was "seemly" in holy things. Many would have adapted themselves to their new circumstances. We are told to-day that "when you live in Rome, you must do as the Romans do." But the captives by the rivers of Babylon did not understand this line of reasoning. They refused to sing; and their refusal is not without some lesson for us.

In seeking to serve God in the present day, let us see that we do not violate the harmony of divine things. The Lord's song and the strange land will not harmonise. Neither will the Lord's song and the strange fire of fleshly excitement. Nor will the Lord's song harmonise with the unholy lips of a Christless worldling,

no matter how musical the voice may be. Nor will the Lord's song be found in keeping with the strange noise of trumpets and drums in the service of the holy God. In heavenly things there is a beautiful harmony. Everything is "in keeping." The spiritual mind cannot fail to observe a certain "fitness of things" when God is leading. But when man must be pleased—when the world must be imitated—the heavenly harmony is lost; and the godly in Israel have to groan as they behold the mixture of the gold of heaven with the clay of earth.

JOTTINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

ONENESS of mind in the Lord.
How blessed the possibility!
How desirable the attainment!

The second verse of chap. iv. shows the importance of such a matter, as our readers may see by noting the repetition of the words "I beseech." The force of the word *beseech* is, "calling to." This, moreover, in the sense of *appeal*; ay, and of very command—savouring thus of affectionate entreaty, as also of subduing authority.

Since it pleased God to take notice of this want of oneness of mind in the Lord, on the part of two sisters in His church at *Philippi*, is not *His voice* to men brethren doubly loud as regards their being of one mind

IN THE LORD?

while this very injunction uproots the

too common delusion and snare that saints in the churches of God may or can with impunity

AGREE TO DIFFER !

It appears to us a principle of God to begin with the weaker—that is, the younger, and subject ones—when He seeks to draw His people nearer, that they may become more like unto Himself. Hence, indeed, all that He lays upon the weaker, as comely to them, He in a double measure makes comely in the stronger, and those in the place of authority or rule. So necessary was this oneness of mind in the Lord that the Apostle requested his true yokefellow to help unto this very end, not forgetting the bye-past life of these women, with Clement also, concerning whom the diversity of mind may have existed. Neither would he that this his genuine yoke-fellow should forget his other fellowlabourers, all whose names are in the Book of Life.

The character and sphere of the labour (that is, the *striving-together*) of these women in the Gospel is easy to be understood by looking back to chap. i. 27. There the whole church of Philippians is exhorted in one spirit, with one soul to *strive-together* (same word as "labour" above) for the faith of the Gospel. Wherefore, it is evidently plain that what these women did was common to, as well as binding upon, all the church as such. A moment's reflection will show that public declaration of the Gospel on the part of each is not meant ; neither is it possible.

RISEN SAVIOUR! ROCK OF AGES!

ISA. XII. 2 : XXVI. 4, R. V. MARGIN.

RISEN Saviour ! Rock of Ages !
Steadfast, strong, and sure for me,
Wild although the tempest rages,
I am safe in trusting Thee.

Safe ! for Thou canst fail me never—
Safe in spite of storm and strife ;
For I'm joined to Thee for ever,
In Thy risen, endless life !

Risen Saviour ! Rock of Ages !
Who my sins in sorrow bore,
How the thought my fear assuages—
Thou dost live for evermore !

Now no curse for Thee remaineth,
Not a charge to Thee is laid ;
Not a spot my soul retaineth,
Like Thyself in Thee I'm made.

Risen Saviour ! Rock of Ages !
JAH JEHOVAH is Thy Name.
Changeling I of life's strange stages !—
Thou for evermore the same !
In Thy deep humiliation

Thorns were platted for Thy brow !
Haste Thy glorious coronation—
Take my blood-bought homage now.

Risen Saviour ! Rock of Ages !
Mighty Conq'ror o'er the grave,
Thine almighty arm engages
Me eternally to save.
Not my strength, nor my believing,
But Thy truth and faithfulness ;
Not my weakness, nor my cleaving,
But Thy changeless power and grace.

Risen Saviour ! Rock of Ages !
Thou shalt be my strength and song
When the foe the conflict wages,
And the strife is fierce and long.
I at last must be victorious,
Thou for me wilt overcome ;
O ! Thy rest shall then be glorious—
Sweet, eternal rest of Home !

ADVERSARIES TO THE TRUTH.

THERE are many adversaries to the truth of Separation unto God, ready to catch at anything that may be used as a handle against the truth. If we are crying out to the Lord for a revival time, these adversaries turn round and say, "What a terrible condition you must be in! Your *Separation Truth* is evidently a failure." On the other hand, if we praise God for what He has wrought, the adversaries tell us we are lifted up with spiritual pride! It is impossible to please them. But we are thankful to say that we have no such aim. We have taken our stand on the *unchanging truth* of God; therefore, although the mountains be removed, we will not fear. Men may change, and do change; but God and His word change not.

The adversary of the truth is a strange individual. If he finds some professedly separated believers to be what he considers "a sham," he comes to the conclusion that the truth of separation to God has been a failure, and that a *new thing* should be started. But here the adversary shows how unreasonable he is. If, in *Gospel work*, he finds some sham professors who declare they are saved and going to heaven, he should in the same way conclude that "the Gospel has failed"; and that a new Gospel must be found! But he does not draw any such conclusion. The Gospel remains unchanged, in spite of false professors. And the truth of *Separation to God*

remains unchanged, in spite of failures in those professing to have come out to the Name of the Lord.

Take an illustration from the Old Testament. Israel's centre of gathering was Jerusalem; for there Jehovah had set His name. Now, when Israel got into a "bad state," we do not find them saying, "God's ordinances have proved a failure: we must give up Jerusalem, and the temple worship, and build *some new thing*; and then all will come well." Not at all. The declension of Israel as a people did not affect the position God had placed them in. *It was not a new position they needed: it was a new seeking unto God.* Therefore, to all God's saints separated to Himself, we would say: "Beware of the false reasoning of the adversaries of the truth. *It is not a new position we need: it is an enduement with power from on high.*" God has already gathered us to the Man whom He delights to honour; and there is no other centre to which we can be gathered. With the unchanging One, and the unchanging word, we have all things that pertain to life and godliness. If we have cause to praise God for revival times, let us not refrain our lips. If, on the other hand, it is meet to seek the valley of humiliation, and cry out for a revival from the presence of the Lord, let us not be deterred by wondering what certain believers will think. We are bought with a price, and are not servants of men. The adversary will find occasion against us, no matter what course we pursue. Therefore, let us seek

God with the whole heart. While the adversary is seeking occasion, let us seek unto our God, that there may be a mighty revival of His power; and that in deed and in truth every one who owns the gathering Name of Christ, may adorn His doctrine and manifest His spirit.

SACRED CONCERTS.

THE religious concert is becoming popular. The world and the god of this world are finding that a better trade can sometimes be done by giving their entertainment a flavour of religion. The world now and again gives a concert that is all "religion" from beginning to end. This is called a "sacred concert." Do the worldlings go to hear it? Certainly. They go in crowds. They do not object to a little religion now and again, provided the music is good. We are not surprised that *they* should go. The surprising thing is, that professing children of God should be found in such uncongenial surroundings. The servants of the Devil gather on a platform to "perform" pieces that are supposed to be sacred to the Lord Almighty; and professed children of God are found enjoying the performance! Truly we have fallen upon evil times. You may appeal to Scripture in order to show up the iniquity of the proceedings;—you may quote such passages as, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord"—"Shall the dead praise Thee?"—"What hast *thou* to do,

to declare My statutes?" But your words are seemingly without effect. "We see no harm," is the reply: "we enjoyed ourselves amazingly." Very likely. But how did it come that the professing saint enjoyed himself at the world's sacred concert? It was simply because he had ceased to enjoy the Lord in his own soul. Our hearts cannot at one and the same time be made glad by the wine of heaven and be entertained by a performance under the guise of religion, at the hands of the Devil's servants.

In the line of sacred concerts the world seems to have made a new discovery. It has discovered that a sacred concert on Lord's-day evening is likely to "take" with the people! In several country towns these concert companies have turned up, and advertised what is called a "service of sacred song." The servants of the Devil are very accommodating. They can suddenly become religious when it suits their purpose. After singing the world's songs all week, they can put on the garb of sanctity, and serve up a sacred entertainment that will be "sure to please everybody." The worldling does not object to a good entertainment at any time; and as for Christians, many are sure to be caught; for, although it is the Lord's Day, the service is to be of *sacred* song. The world knows what it is doing. That word "sacred" has a magic effect. The world is aware of this, and knows how to use the charm. The result is, that professing believers are found elbow-

ing their way into the world's "sacred concert," even on Lord's-day night!

There has been testimony against this new form of iniquity; but we believe there is room for more testimony. Even men of the world have been known to condemn and expose its unblushing hypocrisy; and when such is the case, it surely becomes God's people to beware of all such snares of the Devil; while it is doubly needful that the trumpet of testimony give forth no uncertain sound as to these new inventions in the way of apostasy.

THE CENTRE OF ATTRACTION.



F, by any means, the Sun were to be suddenly blotted out of existence, the earth would at once lose its centre of attraction, and drift helplessly through space. Now, what the Sun is to the earth, Christ is to the believer. The Son of God is the great attractive power by which God's people are kept in the path of life divine. Apart from Christ, we would be just so many wandering stars, for whom would be reserved "the blackness of darkness for ever." Without Christ as our great centre of attraction, we would at once leave the circle of His influences, and rush aimlessly onwards, having no fixed path to tread—here to-day, and away to-morrow; and the next day no one knows where. But let Christ be acknowledged as the great controlling force, and the believer is kept in an even path—steadfast, unmovable.

In the works of creation we see that there must be a centre of attraction. The planets in these heavens pursue their path through the fields of space with amazing exactness and regularity. We never hear of a "collision" among these heavenly bodies. Each keeps its own orbit, and runs its own race silently and smoothly, with no note of discord—no sound of conflict. What is the cause? It is found in this, that they have a *centre of attraction*. In the world of creation we see that there must be such a centre, if each of the heavenly bodies is to keep its proper position and run its appointed race. In the realm of Redemption the same rule applies; for Christ is there the great central attractive power. The world refuses to respond to His power, and is therefore in darkness even until now. But God's saints—His holy ones, who have known His saving Name—are found bowing to the great Centre. It is true that there is in them a tendency to leave the circle of His influences, just as there is in the earth a tendency to leave the place in which it moves, were it not for the Sun's attraction. But greater is He that is in the believer than he that is in the world. Let Christ's attractive power be acknowledged, and He shall draw us and keep us in the path of heavenly communion, no matter how many tendencies there may be to impel us into the darkness of an unbelieving world.

—♦—
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A GODLY LIFE, A HAPPY LIFE.

AN aged brother, now gone to his rest, was wont to say: "Supposing there were no hereafter, a godly life's a happy life." Thus quaintly expressed, a great truth is brought before us. In these days Heaven is too often held out as a mere reward in the distant future, after a life of sorrow and disappointment here. It is true, there are sorrows in the wilderness path. This world has been called "the vale of sorrows." He whose life was in perfect unison with Heaven was called "a Man of sorrows" (Isa. liii. 3). It is true that there are disappointments—speaking after the manner of men; for, as one has said, "disappointments, to the child of faith, are simply intimations of the will of God." Yet, in spite of all the trials of the journey, there is even here such a beauty in holiness that the child of faith would not exchange it for all the glory of earth. Conformity to the image of Christ is happiness; because conformity to His image means freedom from the power of sin; and we are only happy as we are thus free. There can be no true happiness while sin is having the dominion. There may be "joy," but

it will not be joy *in the Lord*. Wherever there is a godly life, there will be happiness, so far as heavenly relationships are concerned. In earthly relationships the storm may rage. "In the world," said the Master, "ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world" (Jno. xvi. 33).

A godly life is a happy life, because to be godly is to be *God-like*—the true signification of "godly." They who are followers of God as dear children, will daily prove that all *His* paths are pleasantness.

Then, a godly life is a happy life, because Christ is on the throne of the heart. Wherever He reigns, there is the calm of Heaven. We speak of the millennium as a time yet future; and so, speaking literally, it is. Yet there is such a thing as living even now in the spirit of that time. The millennium will owe its blessedness to this, that *Christ is reigning*. That which makes a millennium *then*, can make one *now*. In every heart where Jesus reigns as Lord, there is already the millennium in its spirit and power. Whatever be his earthly condition, the man is happy who thus has Christ enthroned. "Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord."

Again, a godly life is a happy life, because there is the testimony of a good conscience. There can be no real happiness so long as conscience is crying out and saying, "You are doing wrong, and you know it." Purity is of the essence of happiness. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. v. 8). There is not a cloud between. They observe the operation of His hand. They see and acknowledge that His ways are good and pleasant. They delight in His law. They follow His leading. They do the right thing—the thing that God directs. Thus doing *righteousness*, they find that "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. xxxii. 17).

We thus see that the child of faith, as compared with the worldling, has treasures more to be desired than gold—yea, than much fine gold. The child of faith has a heaven-upon-earth, of which the worldling has never dreamed. We say "child of faith"; for every child of God is not walking by faith. Every child of God is not enjoying the millennial reign in the heart. The mere fact that you have been born again will not of itself confer upon you a life of felicity on earth. If you live like the worldling, you shall have the worldling's unrest. If your affections are centred *below*, you cannot expect to enjoy the peace that comes from *above*. "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord" (Ps. cvii. 43).

"I MUST DECREASE."

(JOHN III. 30.)

NOT very long ago a certain great preacher said of another preacher who had "newly arrived"—"He must increase, but I must decrease." Of the respective merits of the two men we are not able to speak. But the man who used these words is possessed of true greatness, whether he be a great preacher or not. It takes a man with a generous and unselfish nature to be found saying of a brother preacher, "He must increase, but I must decrease." Men with "narrow souls" never rejoice when some new arrival threatens to excel *them* in the field of ministry. They view him with suspicion. His weak points are searched out. His abilities are questioned. His enthusiasm is set down as strange fire. Envy sees no beauty in him, that he should be desired. But it is different with those who have that largeness of heart which was a special gift of Heaven to Solomon of old (1 Kings iv. 29). If they hear the Bridegroom's voice, they are well content to stand by and rejoice, although another must increase while they have to decrease. Yet men of the large heart are seldom called to decrease—at least through a generous acknowledgment of the gifts of their brethren. The greatness of a noble spirit loses nothing by acknowledging the virtues of another. It is only the worthless that are constantly watching lest their own worth should be undervalued.

WHY THE DIFFERENCE ?

WHY is it that a fleshly action in some believers does not look so heinous as in certain other believers? One believer, for example, speaks in a fleshly way ; and you do not remark much out of place. Another believer commits the same offence, and lo! you are astounded. The hideousness of the flesh at once makes itself manifest. How is this? It is easily explained. Anything of a carnal nature is very easily seen in a *spiritual* man. You did not expect that *from him*. You are surprised. The fleshly action presents such a contrast to the spiritual character of the man, that you cannot fail to remark it. A picture always looks dark against a clear background. Even a very small blot is easily seen on a sheet of snow-white paper. We know that where the light is brightest, the shadow is darkest ; and, the brighter the life is for God, the darker will every fleshly spot appear. Thus it is that the un-Christ-like word strikes so sharply on the ear, when in an unguarded moment it proceeds from one whom we esteem as a man of God. But it is entirely different with one who is not a spiritual man. You hardly expect any manifestations of grace on his part : therefore you are not surprised at the absence of such manifestations. If he speaks in a fleshly way, it does not strike you as out of place *for him*. If a godly brother were to do the same thing, he would be in danger of losing his reputation. But in the carnal-

minded believer the action is viewed as in perfect keeping with his reputation. Therefore his reputation does not suffer ! This, we are satisfied, is the true and only explanation why a fleshly action in some believers attracts no attention, while in others it appears exceedingly heinous.

NO CAUSE FOR ENVY.

IN the world around us, every supposed "good" has its counteracting evil. Every path has its difficulties — every condition in life has its drawbacks. The day-labourer, earning his bread by the sweat of his face, looks on the lord of the manor as a man that *must* be happy. The great man has everything (or is supposed to have everything) that can make life a pleasure ; and the poor man sighs, saying : " I wish I were you." But, if he could change places with his rich neighbour he would very likely find that things and men are not always what they seem. Perhaps that rich man would give half his fortune to sleep the sleep of his day-labourer ! The wealthy, as a rule, spend an unsatisfying, because an aimless, life ; and are often engaged from morning till night in the hopeless task of trying to *kill time* ! The blessing of repose, even in earthly things, can only be enjoyed after honest toil, of whatever nature that toil may be. There would be less envy in the world if we saw life's *dark side* in those with whom all seems to go well. If we knew our wealthy

brother's cross, we should most likely choose to carry our own cross, rather than have his—even with his gold. Envy is often excited by the successes of some wealthy speculator. He is making money, and seems to make it with ease. But who shall tell what tempests are raging in that breast! He lives in constant dread of evil tidings. He may be laying his plans for having "a good stroke"; when lo! the wind of fortune blows the wrong way, and he loses. With mortified pride, and lightened purse, he sits down to curse his own shortsightedness, and to lay plans for recovering all he has lost. But, whether gaining or losing, a dread uncertainty haunts him. He broods over his speculations by day—dreams of them by night. The finer feelings of the man are soon frozen up. The world of humanity, with its ten thousand festering sores, is forgotten. Everything is lost sight of in the mad race for success—fortune—call it what you will. But while the great speculator, in spite of his thousands, is reaping the gnawing unrest of those who *will* be rich, the child of faith (day-labourer though he be) is tasting the sweetness of rest after a day of toil, and thanking Heaven that all things are his, for he is Christ's, and Christ is God's! Therefore envy not the prosperity of the wicked. "Godliness with contentment is great gain."

WE must be free, before we can serve: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me."

THE PRESENT BLESSING.

IT matters not whether you be a believer in "the second blessing" or the hundred-and-second blessing. The great question is this: Am I enjoying the *present* blessing?

Some speak as if every believer must possess what is known as "the second blessing," before he can possibly enter into his true experience as a child of God. If you do not advocate the second blessing you are treated by some as if you were in a very unsatisfactory condition. In fact, without *it* (the second blessing) you are looked upon as one who has never entered into "the rest of faith," and who is only in the most elementary stage of the Christian life. So firmly has this idea of second blessing taken possession of some, that the "doctrine" has now become the leading tenet with not a few professed believers.

We need not say that our sympathies are not with the second-blessing advocates. If a believer finds that he has been living a low life in Zion; and if, by the good hand of God, he passes into a new and deeper experience of communion with the Father, then we rejoice. He may call the new experience "the second blessing" if he pleases; yet the fact remains, that he has been drawn experimentally nearer to God; and it is in this that we rejoice. But whenever that believer makes his own experience a *pattern* for the experience of all other believers, he makes a very grievous mistake. It is at this point that so

many of the second-blessing people have gone wrong. If you have found a deepened experience and a more abundant life in connection with what you term "the second blessing," praise God for it. But do not sit down as if the second blessing were to be *the last* blessing. If you have needed a second blessing, you may need a third, and a fourth. You have therefore no warrant to found a second-blessing doctrine. One who has experienced a *third* blessing has just as good a right to found a new doctrine on the necessity for a *third* blessing. We object to the phrase, "*The second blessing.*" Call it a second blessing, if you will; and that will leave room for many blessings yet to come. But "*the second blessing*" implies that you must secure it; and having secured *it*, you have secured everything!

Now, if we are addressing one of the second-blessing advocates, we would ask, What do you make of the godly brother who tells us he got such a wonderful blessing from the Lord at conversion that he has lived in the power of it to this day? What has he *lost* by retaining the joy of his espousals? He has lost nothing. He has gained much. His theology certainly goes higher than yours; while his experience as certainly goes deeper.

Then, what do you make of the brother who has experienced a "second blessing," but, finding there was more to follow, has entered into a third, and a fourth; finding each experience but the

vestibule that has led him into new and deeper experiences of the love and grace of his Father, God? From strength to strength he has gone. He rests not in any experience or in any blessing. He loses count of the "blessings," and seeks to find his all in the Blessor Himself; saying, like the apostle of old, "That I may know *Him*." Therefore; whatever our experience may have been—a great abiding first blessing—or a never-to-be-forgotten second blessing—or wave after wave of revival from the Lord's presence—let us simply praise God that by *His grace* alone we are what we are.

UNTIL HE IS TRIED.

JUST as the strength of a chain is found by testing its weakest link, so man's moral strength is often discovered by touching his weakest point. A *test* of some kind is needed in order to convince us of our own weakness. You cannot say much about a man who has never been *tried*. No one can tell how he will stand the fire until he has been put into it. In Matt. xix. 16–22 we read of one who came to Christ, seeking eternal life. The young man seemed to be possessed of a wonderful catalogue of virtues. One commandment after another he professed to have observed with scrupulous care. But the great Searcher of hearts, who knew what was in man, at once put His finger on the weak point. "If thou wilt be perfect," He said, "go and sell that thou hast, and give to

the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come and follow Me." The words fell with startling effect on the young man's ear. His fancied perfection vanished in a moment. He was a worshipper of the golden idol. The weak point had been touched; and in that touch his true character was revealed. He went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions. Doubtless he had long passed current as a true seeker after the kingdom of God, persuading himself as well as others that his was a devotion of no ordinary kind. But the *testing-time* came; and he discovered what he had never suspected before—that he was *not* prepared to leave all and follow Christ.

Thus it is with many. They make great professions of devotion to the Master. They are sincere, so far as they know. But then they do not know themselves. A testing-time comes. They are called to pass through a storm, in which they find themselves subjected to an unusual strain. The weak spot is touched; and they discover, perhaps with a measure of surprise, that they are not the saints they supposed themselves to be! Many a believer will run smoothly enough so long as his surrounding circumstances are calm and peaceful; and for a long time he may pass as a pattern of devotion. But the whole scene is changed when the storm arises, and the winds blow and beat upon that man's profession. It is then manifest that he had not been drawing his supplies from heavenly sources. He had merely

been floating with the general tide of profession; and, when the storm arose, he was helpless to resist its blast.

Not long ago some half-dozen ships lay at anchor in a certain bay in a distant sea. All looked very much alike, so far as sea-worthiness was concerned. But a trying time was at hand—a time that would make it manifest whether they were what they seemed to be. A hurricane swept over that spot. Only one of these ships escaped; and that by running in the teeth of the wind, and so gaining the open sea. Thus, in the calm waters of a believers' conference, or quietly at anchor in the even tenor of our assembly life, we may pass for excellent Christians. But we need not boast, or compliment ourselves on our attainments in the divine life. Some unlooked-for tempest may suddenly let us see how many cracks there are in the timbers of our profession. Let us therefore not despise trial, although for the present it seem not joyous but grievous. Trial is designed of Heaven for the working of patience and the strengthening of faith. It is well to find out our weak points—not that we may go away sorrowful, like the young man of Matt. xix; but that, with unencumbered foot, we may follow Christ anew rejoicing. The more dross that is burned up *here*, the less there will be to burn in that *Day* when the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.



TRUE confession of Christ will ever be accompanied by denial of self.

MORDECAI THE JEW.

MORDECAI would not bow down to that which was not of God (Esth. iii. 5). He refused to make obeisance to Haman the Agagite. Others might be impressed by the imposing appearance of one who stood so well with the king. But Mordecai looked deeper than mere appearances. He recognised in Haman the descendant of Amalek—a race who had ever been the determined enemies of the people of God. We know what Amalek did to Israel on the journey up through the wilderness (Ex. xvii. 8). We know that it was the Amalekites whom Saul was commanded to utterly destroy (1 Sam. xv. 3); and had he faithfully carried out the divine mandate it is likely that no Haman would have turned up in a later day, to compass the destruction of the remnant of Israel. We also know that Agag, whom Saul suffered to escape, was hewn in pieces by the sword of Samuel in Gilgal (1 Sam. xv. 33). The faithful Mordecai would doubtless know all this. Therefore he refused to do reverence to the Agagite.


To a casual onlooker it might appear that Mordecai was pursuing a wrong path in refusing to make obeisance to Haman. The aged Jew seemed to be the only man who failed to do reverence to the descendant of Agag. Why should he be so peculiar? Would it not have secured peace if Mordecai had done what everybody was doing? Was his refusal not clearly bringing down on

himself and his people the wrath of one in a high position? Surely it would be to Mordecai's interest to make a mere bow of the head; while his refusing to do so seemed to be madness. Thus the carnal mind would reason. But Mordecai, like every true child of faith, was reckless of consequences, provided he was found "doing righteousness." If a bow of the head involved the surrender of a principle, then Mordecai refused to bow the head. He might have to suffer for his refusal. But he was prepared to suffer. He might be told that everybody was bowing down to Haman; but this argument of the multitude had no weight with Mordecai; although, alas! it is a most powerful argument with many to-day. People might set him down as obstinate—self-willed—uncharitable. Yet he remained unmoved. He calmly "bided" his time. The man of faith can always afford to wait "the development of events." But while events were developing themselves, the clouds gathered thicker around Mordecai's path. It was clear that he was doomed, and that all his people were doomed (Esth. iii. 6). Was he not convinced *now* that he had taken a wrong path? No. A storm of opposition is no evidence that we have taken a wrong path. The doubting and the short-sighted, looking only at the clouds of circumstances, are found fleeing to-day if circumstances frown, and following to-morrow if circumstances are favourable. But the child of faith takes his stand upon the solid rock of divine principle, and will not flee, no matter

how the storms of persecution may lower above his head. Such was Mordecai. He had a clear, fixed principle to go upon; and he kept to that principle. They might misunderstand him—speak evil of him—plot against him. Yet he kept to his principle. In all this, Mordecai presents a striking contrast to many in the present day who are ready to bow down to whatever happens to be popular. They may lift their voice against some fleshly Haman to-day. But to-morrow they find that the Agagite is going to “commend himself.” Therefore they think it *wise* to say nothing. And next day they are found making obeisance with the multitude! Such is man—only vanity at his best. But such is not the man of faith. Such was not Mordecai. He asks the simple question: “What is God’s path?” Having found that path, he treads it, even although the people are against him to a man. To the carnal eye he may seem to be making a great mistake. But in due time everything is clear, and Mordecai stands forth as a great deliverer of his people. Such are the men whom God ever selects for the deliverance of Israel. We never find Him honouring the man of policy—the man who must go out and find how the wind of popular opinion is blowing before he can tell you what is God’s path! In such uncertain guides the Lord’s people will never recognise the heaven-sent deliverer.

THE patient spirit is more to be prized than the gifted tongue.

“RESERVED” AND “KEPT.”

N 1 Pet. i. 4, 5 we have an inheritance *reserved* for a people, and a people *kept* for an inheritance. The inheritance is “*reserved* in Heaven for you, who are *kept*.” This is in direct contrast with Israel of old. They, too, had an inheritance—an earthly inheritance; while ours is a heavenly—“*reserved in Heaven.*” Israel lost their inheritance. Ours is not left in our keeping: it is reserved for us; and that which is reserved in Heaven cannot be lost.

And not only is the inheritance secured, but the people are secured for whom the inheritance is reserved. “Kept by the power of God through faith” (ver. 5). The One who saves is the One who keeps; for whom He justified, them He also glorified” (Rom. viii. 30). Thus in the dispensation of grace we see grace reigning. God is calling out a heavenly people—reserving for them a heavenly inheritance—and keeping them by heavenly power. He who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Christ Jesus (Phil. i. 6).

NOT to take any side strongly is no evidence of a large soul or a great purpose. It is generally an indication of littleness. The furrows drawn by a firm hand are strongly and deeply drawn. It is no surface work; soil and subsoil are turned over with a decision which implies that, if the work is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well.

THE ABSALOM REBELLION.

Fifth Paper.

THERE now remained nothing but for Absalom to seize the throne.

His flattery had done its work; and his spies, scattered through all the land of Israel, were but waiting the signal for the proclamation: "Absalom reigneth in Hebron." At the appointed moment the signal was given. Absalom was proclaimed king. The highest pinnacle of his ambition was reached—the desire of his heart had been accomplished; for we must remember that the words "he that seeketh findeth" have a wider application than to the seeking of that which is right. Absalom's case is one out of many, to show that the seeking of that which is wrong is often "rewarded" with "success." God sometimes allows even His people to be filled with their own way, that they may learn how evil that way is. "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul" (Ps. cvi. 15).

Absalom's *success* in reaching the throne was no proof that the throne was his. Yet, with the multitude there is no argument like success. Let a man of the most meagre qualifications assume to be something among God's people—let him aim at a position of power, and *gain* that position; and at once the multitude is ready to do him homage. But let him fail to secure the coveted position, and the multitude at once casts him out. He may be endowed with all the Christian virtues. But, if he does not

secure and hold the position of one who is great in Israel, he is looked upon as nothing. The multitude is never found admiring virtue in lowly guise. Its idols must have one great qualification—they must be successful; and if they are successful, it seems to matter little although they have not a single other qualification!

In the religious world to-day many a man is reckoned great, simply because he is great in *ambition*. Possessed of a good address, a retentive memory, and a fluent tongue, he soon learns how to "carry away" the people. He uses his gifts to "the best advantage." His audiences are charmed. He knows his power; and he takes care to see that it does not fail of its effect. But it is not *spiritual* power, albeit many are hanging on his lips as if he were the bearer of tidings, direct from the throne on high! Take away his "gift of language," as scientific men call it, and what would you have left? Nothing that truly goes to make a man great! Thus it is with many great preachers to-day. They can lay down a line of truth "as clear as a sunbeam," as the saying goes; and they can unfold mysteries of Redemption in such a way as to raise the smile of wonder on a thousand faces. Yet that strange *something* that we call "unction" is awaiting. The address *dazzles*, but it does not *melt*. It displays *mind*; but it lacks *soul*. You wonder at the preacher's intellect; but you are not arrested by his heavenly-mindedness. You are not allured by any fragrance from the

heavenly fields. Preachers of that kind grapple with the *intellect*; but they do not affect the *heart*. And in so far as they arouse the admiration of the people, they only do what Absalom did,—attract to themselves, instead of attracting to the Lord's Anointed.

In 2 Sam. xv. 12 we find that "the people increased continually with Absalom." The cause of the usurper was gaining new adherents every day. "The conspiracy was strong." This is ever one of the sorest trials to the man of faith,—to see some unrighteous cause flourishing; yea, and flourishing through the support of undoubted children of God. But they who have had any lengthened experience in the Lord's service will have learned that men of stability are few, compared with the many who are ready to run whenever some Absalom blows the trumpet which is to inaugurate a new order of rule in Israel. The "fickle nature of human nature" was the chief element to which Absalom owed his brief success; and it was from that element that he drew his chief support. The character of his adherents may be seen in the description of the two hundred men that followed him out of Jerusalem. "They went in their simplicity, and they knew not anything" (ver. 11). They supported a new movement before they had even tested its claims! They rejected the leadership of the Lord's anointed to fight under the banner of a mere adventurer! It was truly a strange time in Israel's history. Yet we have seen as strange times in the

church's history. Human nature is the same now as it was in David's day. Grace, it must be admitted, makes a wonderful difference; but that is only when grace is reigning. If some Absalom conspiracy come suddenly into view, it will not take at unawares those who are walking in the light of Heaven. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. There were men in the Absalom rebellion who stood firm for David. They might be in the minority, and have little prospect of seeing the rule of God re-established in Israel. Yet they continued steadfastly in the heaven-appointed path, refusing alike to be charmed by Absalom's music, or to be bought up by his flatteries.

—♦—

THE fewer "pattern" lives there are, the harder will it be for us to live "a life of faith upon the Son of God." The influence of example is a far more powerful thing than the influence of preaching, whether that example be good or bad. The lamentable thing is, that a bad example is far more likely to be followed than a good one. Yet, the example of a devoted life is not without its fruit, as it shall not be without its reward. It is a law of the Kingdom that "He that is of God, heareth God's words,"—a passage which, though pointing specially to Christ, has yet a true reference to all who bow to the Father's will. And we know that God never speaks louder than by the life of one who is *all* for *Him*. It is written of Christ: "The life was the light of men."

JOTTINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

REJOICE in the Lord alway ; yea, again it is said,
REJOICE !

Earlier in this epistle (iii. 1) the Apostle had said, "Finally,"—that is, for the rest, or as regards all else—"Rejoice in the Lord." Surely there is here "*double*" for all thy sorrow ; drooping, tried, disconsolate saint. Listen ! and take in the word of love and cheer. "Rejoice in the Lord **ALWAY.**"

It is only as we heed such an injunction that we can well endeavour to let our moderation (gentleness or forbearance) be known unto *all* men ; and that, in the sustaining consciousness of the Lord being close beside us—even Him that hath said, "I will never leave, and will not by any means ever turn aside from thee." Wherefore, we may boldly say, "I will not fear ;" while we ask in the energising power of faith : "What shall, or can, man do unto me?" (compare Ps. cxviii. 6 ; Heb. xiii. 6). Alas ! that we who are the Lord's should live so much, and be so contented without, the apprehension of His being so near. It is our privilege to see Him always before our face ; ay, at our right hand, that we should not be moved. Therefore may our heart be glad, until our lips greatly rejoice when we sing unto Him who thus has redeemed our life. By such communion and exercise of spirit shall we be equipped and enabled to live the mighty manner of life expressed in chap. iv. 6 :

Being anxiously careful for nothing ; prayerful for everything ; and thankful for all. Whether we are, or are not, so living, may be determined or known by us each for ourselves. Fulfilling verse 6, the divine result is : "And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding (thank God it is not "surpasseth all realization"!)—that peace shall, as an efficient force holds a fort or garrison, so keep our hearts and minds (the *thinking* faculty) **IN CHRIST JESUS.** Wherefore, brethren, again "as regards everything"—the true, the venerable, the righteous, the pure, the lovely, the well-reported of—let us *think* upon, yea revel in, these things ; if to us there be virtue and praise therein. And if, as regards what we take pleasure in, it be otherwise with any, they shall do well to examine themselves whether they be in *The Faith*. The things learned, and received, and heard, and seen in the Apostle who is pattern of them who believe upon Christ Jesus unto life eternal, the Spirit would have all such persons **DO !**

We jot that the above order is divinely instructive, binding every Christian to an entire whole, and not to selected parts, of that wonderful pattern life and person. Little wonder that individual Christians have not the God of peace with them ; and still less wonder that Churches of God are so disturbed ; since on every hand it is alleged and acted upon that most important parts of that "pattern Man's life, etc.," (2 Tim. iii. 10-12) are
 "EXCEPTIONAL,"
 and therefore, though revealed to be

learned, received, heard and seen in him are
NOT DONE.

And not being done, God, as the God of peace, is not with such. Hence the disquiet and lack of unanimity that is often mutually deplored by the persuaded, obedient saint, and the unpersuaded disobedient saint, that find themselves in yoke they never had known, if, ere being yoked, the things revealed in connection with Paul had been learned, received, heard, seen, and then done. Regarding which, let every heart pray

“JEHOVAH SHALOM,”

Jud. vi. 24, provided that of such it be true,

“JEHOVAH SHAMMAH”

Ezek. xviii. 35 ; Matt. xviii. 20 ; Heb. ii. 12 ; while we seek for ourselves the fulfilment of Heb. xiii. 20, 21. J. B.

—♦—

A CLOSER walk may entail a deeper trial. There can be no “promotion” in the divine life without a bringing low. This is why the longings for a holier life are often answered by the experience of a sharper conflict. Dross has to be taken away ; and that requires the action of *fire*. While the fire is doing its work, we may think it strange that we should be subjected to such a trial. (1 Pet. iv. 12). Yet, if we give heed to the exhortation of Scripture, we will not think the fire “a strange thing.” Our God is purifying unto Himself a people. The work of purification may not seem to us to be joyous but grievous. If, however, we are *exercised* thereby, the peaceable fruits of righteousness shall appear in due time.

MUST TELL FOR GOOD.

IT is true that a carnal-minded man, or a believer out of communion, may be the means of doing great harm ; but it is also true that a saint *in* communion may be the means—yea, *shall* be the means—of untold blessing to his brethren. In the Kingdom of God, the law of cause and effect operates with unfailing precision. The sowing and the reaping are ever going on ; and the harvest never fails, of whatever kind that harvest may be. The believer who in experience walks the heavenly plains, is daily leaving his impress for eternity on the path he treads below. His heavenly tone permeates the society in which he moves. The fragrance of his inner life makes itself felt in the field of testimony. Even although he be what we call “a silent witness,” he is yet a shining light ; and we know that a light kindled at the heavenly altar and glowing with heavenly unction, is ever a powerful witness for God. The *man of God* shines not in vain—lives not in vain. He is ever alluring to Christ—saying, although with the words of a stammering tongue, yet with the eloquence of a consecrated life : “Behold the Lamb of God !”

—♦—

THE path of faith may be called a simple path ; but it is not, by any means, an *easy* path. Many choose it for its pleasantness, and then give it up because of its ruggedness. But the true child of faith treads the path of faith, simply because it is *God's path*.

ANTICIPATION.

A FEW more days of toil and care—
 A few more days of pain—
 And we shall dwell in regions fair,
 And rest eternal gain,—
 Shall plunge in joy's deep, shoreless sea,
 For ever with our Lord to be.

A few more conflicts strong and sharp,
 To prompt the secret groan,
 And we shall strike the victor's harp,
 And mount the victor's throne ;
 While crowns of life our brows shall gem
 In God's own fair Jerusalem.

A few more days to strive with sin,
 And all its misery prove,
 And we, the Father's house within,
 Shall be like Him we love,—
 Holy, as God delights to see—
 Holy, as here we thirst to be.

A few more hours to have the veil
 Between our eyes and Him,—
 To mourn that faith so oft should fail,
 And love so oft grow dim.
 And then His face—Himself—shall be
 Our feast through all eternity !

I long to pluck the fadeless flowers
 On those blest heights that bloom,
 And rest in those immortal bowers
 That veil no hidden tomb ;—
 To drink of life's fair tree above,
 And breathe the atmosphere of love.

How light will all our trials look,
 When dawns the perfect day,
 When we shall read, in Heav'n's own book,
 Each mystery of our way,
 And all His love and wisdom own,
 And know as we ourselves are known !

C. W.*

* C. W. departed to be with the Lord in the year 1856. These verses reached us through our brother Blane. They had come under his notice during his recent sojourn in England, and are now, we understand, published for the first time.

DEPENDS ON WHERE YOU STAND.

HE who would see the world in its true colours must view it by the light of the sanctuary. Everything depends on *where you stand*. If you take your stand *with* the world—like Peter, warming himself at the world's fire—it may appear not so bad a world after all. But if you view it from that hallowed spot—

“Alone with Thee, O Master, where
 The light of earthly glory dies,”

truly the world is seen to be vanity. How weak and beggarly its elements—how unsatisfying, even its choicest pleasures! What a different effect is thus produced by the world on different believers,—yea, upon the same believer at different times in his experience. At one period in his experience—some evil hour—the world, bereft of its grosser attractions, is considered *desirable* on the whole. But when the far country of spiritual declension is left behind—when the hour of holy joy has come—the world has nothing, absolutely nothing, left for the heart that is satisfied with Christ. One day in the courts of heavenly communion excels a thousand where the world's corn and wine abound. You simply want to know where a believer in spirit dwells, if you would know what the world is to *him*.

IN John iv. we see Christ as the model soul-winner. He seeks the lost sinner ; finds her at the well ; gets occupied with her need, and forgets His own. C. I.

ASKED TO EXPLAIN.

WE have been asked to explain why a certain leading brother proposed "a sort of alliance" with the Ayrshire Christian Union. Although such questions do not lie exactly within the scope of this Periodical, we may say this much: From what we have been able to learn, we find that a brother, whom we suppose to be the brother in question, merely suggested that, if the current rumours of a contemplated "exodus" were true, it might be well for a few leading brethren to confer with the Union leaders, and thus help to remove misunderstandings and misconceptions as to our own position; as it was thought that such a course might result in a closer fellowship. In this suggestion we see nothing more than a little forethought of brotherly love. We may just add that the brother who made the suggestion (assuming him to be *the* brother referred to) was shown our "Reply" to the *Reaper* before it was published; and the "Reply" had his hearty approval.

At the same time the "recognised leader" may be another person altogether; in which case we can only say to our beloved brother, of the *Reaper*, that we undertake no responsibility for what even "recognised leaders" may say. If some one has definitely proposed an alliance with the Union, he is evidently a brother needing light as to what is involved in Separation to The Name. We do not doubt his good intentions, and his desire for unity. But if our brother wishes an amalgamation with the Union, then we make bold to say that his public proclamation of that wish would soon make it manifest how far he is the recognised leader that the *Reaper* takes him to be. We esteem our

brethren in the Union highly (some think we esteem them too highly). Yet we cannot see what godly end can be served by the sacrifice of truth, even on the altar of brotherly love.

THROWING UP THE FORM.

WHEN believers have to remove to another neighbourhood, or another country, it is a trying time for their faith. A thousand new trials and allurements seem at once to spring into existence. They find themselves put "off their way." They are not only passing through a new country, but they are passing through new experiences, and meeting new difficulties. All this means fresh grace for the daily battle, if they are to be more than conquerors through Him that loves them. Those who have been accustomed to deal with God and cleave to God in secret, are found passing through the furnace; while those who had merely been *keeping up* the form are found *throwing up* the form. This is the reason why so many professed believers drift right into the world as soon as they set foot in a new land. If they had been finding it irksome to follow Christ in the old country, why should they continue the task where no one knows that they ever made any profession? They have the opportunity of either confessing Christ or denying Him. If they deny Him, they need have no fear of some overseeing brother bringing them "to book." They are left with a free choice.

They make that choice. They elect for the world. "Terrible," you say. Well, yes; but not surprising. That professor simply tore off the covering of hypocrisy, and declared his true colours. He resolved to be outwardly what he had long been in heart. And who can tell what a *riddling-out* there would be among professed believers if a similar chance could be given of throwing up all profession of Christianity! If a professed believer finds that following Christ is not a pleasure—if, on the contrary, it is merely a task—then that man will be sure to get rid of his task at the earliest opportunity. No sooner is he out of sight of "the old place," and free from the eye of those who watch for souls, than he is found frequenting forbidden paths, and drinking at forbidden streams. He simply "gravitates" to where his communion had been. But if our communion is with the Father—if our citizenship is truly in Heaven—we shall undoubtedly be found seeking out kindred spirits, if it be our lot to remove to the land of the stranger. Difficulties may meet us—trials may assail us. Yet we shall have succour that the world knows not of. The righteous are never forsaken. The Lord is a stronghold in the day of trouble to all that put their trust in Him.

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WHAT IS NEEDED FIRST.

IT is sometimes with a Church as with the human body in a certain stage of disease;—it is not in a condition to stand an “operation.” An operation may be needed. All the physicians may be agreed upon that point. But will the patient survive the ordeal? That is the question. He may be in such a condition that he would *not* survive. What, then, is done? He must first be *brought into* the proper condition; and then the knife can be applied; the needful incision can be made; and the operation carried out successfully.

This may all, in like manner, be true of a Church. An “operation” may be needed. The assembly may require to be set right in certain important departments of truth, or dealt with as to the need for a higher moral standard. But such a matter requires skilful handling,—skill not only to see what is needed, but to discern if this be the *time* for the operation to be carried out. It *may* be the time, and it may not. Would-be reformers often rush in with sword in hand, and hew and hack indiscriminately, on the plea that the thing has got to be

done—no matter what the consequences may be! But there is more than one way of doing a thing. There is such a thing as handling a matter wisely, and finding good (Prov. xxi. 20); while there is such a thing as driving at Jehu pace, and producing a scene of desolation.

The man or men who are called of God to help a Church of Christ will be found possessed of two things,—the call to do the work, and the grace to do it in a wise and godly way. The *call* and the *equipment* will ever be found joined together. And the heavenly equipment will be seen in this: a seeking to get *hearts* right, before there is a striving to get *points* right. What is wanted is to get God's people into a condition of happy fellowship with the Lord Himself. There are a hundred-and-one questions that can stand, like Abraham's young men (Gen. xxii. 5), while we “go yonder and worship.” Let there be a revival of true communion with Heaven; let Christ be unveiled, if we may so speak, before the eyes of His people; let His beauty fill the eye and captivate the heart; let the saints of God be conducted from the cold atmosphere of the outer court into that great Presence where “the light of earthly glory dies”; and then you can

come as soon as you please with the needed "operation." A people in such a happy case will be found ready to bow to the will of God—to reform abuses—to abhor that which is evil—to cleave to that which is good. In the courts of heavenly communion the soul simply seeks to *know* in order to *obey*; for the language of the heart is then: "I delight to do Thy will, O my God."

Such, it seems to us, is the more excellent way of dealing with certain "diseases" that manifest themselves in our assembly life. There are two extremes into which there is a tendency to fall. One extreme consists in shutting the eyes to clearly-revealed evils and making no attempt whatever to let the Word have free course. The other extreme is found in the "furious driving" of those who would seek the reform of abuses before there has been the melting of hearts. We are satisfied that the God-appointed path lies between these two extremes.

It may be argued that God's people cannot be led experimentally into the Holy Place except through the instrumentality of the truth; and that the truth—perhaps unpalatable truth—must be proclaimed. To this we reply that, although the "closer walk" will be found through the instrumentality of revealed truth, yet we must at the same time be careful to distinguish between *God's truth* and *God's message*. "I don't care," says one; "I'll deliver my soul: it is God's truth." True; but is it God's message? Is it the truth that

the Lord has sent *you* to deliver to *this* people at *this* time? We must not forget that God's truth is not always God's message; while His message is ever His truth.

But as to the truth that may be needed, a wise man will know what to do (1 Kings ii. 9). He will see that the iron is hot, before he attempts to mould it to the divine pattern. Moreover, if *he* is to be instrumental in bringing up the general warmth, he must be on fire himself. Cold hearts kindle no fires of devotion. He who would deliver souls must be himself in a condition to lead them into the presence of God. He may have "wonderful truth" to unfold. But if he be not a man of God—if his words be not aglow with the altar fire, he shall assuredly fail to deliver. The godly, like Nehemiah (See Neh. vi. 12), will perceive that the Lord has not sent *him*; while the saints as a whole, though ready to acknowledge him as a preacher of smooth things, will utterly reject him if he take up the sword of truth to hew *them*. His authority will not be owned, seeing it lacks the highest characteristic of all true authority,—the element of *spiritual power*.

Therefore, let us have the heaven-sent messengers; and we shall have the heaven-sent message, and the heaven-sent deliverance.



WE are constantly in danger of forgetting that we are here to suffer—to be buffeted, persecuted, despised. If we remembered our true calling we would not wonder so much at our present suffering.

THE HUNDRED TALENTS LOST!

IT is a common error to suppose that if you have embarked on a wrong course you are bound to *go on*.

But there is no *need-be* for our continuing in such a path. The case of Amaziah (2 Chron. xxv. 1-11) will help to make our meaning clear. Before going forth to the war he found that he had three hundred thousand choice men of Judah and Benjamin. But he was not content with this army, large though it may seem. To make victory doubly sure he hired "an hundred thousand mighty men of valour out of Israel, for an hundred talents of silver" (ver. 6). He felt sure now that all would go well. "Choice men" out of Judah and "mighty men of valour" out of Israel made a combination which, from a human point of view, looked irresistible. There is a saying that "union is strength." But, like many sayings of the world, it is only value for what it is worth. In this case the value of the saying is entirely dependent upon certain *conditions*. Union is *not* strength, if *God* do not form the union. In such circumstances union is positive weakness, as Amaziah found, and found to his cost.

No sooner has the king completed the bargain than we find an ominous "*but*" in the sacred narrative. "*But* there came a man of God to him, saying, O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee; for the Lord is not with Israel, to wit, with all the children of Ephraim." "If thou wilt go," said the man of God,

"do it, be strong for the battle: God shall make thee fall before the enemy: for God hath power to help, and to cast down." Amaziah saw at once that all his plans would be upset. If he followed the counsel of the man of God, and sent the hundred thousand mighty men of valour home, he would lose a hundred talents of silver. What was he to do? Was all that money to be lost? Seeing the money was *already paid* would it not be better to let the thing go on, and yet expect the Lord to give victory? Thus Amaziah seemed to reason; and thus thousands have reasoned while embarking upon a doubtful course, and doing a thing about which their conscience was not altogether clear. To settle the matter, and drown the murmurings of conscience, the bargain is struck, the money paid down, and the plea at once made: I must continue in this course—I am compromised to it—I cannot retreat. This may be a convenient means of getting our own will carried out. But it is an artifice that cannot deceive the all-seeing One; and, however it may seem to succeed, the end thereof shall *not* be peace.

Amaziah, like many to-day, wanted to walk upon *two* principles at one and the same time. He wanted to walk by *faith*; and yet he thought it prudent to walk by *sight* as well. He would fain walk by faith in the God of Judah; yet his "eye of sight" was upon the hundred thousand mighty men of Israel. Amaziah failed to walk on these two principles—the principle of *faith* and

the principle of *sight*. And like failure has attended all similar attempts since his day. You need not try to walk according to divine principles, and yet square your conduct with the world's *maxims*. The new wine will assuredly burst the old bottles; the new cloth on the old garment will simply make the rent worse. You cannot please God and Mammon; and those who are determined to do the two things must not be surprised if, to use the words of an old writer, they find themselves "out of favour both in heaven and earth."

When the man of God had delivered his message, Amaziah's concern at once centred itself on the money with which he had purchased the services of the mighty men of valour. "What shall we do," he said, "for the hundred talents of silver which I have given to the army of Israel?" "And the man of God answered, The Lord is able to give thee much more than this." A hundred talents of silver is nothing, if a lesson of eternal value is to be learned. High fees have often to be paid in God's school. Amaziah paid a hundred talents of silver for a single lesson! The men of Israel were sent home; and the Lord, according to promise, led Amaziah on to victory. From all this we learn that simple faith in God never fails of its reward; and that he who enters upon a *wrong* course will be a wise man if he retraces his steps, in obedience to the heavenly call; even although he should lose a hundred talents of silver in passing through the experience.

EVIL SPOKEN OF.

SCRIPTURE expressly tells us that, through the pernicious ways of certain professors, the way of truth shall be evil spoken of (2 Pet. ii. 2). But that is no warrant for us to forsake the way of truth. Scripture tells us what we are to expect;—false teachers—many following their ways—the result being, that the way of truth is derided. But Scripture gives no hint that we are therefore to leave the way of truth. When the wheels of our church life are running smoothly, and all is going well, some short-sighted believers compliment themselves that they are in their true place, and no doubt about it. But if the scene changes—if, through certain causes, the way of truth comes to be evil spoken of, these believers at once begin to question if they are in their right place after all! This is caused by their viewing the way of truth in the *light of circumstances* instead of in the *light of God*. The way of truth is none the less the way of truth, although God's people may be passing through an hour of adversity. It is in such a time that the faith of many is severely tried. It is in such a time that the "adversaries of Judah" are found pointing the finger, and saying, "Can *that* be the way of truth?" Yet the child of faith will deliberately choose to remain in *the way of truth* (evil spoken of, though it be) and have the approval of God, rather than tread the path of *popular religion*, and have the approval of the worldlings.

WHICH IS GREATEST ?

THE Flesh, the Devil, and the World,—which of these is the greatest? Which of them is the most formidable enemy that the believer has to contend with? This question has been often asked by devout souls, longing for a deeper practical conformity to the mind of Christ. What is the answer? Well, the answer may be manifold. We are not all constituted alike. What is a powerful temptation to one, is scarcely any temptation at all to another. Then, the circumstances of our earthly lot vary. Some believers are called to pass through a furnace of affliction; others through the fires of persecution; others are vexed by the filthy conversation of the wicked; while others, again, find circumstances wonderfully favourable to a life of faith upon the Son of God. All these things must be taken into consideration before you make a calculation of whether the Flesh, the Devil, or the World, is the most powerful enemy in any given case. Speaking generally, however, so far as we have “exchanged views” with “longing souls,” it would seem that the Flesh is, by common consent, set down as the most formidable. The reason for this is not far to seek. The Flesh is *within*: the Devil and the World are *without*. The Flesh would appear to be the most formidable because it is only as it gains the ascendancy that the Devil and the World can have any real power. An enemy *without* is not so much to be

dreaded, if there be not a traitor *within*. The power of the Devil and the World would seem to be in great measure regulated by the power of the Flesh *within*. Let the *deeds* of the body be mortified—let there be a heaven-inspired “Amen” to the declaration of Scripture that “I am crucified with Christ,”—and the assailants from *without* shall at once be bereft of their most powerful ally, the response of a kindred spirit from *within*. If the Flesh be kept “nailed to the Tree,” by virtue of Christ being sanctified as Lord in the heart, then the World will find it hard to obtain a footing. The World may knock at the door. But all will depend on the question: “Who is reigning *within*?” In the affairs of this world, a nation seeking to form an alliance with a neighbouring state, has often to wait until a certain political party comes into power in that state. Then they join affinity. So is it with the World and the Believer. If Christ is on the throne, the World knows it is useless to propose an alliance. There could be no agreement: therefore there can be no alliance. In vain does the World lay its snares in the sight of him who is walking in the light of God. In vain does it seek to dazzle the eye that is feasting on the moral glories of the Son of God. Moreover, the World cares as little for such men as they do for it. They and the World have no common ground to stand upon—no kindred spirit to bring them together; for the testimony of the man of God concerning the World must ever be, that “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" (1 Jno. ii. 16).

It is more difficult to define the power of Satan, whom some may consider in many respects the greatest enemy of the three under consideration. Unlike the World, he is a person—notwithstanding the attempts of some modern "divines" to treat him as a mere "influence of evil." He is expressly defined in Scripture as "your adversary" (1 Pet. v. 8); and the admonition is given, "Whom resist, steadfast in the faith" (ver. 9). No saint, however high his attainments in grace, can hope to be exempt from the attacks of Satan. We know that Job, even with the divine testimony that he was a righteous man, had to suffer at the hands of the great Enemy. Even our Lord Himself was tempted of the Devil, although the prince of this world came and found nothing in Him (Jno. xiv. 30). But while we may not escape the attacks of Satan, we need not be worsted in the fight; for "greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 Jno. iv. 4).

ETERNAL PRINCIPLES.



CERTAIN philosopher has spoken of those who "abandon eternal principles for accidental circumstances." That is to say, there are men who seem to act for a time upon eternal principles; and yet, when certain accid-

ental circumstances arise, they at once throw up the eternal principles, and embrace the accidental circumstances. Once upon a time they trod God's path, and found in it certain advantages. But when *man's* path seemed to offer higher advantages, they were ready to tread it! This is simply *selling* the truth although we are counselled to *buy* it, and not to sell. But when we see men who sell the truth so readily, we may well question if they paid very much for it at first. He who pays dear for a thing is not likely to part with it on easy terms. And he who has bought the truth at a high figure, is all the more likely to hold it fast, no matter how "accidental circumstances" may clamour for him to throw up his "eternal principles." On the other hand, he whom the truth has cost but little, and whom the truth costs but little, can not be expected to hold it with a very rigid grasp. "Easy come, easy go," if not a law of the Kingdom, is to a certain extent "the rule" in the Kingdom, as it is the rule in the affairs of earth. Many men hold eternal principles merely because it is considered "good policy" to hold them. But, concerning all who thus profess to hold eternal principles, it may truly be said: Eternal principles do not hold *them*. He who holds the truth simply because it suits him best, will be found holding something else to-morrow, if that "something" suits him better.

THEY that seek for new beauties in Christ are ever finding them.

A NEED-BE.

WE may rest assured that there is a "need-be" in every trial. We may not understand it now. But it will all be clear by and by. Peter did not understand the feet-washing. "What I do," said the Master, "thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (Jno. xiii. 7). It may not be needful that we should understand the "why" and the "wherefore" of our troubles. It is sufficient for faith to know, as faith ever knows, that *it is the Lord*. The time is coming when we shall understand the reason of every sigh and tear. That time may be near, or it may be far—as we reckon far—even the time when "time shall be no more"—that coming day of joy and glory, when we shall know as we are known. Yet faith can patiently wait the unfolding of the divine purposes, knowing that the afflictions of this present time are working for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

THE PRAISING SPIRIT.

TO possess the praising spirit does not mean that you must be constantly humming over a hymn or shouting "hallelujah." There is such a thing as making melody in the heart (Eph. v. 19); and we know that God looks on the heart (1 Sam. xvi. 7). The spirit of praise goes far deeper than a mere proclamation with the lip that

Christ is more to us than all the world beside. There may be true adoration—there may be praise ascending into the very presence of the Father—and yet no earthly sound be heard. On the other hand, there may be a great noise of trumpets, telling forth that we are "all for Jesus," while other gods are reigning in the heart! In these days, when appearances count for everything with many, there is much glorying in face while the heart is far from God! But if there be not heaven-begotten melody *within*, it matters little how loud the sound may be *without*. If in the heart there be not the spirit of praise and adoration, then it is simply hypocrisy to stand up and say before God and man, "O Thou art more than life to me."

—♦—

In musical composition there are certain "laws of harmony" that must be respected. In God's service there are likewise laws of harmony, that must be observed, if we would truly offer that praise which is comely for the upright. Yea, we will go further and assert that the laws of heavenly harmony *shall* be observed by those whose spirits are tuned into unison with the Master's mind. The lowly and patient heart that waits only upon the Lord will, by a certain spiritual instinct, perceive what is of God, and reject the unseemly combination of that which is from above with that which is from beneath.

—♦—

THEY that wait only on God, never fail to hear His voice.

FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.

ANOTHER wave of revival—and yet another wave. Such seems ever to have been the means used by God for maintaining the standard of godliness among His people. And not only is this true of His people as a whole, but it is true of each individual believer. In the life of every saint who truly “seeks God” there are times of special revival—seasons when a new experience is entered upon—a new land of heavenly joy discovered—a new vista of spiritual beauties opened up to the gaze. We must not conclude that such seasons always follow upon a period of backsliding. They *may* come in at that particular juncture. A child of God may turn in sudden loathing from the fountains of earth; and, perceiving the unsatisfying nature of earthly things, may cleave unto his God with a purpose of heart unknown before. He has beheld the world in its nakedness—lying in the wicked one. He recoils from it in disgust; and in that recoil he enters upon new and deeper heavenly experiences. But we need not suppose that deepened heavenly experiences *always* come in that way. They that truly seek the Lord are ever going “from strength to strength.” God not only *is*, but He is the *rewarder* of them that diligently seek Him. Unto such it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom. They may be cast down at times,—the path of circumstances may be dark,—they may be at their wits’ end because of trouble. But light is sown

for the righteous. The desired haven is reached; and the song of praise ascends,—a song attuned to a higher strain than had been known in all their bygone experience; for they had not “come this way heretofore.” Thus it is, that out of weakness the faithful are made strong, and wax valiant in fight. Their faith is never without its reward. They drink of hidden streams—streams hidden to the carnal eye. They have their sorrows and their trials, it is true; but their joy no man taketh from them.

“AFFLICTED, YET NOT FORSAKEN.”

SHE lies and suffers day by day;
Earth's help and hope are vain;
Her life is ebbing fast away
In agonising pain.

Unknown, forsaken, friendless, poor,—
What circumstance of gloom
With thicker shade could mantle o'er
The pathway to the tomb?

Come to the lone and lowly bed,
Where wearily she lies;
And tell the meaning of the smile
That beams within her eyes!

What hand unseen on sorrow's wave
Has poured a sacred balm?
That pallid cheek—that suff'ring brow—
Are bathed in heavenly calm!

Whence comes the peace of every look—
The praise of every tone?
She would not leave that couch of pain
To fill an empire's throne!

Is it the light of angel wings
That shines amid the gloom?—
Speak softly! 'tis the King of Kings,
Whose presence fills that room.

She knows the *Holy Place*, her home,
Through Jesus' sprinkled blood;
She waits the glory yet to come,—
Her soul is *stayed on God!* C. W.

These verses are from the same pen as “Anticipation.” See November *Treasury*, page 173.

THE ABSALOM REBELLION.

Sixth Paper.

MANY have wondered why David fled from Jerusalem when Absalom seized the throne. If David was reigning by divine authority, why did he not stand his ground and resist the usurper at the very outset? Many reasons might be given in answer to this question. The conspiracy was "strong"—the thing was done suddenly—and the people increased continually with Absalom. It might be well to see who was truly on the Lord's side. This could best be done by removing "the king's court" into the wilderness. David *reigning in Jerusalem* was a very different thing from David *fleeing in the wilderness*. On the throne he had many to do him honour. But now the test of devotion was to be applied. He was a crownless king—rejected, despised, persecuted. David in rejection would soon discover his true friends; and if any blow was to be struck, he would have the assurance that, if his followers were few, they were men who could be depended upon in the hour of extremity.

But considerations such as these, though weighty enough, are merely on the surface. Deep down in David's heart he realised that the Lord was *dealing with him in judgment*. Absalom's conduct was unjustifiable, and the weapons he used to secure the throne were despicable in the extreme. But, notwithstanding all this, David felt he was under the rod of divine chastisement.

While others, truly devoted to his person, are waxing furious against the usurper's power, the king utters no word of resentment. He sees only *one* hand in the hour of calamity; and that is the hand of a righteous and yet a gracious God. David, like every true child of faith, saw "afar off," and traced everything to Jehovah's hand. We find him giving instructions to carry back the Ark of God into the city, saying in the language of the deepest submission: "If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again, and show me both it, and His habitation: but if He thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him" (2 Sam. xv. 25, 26). He deliberately puts his case into the hands of God, and *leaves it there*. He therefore accepts everything as coming *from above*.


At Bahurim we see a Shimei coming out to curse him with a grievous cursing. "Come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial;" he said, "the Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul. . . thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man." To use the language of the world, this was more than flesh-and-blood could stand. But it was not more than the heaven-sustained spirit could stand. David was calm and unmoved, even under the terrible scourge of Shimei's tongue; for we can scarcely conceive a severer trial to the spirit than for some fleshly professor to taunt the man of faith in the hour of his calamity. Yet David rose above it all, because he

saw above it all. Nor was he so utterly helpless that he was unable to rid himself of the reproaches of Shimei. A single word from the king, and the reviler would have been slain. "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king?" said Abishai; "let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head" (2 Sam. xvi. 9). Retribution was easily within David's reach; but retribution was not in all his thoughts. "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruah?" he replied; "So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, 'Curse David.' Who shall then say, 'Wherefore hast thou done so?' Behold, my son," he continued, "who came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him" (ver. 10, 11).

Surely this is the perfection of faith. How rare it is, even in this dispensation of the Spirit, to find such complete and beautiful acquiescence in the will of God! Simple faith in the unseen One will not fail to hear God's voice, even in the cursings of a Shimei. This is where many fail, and lose untold blessing. They trace the day of prosperity up to God; but they never associate Him with the hour of calamity! They have not learned to say in the time of trouble, "Hark, my soul, it is the Lord." They seem not to see beyond an Absalom or a Shimei. Therefore they must needs wax wroth with man; thus proving that they see no farther than man; for if they traced all up to God, they could not wax

wroth with *Him!* What calm and settled peace it gives when we see God in trial,—be it the persecution of an Absalom, or the cursing of a Shimei! To see God in the furnace is to have Him *with us* in the furnace. Faith may be said to have a double reward,—the reward of a *present* peace that passeth all understanding, and fruits of righteousness in *due time*. They need not to fret, who have put their case into God's hands. It is only they who see God in everything, that have everything in God.

COMES INTO PROMINENCE.

HE wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted (Ps. xii. 8). Perhaps you could not find a more apt illustration of this than the case of Shimei (2 Sam. xvi.). Absalom—the wicked one—is exalted, and immediately the men of Belial are found walking on every side. Shimei comes at once into prominence. He had never been heard of before. But he feels that his time has now come. No sooner is unrighteous rule established in Israel than the lawless wax bold. David's calamity is Shimei's opportunity. Thus it has ever been; and thus it is to-day in the churches. Let the rule of God be carried out, and men of the Shimei character feel that it is difficult to let their voice be heard. But let fleshly rule be established, and the followers of Shimei at once come into a prominence which they never had before. Yea, they set themselves up; yea, they are exalted.

Therefore, let our prayer be, and our aim be, that the rule of God may be carried out in our midst,—that the great characteristic of millennial times may even now be felt among us,—“The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.”

LORD, I AM THINE.

LORD, I am Thine! Thy precious blood
Upon Golgotha's mountain flowed,
That I might be brought nigh to God
As one of Thine!

Lord, I am Thine!—No more my own;
O let me live to Thee alone;
For Thou didst come from yonder throne
To make me Thine!

Lord, I am Thine! Then whither could
I go from Thee, e'en if I would,
Since Thou, the Fountain of all good,
Hast made me Thine!

Lord, I am Thine!—'Tis mine to share
Thy matchless love and tender care:
Thy boundless mercies all declare
That I am Thine!

Lord, I am Thine! While here below
May I walk *with* Thee—in Thee so,
That every word and deed may show
That I am Thine!

Lord, I am Thine! O Master, let
My heart and mind on this be set,
And help me never to forget
That I am Thine!

Lord, I am Thine! Thou'rt ever near,
With words of love, reproof, and cheer;
E'en in death's vale I will not fear,
For I am Thine!

Lord, I am Thine! and shall be so,
When ocean's billows cease to flow;
O what a blessing, Lord, to know
That I am Thine!

Lord, I am Thine! and soon upon
Thy glorious, everlasting throne,
Before Thy Father Thou wilt own
That I am Thine!

Lord, I am Thine! and when I see
Thee face to face, and be like Thee,
My theme of joy shall ever be
That I am Thine!

JOTTINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

HOW sweet the possibility of rejoicing alway in the Lord! Yet how much sweeter to rejoice in the Lord greatly! This latter experience was that of the apostle, as chap. iv. ver. 10 makes known. Moreover, that verse teaches what is meant by rejoicing in the Lord. There, the expression of the grace of the Lord, manifested by those in the Church of God in Philippi, caused the apostle to greatly rejoice in the Lord. That recognition of the source and power of such kindness is highly instructive and helpful, both for givers and receivers. Hence, while he so exults and is made glad, it is not the joy of one who is occupied with his need being SO MET. Neither is it that of one complaining of want at last supplied. For O! what growth!—he had learned in whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content. Yes, he knew what it was to be made low: he also knew *how* to abound. In every place and in all things he was INITIATED both to be full, and to be hungry; yea, to abound, and to suffer need. This, indeed, because he had strength for all things in Him who empowered him—even Christ. Which grace, every child of God may seek, possess, and manifest! Nevertheless, these Philippians had done well, even *beautifully*, in having fellowship with his tribulation. Besides, he would that they should know that not only at this latter time, but even in the beginning of the Gospel when he

had departed from Macedonia, NO CHURCH communicated with him as to giving and receiving but these Philippians only. Let saints take especial notice of how these Philippians gave

EVEN AS A CHURCH.

Giving as a church in circumstances such as these, is as important as are the prayers of a church in the matter of prayer. What ringing praise there is in the word: "For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again to my necessity"! Consider the force of that word "*even*." Were not the Thessalonians indebted enough and fit enough to have thought of the apostle's need? Whether or not, the Philippians, as a church showed that they would not count upon that. Rather did they seek to do what they could, although Paul was not now with them, and might be having his need well-cared for. What lesson is here for the churches of God that to-day are still privileged to remember such as for "The Name" have gone forth, regarding whom the will of the Lord is, that we ought to SUSTAIN them (3 Jno. 7, 8). Further, think how short a time the apostle had been in Thessalonica,—some few, very few, weeks at the longest. Yet, once and again had these Philippians thought of, and sought to, provide for his need. Here, indeed, is care for labourers whom we have learned to know, to love, and to appreciate as workers of the work of the Lord. While the apostle thus wrote, he wished them clearly to understand that he did not desire a gift. Notwithstanding, he did

desire fruit that would abound to their own account. O! how much we may deprive ourselves of, by withholding more than is meet, which always tendeth to poverty. Herein is fulfilled the word which saith, "He that soweth sparingly *shall reap* also sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully (that is, upon blessing already received) *shall reap* also bountifully." Yet, after all, the first requisite is a willing, NOT a bargaining, mind. For, be it carefully marked that gift, or giving, is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not; while he that gives with hilarity, God loveth. Therefore, He would that none should give grudgingly, or of necessity. Furthermore, what character, impetus, and sustainment to godly giving, is afforded by the truth that "giving" is that which God is pleased with. Who of us would wittingly withhold pleasure from our God? He, also, in care for our blessing has caused it to be written, "But to do good and to communicate, FORGET NOT; for with

SUCH SACRIFICES

God is well-pleased;" which sacrifices verse 18 so touchingly describes—even "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God." Therein lies, as thereby was ensured, the great harvest of such sowing as verse 19 declares these Philippians would reap at the hand of Him whom Paul calls "my God." And what a harvest!—all need supplied! All this is sweetly climaxed and crowned by the worshipping of God, even our Father, through giving Him the

glory for ever and ever. Unto which let every hearing ear and opened heart say in one accord, "Amen." The salutations of verses 21 and 22 are most noteworthy; while the closing wish as to the grace of the (not *our*, here) Lord Jesus Christ being with their SPIRIT is beautifully instructive.

J. B.

NOT TO BE IMITATED.

ALTHOUGH we find David saying of Shimei: "The Lord hath bidden him curse David," we must not infer that there was anything meritorious in Shimei's cursing. We have heard believers speak as if they considered that a Shimei's work might be needful in certain circumstances. Possibly; but we do not see how any Spirit-taught soul could desire to do the work of a Shimei. We find it written: "It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him through whom they come!" (Luke xvii. 1). Although the Lord permitted Shimei's cursing for a purpose, and although that cursing was the means of positive blessing to David, yet we do not find that Shimei reaped any reward for the cruel reproaches he heaped on David's head. If the exiled king was learning of God, even through the cursings he met at Bahurim, no thanks were due to Shimei; and he received none. In due time the sword of retribution found him out (1 Kings ii. 46)—a circumstance of sufficient significance to deter any one from seeking to do the work of a Shimei.

MORDECAI THE JEW.

(Concluded.)

HAVING spoken of what Mordecai *refused to do*, we now proceed to speak of what he positively *did*.

If we were to omit this, our review of his life would certainly be very incomplete. Mordecai was endowed with decision of character—a rather scarce endowment, it is to be feared, in the present day, so far as concerns spiritual things. He made up his mind decidedly as to what he would *not* do; and he made up his mind decidedly as to what he *would* do. It is often easy to take up a *negative* position; that is, the position of one who simply objects to a thing, or protests against it. There are many *negativists*, if we may use the term. Their theology consists almost entirely of what they *deny*, instead of consisting largely—as it ought to do—of what they *affirm*. They refuse to bow to *this thing*, and *that other thing*. They have faults to find with almost everything in the religious world. But press home to them the question, "What is *your* body of divinity?—*your* form of church government?—What is *your* remedy for the ills which you affect to deplore?" and you find that they have nothing definite to propound. They refuse to bow, it is true; but they are not found contending for the positive side of truth. Hence they fail to deliver. This was not the case with Mordecai. He did not rest with a mere refusal to acknowledge Haman. The aged Jew knew that far more than

that was needed, if God's people were to be delivered from the machinations of the Agagite. Mordecai must *act*; and the time for action had come.

The man whom God chooses for the deliverance of His people is ever one who has "understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chron. xii. 32). In the history of God's people there often comes a time when a blow of some special kind needs to be struck. If the blow be not struck at the right moment, it may entirely fail of its effect; and this result is just as likely to follow if the blow be delivered with a trembling or a doubting hand. Such a crisis came in the history of the children of the captivity. But Mordecai had the discernment to see that the "set time" had come; while he was not wanting in faith and courage to carry out his purpose. He sends word to Esther the queen, that the destruction of her people has been determined, and that she (queen though she be) need not hope to escape. "If," said he, "thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed" (Est. iv. 14). This is a powerful testimony to Mordecai's faith in God. Esther was not to flatter herself that everything depended on her. God's resources, like Himself, are infinite. Mordecai seemed to know this; for we hear him say in the language of assured confidence: "Then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from

another place." He had no doubt as to the issue. When Heaven sends a deliverer, that deliverer is ever one who is "strong in faith, giving glory to God." He knows that if one instrumentality fails, the God of Heaven and earth can easily lay His hand upon some other instrumentality, when His *hour* has come. Yet in Mordecai's message to Esther he throws out a strong "peradventure" that *she* may be the chosen instrument. "Who knoweth," he said, "whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (ver. 14). The decision and confidence of the man of faith had their due effect upon Esther. She sought the king's presence—found favour—was privileged to touch the golden sceptre—and was told to make request for whatever she would, even unto the half of the kingdom. She made request for the lives of herself and her people. Then comes Haman's discomfiture and execution,—Mordecai exalted as the man whom the king delighted to honour,—and a remarkable deliverance of the Jews in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus.

We thus see how a God-honouring faith had its due reward, although for a time it might seem in the eyes of man to fail; for the closing words of the book of Esther are devoted to a description of the man Mordecai, who "was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed."

TO OUR READERS.

OUR work in these pages, for another year, is done. Again we raise our Ebenezer, saying with grateful hearts, as before, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." We do not lay any claim to infallibility in this ministry. Nevertheless, we rejoice to know that weary ones have found a word in season through these columns. The imperfections are ours: that which is of God has come from above. To His name be glory; for the earthen vessel is nothing.

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