

THE
BELIEVER'S TREASURY.

VOL. VI.

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Vol. VI.

LIFT UP A STANDARD.

LIFT up a standard for the people" (Isa. lxii. 10). This is what we want,—a standard of vital godliness that shall cause iniquity to hide itself and worldliness to stand back abashed. We want a standard that shall cause the mere professor to tremble as he assays to join himself to the company of the redeemed. We want a standard of holiness that shall make it a more difficult matter to *profess* than it seems in many cases now to be. We want a standard that shall say to the hypocrite in language stronger than words: "Now you need not try to profess *here*; for the atmosphere is one in which you could not live." We want a standard of holiness that shall be a terror to the lawless—an encouragement to every heavenly sentiment, and a withering-up of the flesh in any shape or form.

A low standard of godliness simply means a reign of formalism. When such a standard prevails, every one seems to do as he pleases, and nobody dare say to him, "What doest thou?" Worldly conformity increases; levity abounds; testimony languishes; the Bible is neglected; and the newspaper

becomes "the best-thumbed book" in the house. A low standard of spirituality not only falls far short of the proper height, but it goes far below the proper depth. It shuts out the higher experiences of heavenly communion; and it reaches so far *down* that it takes in a vast amount of that which is "not convenient"—yea, open worldliness itself.

When there is a low standard, there are no sharp contrasts between the separated life and the world-conforming life. Ease in Zion has things all its own way. A low standard leaves the backslider undisturbed,—perhaps causes him to think that he is not very far wrong after all. A low standard opens a wide door for heart-backsliding, and paves the way to open sin. A low standard misrepresents the blessings of the Gospel—causing outsiders to conclude that the Kingdom of God is a very dull and dreary affair, while God declares it to be "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. xiv. 17). A low standard of spirituality exposes us to the terrible danger of repelling those whom God would draw, and drawing those whom God would repel. A low standard saps the springs of energy, and clogs the wheels of progress; while it leaves all

and sundry under the fatal delusion that they are good enough Christians,—certainly “as good as many that are going”!

Need we dwell on the pernicious effects of a low standard of Christianity? We think not. Its effects are only evil, and that continually. But how is it to be remedied? How is the general standard to be raised? There is only one way that we know of; and that is, by *individual believers* laying themselves on the altar of consecration, and, by the power of grace divine, manifesting in their life the true standard of vital godliness. A church is made up of units; and the spiritual condition of each individual unit is the spiritual condition of the whole. “Ah!” you say, “then, if I were aglow with the heavenly fire, the general standard would to that extent be raised.” That is just it, brother. There is no need to wait until the church resolves to make a united effort to raise the standard, or perhaps to secure the services of some gifted preacher, to stir up things a little. The raising of the standard is in its truest sense an individual matter. “Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?” (1 Chron. xxix. 5),—literally to “fill his hand” for God. We are satisfied that if the true standard—the scriptural standard—is seen in the lives of even a few, the effect shall be felt all round. When the Ark of God was taken into the house of Dagon, the god of the Philistines, Dagon had to fall (1 Sam. v. 2-4). No standing-

ground was found for him in the presence of the Ark of Jehovah. And thus it has been, and thus shall it be, wherever Jehovah's standard of vital godliness prevails. The Dagon of carnal indulgence shall be found breaking up on every side.

Therefore, brethren, let the cry go forth: “Lift up a standard for the people.” We know that easy-going professors will cry out against being disturbed. They will very likely tell us that the standard is high enough as it is; and that if any change is to be made, the standard should come down! But such sentiments were never learned within the veil; neither were they born of a closer walk with God. He has said: “Lift up a standard.” Young believers are looking for a standard to be raised. They feel, in the dew of conversion's youth, that the popular standard of Christianity has but little for *them*. They want God's standard. Are they to find it? Wavering believers, sitting on the fence between Separation-to-God and affinity-with-the-world, are sadly needing a standard raised. A single example of surrender to God might decide them for life. Are they to have it? The Lord is looking on. The Judgment-seat is in view. Even apart from the consideration of the wonderful *effect* that a single devoted life may produce, such a life should be our aim, simply because we shall thereby be *well-pleasing* unto Him whom we call Lord and Master, and of whom we sing:

“Saviour, more than life to me.”

Yet, in seeking thus to please Him in yielding ourselves to His energising and transforming power, we shall thereby lift up a standard for the people. Nor shall the standard be lifted up in vain. The thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed. The standard, like the Lord to whom it points, may be "for a sign that shall be spoken against." Nevertheless, let us rest assured that such a standard shall be our most powerful testimony for God, while it shall not fail to work the purposes of His eternal glory by Christ Jesus.

WILL-WORSHIP.

WILL-WORSHIP is simply worship that is *not according to what God hath appointed in His Word*. You may say that you had no will in the matter,—that you have simply sought to worship God in accordance with what is customary in the religious world. Quite true. But such is none the less will-worship. The religious world has adopted a worship *according to its own will*—a worship that is opposed to the God-appointed way. And, if you cast in your lot with the world's order of things, you are virtually endorsing the will-worship of this Christ-rejecting age.

HE who thinks that grace gives him a licence to sin, thereby proves that he is an utter stranger to grace and to God. The first lesson that grace teaches us is, to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*.

A RETROSPECT.

ASERVANT of Christ was drawing near the end of life's journey. In looking back over his ministry during a long course of years, there was one thing in which he was conscious that he had sadly erred. Looking at things in the light of eternity he perceived that his long prayers and long addresses had been a mistake. He could see, standing on the threshold of the grave, that counsel had often been darkened by the mere accumulation of words. He declared that if he had life to live again he should simply give what he might get from God, however few his words might be.

We think the lesson this aged saint learned on the brink of eternity is one which might easily be learned before our earthly race seems to be about run. Long, dreary prayers have been the death of many a prayer meeting. And as for ministry that is spun out in a cold matter-of-fact style, it is simply a weariness of the flesh. We do not believe that men should preach unless they are conscious that the heavenly fire is burning in their bones, and that they have a message from God. An idea seems to prevail that an address, to be of any use, *must* be of considerable length. We are satisfied, however, that this idea is not entertained by any true ambassador of Christ. Better a three-minutes' address, which we feel is coming from the throne, than the long oration that reaches neither heart nor conscience.

UNREST.

THE restless, fitful, unsatisfied believer may be assured that moral disease of some kind is at work. *Unrest* is no part of our heavenly heritage. It is simply the outward expression of backsliding in heart. To deal with the unrest you must strike deeper than the unrest. You must reach the *cause*. You must discover the *disease*. Having applied to the disease the knife of truth—having joyfully taken the yoke of Christ that you may learn of Him—the promise is sure: “*Ye shall find rest.*” This is the great remedy for all the unrest that abounds in a restless world.

Yet, while taking the yoke of Christ will assuredly give us rest *in Him*, we must not be surprised although it is “very tempestuous” round about. While *in Him* we have peace, let us remember that He has said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” The winds of adverse circumstances may threaten to overwhelm us. But, if in heart we are stayed upon our God, we shall have the rest ordained for all who truly trust in Him.


“LIGHT LITERATURE.”

THERE are many kinds of spiritual disease, although they all bring about one result—*unrest*. There is a disease brought on by gorging the mind with improper food,—the world's light literature—the attractive tale of fiction—“the plot and counter-plot—the

hero in the toils—the exciting scene—the hour of suspense—the wonderful escape—victory at last.” After the Christian reader has devoured one of these tales—after he has wept for people that never lived, and held his breath over scenes which a hired novel-writer conjured up in his easy chair,—need it cause wonder that there is unrest? It makes no practical difference that the story has a coating of religion, in order to make it *take* in certain circles. It is read for its plot. It is to be feared that children of God are already being defiled with such literature. The result is—no appetite for the Word. The Book of Books is reckoned “light bread” after the mind has become saturated with the exciting tales now pouring from the press. We are already hearing of the deadly effects of such literature among the saints. We will therefore be excused for sounding this word of warning. Let God's people *take heed what they read* (See Mark iv. 24). It is easier contracting a bad habit than getting rid of it. Novel-reading is like the grave, which is never satisfied (Prov. xxx. 15, 16). He who seeks his satisfaction in the exciting tale of fiction shall assuredly find that each succeeding draught at that “stream of false delight” will but increase his thirst. What a humiliating condition for a professed child of God to be in! Bound hand-and-foot by a penny tale of fiction! If the thin end of this woful wedge is being inserted between believers and their Bibles, we may truly say, “It is time for Thee,

Lord, to work" (Ps. cxix. 126). We want such a revival from the presence of the Lord as shall cause His people to exclaim in joyful wonder: "Thou art fairer than the children of men" (Ps. xlv. 2). When such is our estimate of Christ — when He is fairer unto us than the children of men—His word is sweeter to us than any of the honeycombs of popular literature. When Christ is to us the fairest One, the desires of our heart may all be summed up in a few words,—“Tell me more about Jesus.”

HOW COMES ALL THIS ABOUT?


ASES are to be found in which professed children of God have embraced sceptical opinions, and are now contending earnestly for some soul-destroying heresy. How comes all this about? We do not claim to unravel the whole mystery. But we wish to call attention to one or two points which may throw a little light on the subject.

Although a man professes to be converted to God, we must remember that we cannot see *the heart*. We can see the outer man; and from his actions we can gather not a little of what is going on within. But the depth of his conviction of sin—the reality of the ploughshare work of the Holy Spirit of God—the manifestation of Christ to the heart,—these are things that lie almost entirely beyond the range of our observation. We would require to know something of God's dealings with a

man's soul before we could explain why that man has been carried away with infidel notions. In plain words, the present is manifestly a day in which superficial conversion abounds. The “intellectual Gospel” is slaying its thousands. Yonder is a sharp, clear-headed fellow. He turns up at the Gospel meeting. He is pressed to decide. He is shown how simple it is. “You believe *this*, and God says *that*, and it is done”! He concludes that “this conversion” may not be so bad a thing after all. His dignity is not interfered with. He does not receive a scratch from the great ploughshare of conviction. The deep waters never come in unto his soul. If you were to tell him that he is a hell-deserving sinner, with nothing to commend him to God, and travelling to the blackness of eternal darkness, he would turn on his heel and leave the place. He would never consent to receive God's salvation upon any such understanding. But, then, things are made “comfortable” for him, so that he may be encouraged to profess. He professes accordingly. But wherein lies the gain. He is a purely intellectual convert. External circumstances have been instrumental in causing him to make a profession. But there has been no *internal* revolution, which is the case with every one who is truly born from above. In an evil day, when professions of this kind abound — when the Gospel is often trimmed to suit the popular taste — is it surprising that professors of conversion are occasionally

found joining the ranks of Universalists, or going after the "strange flesh" of worldly religion? It is no surprise to us. If a man has not experienced the pangs of the new birth, and been brought to abhor himself in dust and ashes on account of his sins, he will sooner or later reach his own level. He may reach that level by making a discovery of "new truth" (in his case another name for "old heresy"); or he may go right back to the world, without ceremony. But, in either case, he is finding his own company. We grant you that there may be cases in which an undoubted child of God has been caught in the snare of the Devil. But, as a rule, it will be found that *perverts* to scepticism are simply gravitating to the thing from which, in their heart of hearts, they had never been truly separated!

ANOTHER CHANCE.

 HAVE got another chance," said a brother who had fallen into sin and been restored again to the path of communion. He was conscious that he might have been taken away as a cumberer of the ground. Yet, through the tender mercy of God, he was spared and brought back; and now, thankful for "another chance," he is setting himself to "redeem the time."

This may fitly illustrate the case of many children of God who look back upon the bygone year,—a year in which, it may be, privileges have been abused

and opportunities neglected,—yea, sin indulged, although it has not been brought before a church court, or blazoned abroad in the world. We doubt not that many are thus looking back on the year that is past, and saying to themselves, "*I have got another chance.*" They realise that they have failed,—not so much, perhaps, in outer testimony as in inner separation of heart to God. They look back over the past record of 365 days, and find that certain things might have been better done, while some other things had been better not done at all! But, going deeper than all mere matters of detail, a calm review of the months that are gone shows that coldness of heart was the great operating cause of unsteady walk and fitful testimony. Perhaps we would fain make new plans, and register new resolutions. But these shall avail nothing if there be not *new power*. There must be a humbling of ourselves in the presence of God,—there to learn anew what the Son of His love has been made to us. There is only one satisfying object for the believer's heart. That object is *Christ*. When the heart is occupied and satisfied with *Him*, the savour of His presence gives a tone and character to our whole manner of life. Only thus shall we be enabled truly to "redeem the time."

To "learn of Christ" is the quickest way to *unlearn* the things that are not well-pleasing in His sight. As the true joy comes in, the false is compelled to take to itself wings and depart.

PUNCTUALITY.

IS the meeting not going to commence?" "O, no; the saints here don't come till about twenty minutes after the time." Such was the answer the servant of God received to his question. He looked discouraged; and we did not wonder at it. Coming in late, in that place, seemed to be a general "failing," to use a mild word. But, indeed, *failing* is too mild a word. If we are right with God, there shall be an exercise of soul as to being in time for the meeting, if such be within our power. The world puts us to the blush in this matter. How often you will find meetings filled to the door long before the hour of commencing! The world has a heart for its work and its enjoyments. Why should it be different with the people of God? Have we less enjoyment than the world? Is it not the case that we are drinking at the streams of everlasting joy, while the worldling is feeding on the husks of the far country? Let us be thorough, even in the seemingly small matter of trying to be in time for the meeting. It is written that "when the hour was come" the Lord "sat down" (Lu. xxii. 14). We also read (Jer. xlvi. 10) of him that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully (margin, *negligently*). This is certainly a reference to *listless* service. If it is agreed to have a meeting at a certain time, let it be our endeavour to be there *in time*. If some brother is to take the meeting, punctuality will only be cour-

teous towards *him*; and, if we are going to meet with the Lord, punctuality will be simply *honouring to God*. In any case, let us *try* to be in time.

INWARDLY CONSTRAINED.

WHAT a chance I had to put in a word for Christ; and I missed it!" Thus we sometimes chide ourselves for failing to testify. But why did we thus fail to testify? If we honestly seek out the cause we shall perhaps find that the failure to *testify* was due to our failure to *sanctify*—that is, to "set apart"—Christ as Lord in the heart. It is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh. If Christ is set apart as Lord in the heart, we shall have something to say of Him. When we are inwardly constrained by His love it is not hard to speak His praise; and when the inner fire is burning so intensely that we *cannot help* speaking His praise, it is then that our testimony for God possesses its greatest power. This spontaneous testimony is easy, and natural, and is scarce ever found to behave itself unseemly. The testimony which of its own accord comes forth from the abundance of a loving heart, may neither "toil nor spin" to do a great work in the vineyard. Yet such testimony has many a seal to its ministry; besides possessing a beauty peculiar to itself—the beauty of holiness and the charm of simplicity.

SATAN OPPOSING.

WHEN the Gospel is proclaimed in power, it is Satan's aim to hinder the work by taking away the word that has been sown, "lest they should believe and be saved." But when, in spite of all the powers of evil, souls are believing on Jesus and confessing His Name, the Devil changes his tactics. When resistance fails, he sets himself to the task of producing *spurious converts*, thereby tending to bring discredit on the work. Witness how Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses (2 Tim. iii. 8). They counterfeited the work of the Spirit of God. There is more than one way in which Satan withstands that which is from above. We may think that Satanic power is being used with some effect when there is a dearth of conversions; and certainly this ought to cause deep searchings of heart. Yet the power of Satan may be manifested with as deadly effect in the midst of what is known as "a revival time." It is then that spiritual discernment is specially needed by the workers, in order to distinguish between what God hath wrought and what Satan hath wrought. No one with any experience in the Lord's work will deny that "strange children," begotten in times of special awakening, have often proved determined enemies to the progress of true godliness. It may not be within our power to prevent such professions being made; but this much is at once our privilege and our responsibility,—to

surround ourselves with such an atmosphere of heavenly power that "strange children" shall be made to feel they are strangers indeed,—aliens from the true commonwealth of the people of God.

DENYING THE MIRACULOUS.

WHILE the opponents of Christianity are labouring to prove that no such thing as a miracle was ever wrought, the child of faith is lost in wonder at beholding that most notable miracle—his own conversion to God. The believer, within the circle of his own experience, can bear testimony to a miracle as stupendous as any recorded in the New Testament. To him the mighty inward change wrought by the Spirit of God, is nothing less than miraculous. Scripture declares it to be *a new creation*; and in no other way could the believer account for the wonderful change of tastes and appetites since first he knew the Lord. Those who are strangers to this mighty inward revolution may be found resisting *The Faith*. Such work is quite in keeping with the sentiments of those who have never known the heinousness of sin, and have never rejoiced in the blessings of the new creation. But the child of faith would as soon think of denying his own existence as deny the miraculous. To do so he would require to reject divine revelation, besides denying that standing miracle of grace—the conversion of his own soul to God.

“FAIRER THAN THE CHILDREN OF MEN.”

“**T**HOU art fairer than the children of men” (Ps. xlv. 2). This is the language of a soul enraptured with the beauty of Christ. Such is our estimate of the Beloved One as we find ourselves in what is called His “more immediate presence.” To the world and the things of time we have said in the language of the Patriarch: “Abide ye here, while we go yonder and worship.” Thus we go forth to “a desert place” to meet with Him whom our soul loveth. But ah! there is no desert place where Jesus is! The desert at once becomes to us the presence-chamber of the King! We may have come with great petitions to spread out before Him. Yet these are for the time forgotten. We have beheld *Him*, “glorious in His apparel” (Isa. lxiii. 1). The spirit of praise and adoration fills our soul. Like Thomas of old, we exclaim: “My Lord, and my God.” Like the Psalmist we find ourselves saying: “Whom have I in Heaven but Thee?” (Ps. lxxiii. 25). Like the disciples on the Mount we feel that it is “good for us to be here” (Mark ix. 5). Why doth that desert place blossom like the rose? Because we have met the Master there. It has been a season in which we can enter into the spirit of the apostle when he says: “And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jno. i. 14). The mists have

rolled away; the allurements of earth have faded in the dim distance; the sound of the world’s music has died upon the ear. We are

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

And, alone with Him, how His beauty unfolds before the enraptured eye! True, it is but the fringe of the garment of His glory that we see; for now we know only in part. But even these glimpses of His glory in “the desert place” cause us to take the shoes from off our feet, and to feel that we stand on holy ground. If the heart had been divided before, it is now divided no more. It has found its rest. The beauty of Christ has so captivated the heart that every rival is driven out. “Jesus takes the highest station;” and in fulness of joy we exclaim: “*Thou art fairer than the children of men!*”

O but it is well with the soul when we can say of the absent One, “Thou art fairer than the children of men.” Every burden seems light when to us He is “fairer than the children of men.” And the hours glide so sweetly by, and work for Him is so joyfully done, when He is “fairer than the children of men.” And our lines fall in such pleasant places, and every Marah of the wilderness yields to us its waters of sweetness, when He is “fairer than the children of men.” And “all things are of God,” and life itself is like a song attuned to the harmonies of Heaven, when the absent One is unto us, “*fairer than the children of men.*”

"THY FIRST LOVE."

YOU have doubtless heard of "the expulsive power of the new affection." That is, when Christ gets into the heart the world has to go out. The old idols are expelled. The love of Christ reigns; and all that is opposed to that love must stand afar off.

There is no reason whatever to doubt that in the experience of many this expulsive power has waned. In some cases it seems to have passed away. Once upon a time how joyfully these words were sung:

"All for Jesus! all for Jesus!
All my being's ransomed powers!"

But it is different now. The bright gold has become dim; and we are reminded of the poet's words concerning Israel when the glory had departed:

"Where are the dews that fed thee,
On Etham's barren shore?"

This decay of "first love"—this passing away of salvation's joy—is a loss that is simply incalculable. The loss is manifold. There is the loss of present enjoyment of God, which means loss of Heaven-begotten peace and Heaven-bestowed rest. There is a loss of simplicity—loss of the clearness of the single eye—loss of that untold blessing, *the satisfied heart*. Add to this the loss incurred by contraction of worldly alliances, learning worldly conformity, and walking in the paths of carnal wisdom. Add again to this, the loss that will be suffered at the judgment-

seat, not to speak of the loss which our own low spiritual condition must inflict upon many who may be within the sphere of our influence. The thought is startling. What a stupendous loss is involved in the few and simple words: "Thou hast left thy first love"! (Rev. ii. 4).

What is to be done? The past can not be *undone*. But the future may be redeemed for God. The Psalmist says: "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation" (Ps. li. 12). The lost joy may be found again. The fire of an all-constraining love may yet burn as brightly as of yore. The Eden of our hearts may be made to wear even a fairer than its pristine bloom. We dare not for a moment question the willingness of our God thus to fill us with His love, until the vessel can hold no more, and we are constrained to say, "My cup runneth over." It is not a question of God's willingness, but of *our* willingness. Are *we* willing that this should be our portion? Are we willing thus to "lose our life" that we may find it in the ocean of His love? The recording angel waits for an answer, and eternal issues are hanging in the balance. *Who is to have the throne of the heart?* Is this year to be a true year of grace—a veritable "year of our Lord,"—a year in which the Resurrection One shall "have dominion from sea to sea" in the whole realm of our being? Is it to be a year in which we shall go "from strength to strength," and from victory to victory?—a year in which the flame of devotion

shall glow and burn as in the day of our espousals—a day in which the light of our testimony shall with sevenfold brightness shine, until nothing unclean shall be found within the circle of its radiance; for the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day! It is for each child of God to answer, as in the presence of the heart-searching One.

NOT THE WAY TO BUILD.

SOME preachers proceed to build up one line of truth by first pulling down another. But when one truth is made to rise upon the ashes of another, we make bold to say that the Lord never intended His truth to be treated in such a fashion. Men may make their selections of truth,—calling *this* essential, and *that* non-essential. But God says, “*All* Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable.” And all truth has been given, that the man of God may be “thoroughly furnished.” Happy are they who can truly say, “I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right.”

BE thankful for the least gift: so shalt thou receive greater. If thou consider the excellency of the Giver, no gift shall seem little or of mean esteem. Nothing is little which God gives.

“No man so rich and free as he that is ready to leave all for Christ, and joyfully take the lowest place.”

“Apart from Me ye can do nothing.”

JOHN XV. 5, R.V.

I cannot triumph over inward sin,
Nor rise above the world's rude strife and din;
I cannot live for Thee one single hour,
Except as Thou, O Lord, dost give the power.

Communion's holy path I cannot tread;
I cannot feast upon the living Bread;
Nor all through life a Father's goodness trace,
But by the workings of Thy sovereign grace.

Thy praises to the world I cannot show,
Nor serve Thee with acceptance here below;
I cannot even choose “that better part,”
Save as Thy Mighty love constrains my heart.

I cannot do Thy will, nor love Thy Word,
I cannot own Thy name and call Thee Lord,
Nor please Thee in a deed, or word, or thought,
Except as by the Holy Spirit taught.

So thorough is my utter helplessness,
I cannot half my nothingness express;
For O! methinks that I at last can see
I can do *nothing*, Lord, apart from Thee.

W. B.

“I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.”

PHIL. IV. 13, R.V.

While in my utter helplessness I lie,
I feel the throb of life borne from on high;
In Christ I may rejoice, and by His power
Be led in glorious triumph every hour.

Sufficient is His grace, and freely given,
That I may live in constant touch with Heaven;
The Lord can guard without and reign within—
The Hand that saves from Hell can keep from sin.

His love subdues the long unbending heart,
So that it chooses for “the better part.”
The ear, the hand, the foot, touched by His Blood,
Hear, work, and walk, well-pleasing unto God.

The Holy Spirit doth unfold the Word,
And teach the soul to call the Saviour Lord—
His Word to reverence, Himself adore,
And yearn to know Him and obey Him more.

The *earthen vessel* proves the *treasure* Thine!
The *broken pitcher* lets the glory shine!
My weakness is my strength; for strong in Thee
There's nothing, Lord, impossible to me. W. B.

“AN OPEN DOOR.”

WE sometimes hear Christian workers use the expression, “I go wherever I find an open door.” Very well. We have nothing to say against *that*, provided you go to *deliver souls*, and shun not to declare *God's counsel*. We can easily understand a brother going even into a Roman-Catholic chapel to deliver God's message, if he be permitted so to do. We have never fallen in with any believers who would object to such a course. Yet, if you were permitted to deliver an address in a Roman-Catholic chapel *on the understanding* that you were not to say a single word about such doctrines as “Justification by Faith” and “The Christian Priesthood,” *that* would entirely alter the whole matter. You would at once exclaim: “I cannot go there to preach on any such conditions.” And rightly so. In other words, “the Word of God is not bound” (2 Tim. ii. 9). And if that Word, or certain parts of it, must be *bound up* before you can preach in a particular spot, you deliberately elect *not to preach there*. The Master said (Jno. xvii. 14), speaking of His own: “I have given them *Thy Word*”; and if we cannot take with us that which He has given us, we at once see that the supposed *open door* is not a door which the Lord has opened.

Now, whether it be a Roman-Catholic chapel or any other kind of chapel, the same *principle* applies. If a brother is invited to go to a certain hall and preach,

he is at perfect liberty to do so—provided he takes an *unabridged Bible* with him, and goes with the deliberate intention to *deliver souls*, if he judges they need deliverance.

Let us look for a moment at these two points—the *whole Bible* and the *delivering of souls*. If you are invited by a scripturally-constituted assembly of believers, your path is plain. There is no difficulty. That which is *according to God* has nothing to fear from an *open Bible*. But if you are invited by a religious body *not* gathered together on divine principles, then a very serious responsibility rests upon you if you respond to the invitation. If you are a *faithful* man you will say to yourself: “Now, the true children of God that are in this unscriptural system must be *delivered out of it*; and, according to the ability which God gives, I shall labour to this end.” Thus you go—to deliver souls from the bondage of an unscriptural system or association. We ask the question, What religious system in all the world would accept your services if they knew that these were your convictions? Not one. They would turn round and say: “We wanted you to build us up,—not to pull us down and take away all our *living* members, while leaving us with all the *dead*.” That is to say, if they knew your real intentions they would not have your help on any account! This brings the matter into very small compass. If, by any means, a faithful servant of God finds himself on the platform of an unscriptural religious

system, you need not expect him to pat it on the back, as if it were in favour with Heaven. No. His aim will be to separate every child of God from that system. Nor will he conceal his intentions. This being so, you may confidently expect that the *new wine* will *burst the old bottles*.

If professed servants of the Lord were simply faithful to their Master, the cry about "open doors" would very soon cease. The question would settle itself. Faithful testimony towards sectarianism must issue either in *the deliverance of souls* or in *the rejection of the testimony*. If, however, I make up my mind to *repress certain truths*, in order to get a good crowd of people to preach to, I may get what I want—large and appreciative audiences. But souls will not be delivered through me from the bondage of sectarianism—the testimony will not be rejected—and God will not be honoured!

In these dark days, it is to be feared there are those who at the "morning meeting" on Lord's-day profess to be separated unto God, and yet find *another company* in the evening where, in order to secure an *open door*, they deliberately hold back truth that would be *unpalatable!* They are clearly conscious that if the unpalatable truth were proclaimed the open door would suddenly close! This is surely lamentable. We have not the slightest wish to put fetters upon any servants of the Lord. But if they *place fetters upon themselves*—if they put *themselves into a position in which they*

dare not proclaim some of the most precious and separating truths of Holy Writ, we think it well to point out that the *open door* they claim is not the open door of which Scripture speaks. The door which *the Lord* opens is not one that is opened, or kept open, by any suppression of the truth whatever.

NEEDS NO SUCH HELP.

WHEN it is manifest that our zeal is largely energised by the flesh, it may well be questioned if it is zeal for God's honour. When the fire of our zeal is fed from above, it needs no help from fleshly power. Heaven-born zeal may be intense; yet it can afford to be calm. When we cannot bear to be crossed without losing our temper, there is every reason to fear that we are contending for *our way* rather than for *the Lord's way*. Zeal for *His* honour is ever found running in *His* channels; and approves its heavenly origin by the "excellent spirit" with which it is associated.

—♦—

LET US not suffer an accusation to lie upon us, under the pretext that God will take care of our good name, when perhaps the secret reason is that there is some foundation for the evil report against us, and that our good name had better not be brought to a too public test. Let us clear ourselves when the opportunity presents or the occasion demands. It is not wrong to be jealous of our good name, and to answer frankly the fair *questionings of friend or foe*.

A LITTLE WORD WITH OUR READERS.

WE have no fault to find with brethren who tell us they must curtail the number of their periodicals, so as to have more time for their Bibles. In order to secure sufficient opportunity for reading the Word, no periodical should be allowed to stand in the way. And if, among God's people, a universal desire were to arise to read nothing whatever but the Bible, then for our part we should be simply rejoiced that there was no more need for the *Treasury*. But that day has not come; and we question if it is the Lord's mind that it should come. Be that as it may, we have to deal with things as they *are*, and not as we might wish them to be. We find that the *Treasury* has been a "help" among God's people. It would be out-of-place for us to go into detail as to the cheering testimony that reaches us from time to time. Suffice it to say, that we are satisfied this Paper meets the need of not a few among the saints. If any one finds that he cannot read both a periodical and his Bible, then by all means let the periodical be laid aside — whether it be the *Believer's Treasury* or any other paper. It is *our* experience, however, in reading the writings of those whom we esteem as God-sent "helps," that we acquire a new appetite for the Word. We are thereby led to wonder and adore, and praise God for having made such abundant provision for all our need while treading the wilderness journey. But while we thus speak, we do not presume to dictate to God's people in this matter. We have simply sought to do our best: we still seek to do our best. We have realized the liberty of God in this ministry.

The *need* has been great — is still great, — perhaps increasing. Therefore, having received mercy, we faint not. We trust that the tendency of all that appears in these pages will be *to allure to Christ*, while sounding the alarm from time to time as to the needed word for the present hour.

CIRCULATING THE "TREASURY."

WE are anxious to have the "BELIEVER'S TREASURY" brought before the Lord's people everywhere. But *who* is to help in this work? To this we make answer, that we depend on those among the saints who believe that *this Periodical is doing a needed work*. To such we therefore address ourselves. Fellow-labourers of that kind can help most materially in extending the sphere now being reached by these pages. If you kindly show the Paper to your brethren, and offer to enrol them as subscribers, a much larger field could be reached. We believe that many would take the Paper readily, if some one would take the trouble of sending for it. Others may find in it a message, who don't expect one. Then there are those in whom sheer indifference is the chief obstacle. We should like to see the *Treasury* brought before all these, so that they may at least have the opportunity of having it regularly if so minded. We are prepared to send you a packet (free) containing any quantity of back-numbers you may wish. You have simply to send a Post-Card saying how many you desire, in order to bring the Paper before the saints. We are persuaded that if we had a *single sympathetic brother* in each local centre, who would *make a point* of securing subscribers to the *Treasury*, our "congregation" would very soon show a decided increase. Read our January number, and if you judge that it is needed Truth for this evil day, and have any desire to help in securing subscribers, we shall afford you every facility to that end.

W. S.

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The 'TREASURY' for January, 1891

Contains (among other articles) the following:

- "LIFT UP A STANDARD" (page 1).
 "FAIRER THAN THE CHILDREN OF MEN" (page 9).
 "THY FIRST LOVE" (page 10).

As these Articles are believed to contain a special Message for the present time, we seek the co-operation of God's people in scattering our January number far and wide. We have printed an extra supply of this "TREASURY" in anticipation of a special demand.

While we trust that the whole of this number will be found "a word in season," we have singled out the three Articles in question, as being all on the one great line of *experimental truth*.

Subscribers will kindly note that we continue to send out their monthly parcels, unless instructed otherwise.

TREASURY OFFICE, Maybole, Scotland.

The NEW EDITION of POETRY LEAFLETS

contains three times the variety of the former Edition. We have added 30 new Leaflets to our Poetry List, thus making 45 different kinds in all. Judging from the acceptance with which the former packet was received, we are encouraged to hope that this new Edition will be largely taken up by the Lord's people. These Leaflets have been selected with care, and embrace a considerable variety of style and sentiment. We have inserted nothing but what we deemed worthy of a place in our Poetry List. Our friends can judge how far we have succeeded in this.

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No.	GOSPEL.
1	His Likeness.
2	Himself.
3	Only a cup of water.
4	Walk before God.
5	The Cross.
6	Lines on J. I.
7	Christ asleep in the boat.
8	I beheld His glory.
9	The power of darkness.
10	The weakening gift and the strengthening grace.
11	Brought back to God.
12	Sowing the seed.
13	Forgiven.
14	Communion.
15	The pastor's spirit.
16	Like Him.
17	In the new creation.
18	Children of the new creation.
19	Polished, hid, well-pleasing.
20	The night of sorrow.
21	Look on the fields.
22	"As" and "where" thou art.
23	The Evangelist.
24	The man of God.
25	To my little place for prayer in the wood.
26	Where is that blessed One?
27	The power of love.
28	The care of God.
29	Thine everlasting Light.
30	"Be not afraid, 'tis I."
101	The meeting at the well.
102	The Solemn Day.
103	Turn and flee.
104	I come to Thee.
105	"He told me all that ever I did."
106	Is it too late?
107	For me.
108	The hour is nearing.
109	Not convenient.
110	Conversion of Zachæus.
111	I'm saved to-night!
112	Come, make thy choice!
113	A Question for you.
114	Saved.
115	The Fairest One.

* * * We can supply whatever number may be wanted of any one or more Leaflets, provided that not less than 50 of a kind are taken.

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THE Believer's Treasury.

No. 102.

FEBRUARY, 1891.

Vol. VI.

THE SOUL-WINNER.

THE soul-winner may be altogether a different person from the gifted preacher; for in these days *preaching* is one thing, and *soul-winning* is another thing. The soul-winner may be no preacher. Perhaps he was never on a platform. His voice, it may be, is seldom heard in public. Yet he *wins souls*. How does it come?

First of all, he has been "born from above." He knows what it is to be saved from everlasting woe. He is a child of God—an heir of Heaven. He knows it. And more—he *enjoys* it. Christ is to him "a living, bright reality." Others may speak of the happiness they knew "when first they saw the Lord." But the soul-winner has all this as a *present experience*. He is drawing water with joy out of the wells of salvation; and by an inner constraining power he is compelled to say to those around:

"Ho! ye that thirst, approach the spring,
Whence living waters flow."

He cannot keep the good news hid in his breast. He feels, like the lepers at Samaria's gate, that it is not good to hold his peace (2 Kings vii. 9). The fire in his bones, like that of Jeremiah

(Jer. xx. 9), must find an outlet. The soul-winner knows nothing of *forced work* in zeal for souls. He is a stranger to the arts of the modern elocutionist—the artificial tremble in the voice—the whine of counterfeited earnestness—the dissimulation that would "work up a tear" for the sake of effect. The soul-winner is natural and transparent. His is a genuine love for souls: therefore he has no need, even if he had the will, to manufacture a counterfeit. In his case these words are literally fulfilled: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. xii. 34).

The soul-winner, like a man running a race, looks not at witnesses admiring, but at "the mark for the prize." His sphere of labour may be humble and obscure. Yet he continues "stedfast, unmovable, always abounding." He is a witness; and he must needs bear testimony: he has a message; and he must needs proclaim it. He is not only ready to give a reason of the hope that is in Him (1 Pet. iii. 15) but he is "ready to preach" (Rom. i. 15)—in his own simple way, it may be—extolling Jesus as the One that can *save to the uttermost*.

The soul-winner is quite at home with a congregation of *one*. If there be an

opportunity for testimony, he seizes that opportunity. It may be the last. Therefore, in the morning he sows his seed, and in the evening he slacks not his hand (Ecc. xi. 6). His motto is expressed in one word—"souls." He seeks souls for the Master's crown; and in this great matter he that seeketh findeth. He may not be permitted to see all the fruit of his labour. Indeed, much of it he may never see. Yet he sees sufficient to make his heart rejoice with "joy unspeakable." He knows the luxury of pointing a weary one to Christ; and he forgets all the toil of the wilderness for joy that a soul has been born into the kingdom of light. But, above and beyond all this, he is a man of prayer; for well he knows that salvation is of the Lord, and that power belongeth unto God. None so conscious of his dependence on the Holy Spirit as the soul-winner.

The soul-winner has thus meat to eat which the world, and many professing the name of Christ, know not of (Jno. iv. 32). He eats of "the hidden manna" (Rev. ii. 17). To him the saving of a soul from death brings a sweeter, purer joy than the accession to an earthly fortune yielding millions of money. The joy in one case is fleeting and uncertain. In the other case—a soul won for Christ—the joy is pure as the light before the throne of God, and lasting as eternity! Well might Rutherford sing:

"And if one soul from Anwoth
Meet me at God's right hand,
Then Heaven shall be
Two Heavens to me,
In Immanuel's land.

HE THAT WINNETH SOULS IS WISE.

FROM Prov. xi. 30 we learn that "he that winneth souls is wise," or, as the Revised Version has it: "He that is wise winneth souls." The soul-winner is specially endowed with that wonderful gift of Heaven, the gift of *wisdom* (See 1 Cor. xii. 8). He is no haphazard worker. He *studies* his work. He aims to make himself "approved to God." He studies at the feet of Him who said, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. iv. 19). Witness the great Soul-winner at Jacob's well (Jno. iv.). What wondrous art shines out in His winning the lone and desolate sinner of Sychar! Being wearied with His journey, thus He sat upon the well. And lo! a woman of Sychar comes to draw water. What does He say? How does He introduce the subject? In the *third* chapter of John He says to the moral Nicodemus: "You must be born again." But then *he* was a *seeker*. The woman, as yet all unconcerned, must be first aroused, in order to become a seeker. She must be "caught" in a different way from Nicodemus. True, she also needed to be born again. But the message must reach her in a different manner. A sudden declaration of what she needed might have driven her away—the conscience not reached, the heart untouched. The case was one that required delicate handling;—but, then, a greater than Solomon was there! Jesus said to the woman, "Give Me to drink." The

woman's curiosity is aroused. *Who* can this be that asks a favour of her? He is a Jew, evidently; one of the hated race? She does not *refuse* to give the water. Yet she must know why it is that *He*, a Jew, should ask drink of her, a woman of Samaria. To this the Master answers, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water" (ver. 10). The woman is now interested. The scene at the well has undergone a change. *The woman* is now the petitioner—seeking that living water, of which she as yet knows so little. How gently she is led from step to step by the great Winner of souls—from the earthly water to the heavenly—until the moment has come when she must be brought under conviction of sin by the startling words, "Go, call thy husband"! While conviction is doing its work she is led from the Samaritan worship to that worship which is "in spirit and in truth." She sees herself and her worship alike unfit for the eye of God; and, with a new and undefined thirst springing up in her heart, she longs for that promised Messiah, in the light of whose presence she should learn all things. The moment had now come when the word of emancipation should be spoken. She had been convinced of sin, and new aspirations were arising in that long desolate heart. She was now prepared for that wonderful revelation of the Saviour God, heralded in the words, "I

that speak unto thee am He" (ver. 26). She gazed upon Him—now fairer unto her than the sons of men; and her heart was won for Christ for ever!

How gently, how sweetly, that soul was won! There are those (with warm hearts, but ill-directed zeal) who would have told the woman right off that she was going to hell, and then taken credit for having been "faithful to God." But *a statement of fact* may not be *a message from God*. We must wait upon *Him* for the needed word. We must learn of the Master how souls are won. There may be circumstances in which words of judgment shall find their fitting place. Yea, we may be delivering God's message in declaring the Christ rejector's doom. But we may rest assured that if we are in fellowship with Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost, we shall, in measure, have His mind—His meekness—His gentleness—in seeking to win souls for His crown. Truly, in the work of telling a single soul about Christ, we must wait upon God for our ministry. Nor shall we wait in vain. The Lord shall give the needed word. But whether we are confronted by a moral Nicodemus, an outcast sinner of Sychar, or a Nathanael of guileless spirit, we shall "find out acceptable words, . . . even words of truth"; for "the words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies" (Ecc. xii. 10, 11).

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THOSE who joy most in God are those who mourn most over sin.

ADDRESSES TO CHILDREN.

SPECIAL tact—perhaps special gift—is needed in addressing children.

Whatever number of general Gospel preachers there may be, certain it is that the number fitted to preach to children is much less. It is a great mistake to suppose that “anybody will do to address the children.” And it is as great a mistake to think that because a brother takes the Gospel meeting of grown-up people, he *must* be interesting to the children as well. Special qualifications are needed. Great *gift*—as it is generally understood—is happily not essential. The preacher to the young does not require to be able to divide a subject into six heads and give an exhaustive exposition of each head. He may be a brother who can carry only one thought at a time; but if he can get that thought into the children’s heads—or, better still, into their hearts—he is the preacher for *them*.

The preacher to children must be a man of a *happy temperament*. His manner of spirit will affect the children, in spite of himself. Your cold, stern, “judgment” preachers are of no use in the children’s meeting. You need not *pound* them with the truth, or try by accumulation of “texts” to compel them to believe. It is hopeless to *beseech* the children to “pay attention,” although in certain circumstances you may have to call a halt to restore order. *Interest them*; and no scolding will be required.

The preacher must have a *heart for*

the little ones. If such is the case, he will be *in touch with them*. This is a most important point. If the preacher cannot *come down* to where the children are, he labours in vain.

The preacher to the young must be conspicuous for his reality. If he is merely pretending to be earnest, or aiming at eloquence by the use of “great swelling words,” the children will not be imposed upon. They have a wonderful power of perception;—some call it a sort of instinct peculiar to childhood. Hypocrisy and dissimulation have no weight with *them*. They “*feel*” that something is wrong; and the whole performance falls flat; although it might have passed as a splendid address in many a Gospel meeting of grown-up people! Passing strange, surely! But we cannot digress to follow up that line of thought just now.

The acceptable children’s preacher, you will find, is one who does not look at the ceiling or shut his eyes while he is speaking. He looks the little ones straight in the face; he looks all round him, and, so to speak, holds his audience *with his eye*. He knows the importance of arresting their attention in his first sentence. So he commences quite abruptly: “When I was travelling in the train yesterday”; or, “I knew a little boy, and they called him Tommy.” Immediately every eye is upon him; every ear is open. All present have evidently made up their minds that they must know what took place in the train yesterday, or what happened to little

Tommy, as the case may be. Attention being secured, the preacher proceeds at his ease. He feels that he has the *grip* of the meeting. Yet, being a wise man, he knows that it is important to *keep* the grip. But this is not hard work, for his heart is *in* the work. Thus he proceeds with his story. But he has something more than "story." Before he commenced he had a particular Gospel truth before his mind; and his aim has been to carry this truth home to the hearts of the little ones. He may start in a railway train, or from the valley of Elah, but he duly reaches the point at which he aims. He brings Christ, the Saving One, before his little hearers. Nor does he wait until the story is ended before he "applies his subject." Some preachers take ten minutes to tell a story, and then say, "Now, I am going to tell you what the story teaches." But he suddenly finds that the interest has disappeared, and his "final exhortations" are lost amid the hum of voices or the rustling of leaves. The preacher who is fitted for his work applies his subject *as he goes along*—he *weaves* it into his incident, and carries home the lesson, often without giving the slightest hint that he is doing anything of the kind! In order to sustain attention (especially if his audience be a turbulent one) he will come to a dead stand, and ask a question; or perhaps point out a certain seat of boys and require one to repeat a particular text of Scripture. But, whatever his methods, he takes care not to hand out *large slices of solid truth*. He considers

the mental capacities of his audience. He labours to make one point clear, and not to give a smattering of the whole plan of salvation. He is a brother with a good temper; and *that* is an essential; for when you get impatient and angry with the little folks you have lost them for that day at least.

The children's preacher is a man with some presence of mind—not easily put out—and ready to turn to good account some awkward interruption of the meeting. In style he is natural and unaffected. His matter is simple and practical. His desire is manifestly to bring the little ones to Christ; and he preaches as if he expected them to come. He is a man possessing a fair amount of what is called "sanctified common-sense." He observes the "pulse" of his audience and gives them no more than they are able to bear. He is most careful to avoid spinning out his address to a painfully attenuated close. If he errs, it is on the side of brevity. He perceives the very moment when that Scripture applies: "Ye have compassed this mountain long enough" (Deut. ii. 3). In other words, he knows when his address is finished, and he sits down, without saying another word.



LET us be on our guard against *old self* in every form, whether it be indolence, or temper, or coldness, or rudeness, or disobligingness, or slovenliness, or shabbiness, or covetousness, or flippancy, or self-conceit, or pride, or cunning, or obstinacy, or sourness, or levity, or love of pre-eminence.

REVIVAL IN ANSWER TO PRAYER.

To the Readers of "The Treasury."

I wish to record, for your good, a remarkable instance of God signally rewarding the simple faith of 5 young men, who asked of Him 20 souls, and *got them*, with 50 per cent. interest added! The circumstances of the case are these: Three of us had been reading the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, and were particularly struck with the mighty power of God manifested in those days in the salvation of "*multitudes* both of men and women" (Acts v. 14); and that by the hands of "unlearned and ignorant men" (as regards the wisdom of this world). We reasoned thus with each other,—Was God's power changed at all during the lapse of nineteen centuries? Was He not able, and was He not willing, to use His servants as much *now* as in the time of Peter and John? And in the face of that record in Acts, might we not ask for 20 souls to be saved in connection with ourselves and the little Gathering in this town to the Name of the Lord Jesus?

We accordingly searched His Word, and read, and re-read the promises, such as Matt. xviii. 19, Mark xi. 24, Jno. xv. 7. And so great and marvellous did these seem, that for a short time we wondered if they were too good to be true, and if we dared to believe them literally? Well, like Abraham, we "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief. . . being *fully* persuaded that what He had promised, He was *able* also to perform" (Rom. iv. 20, 21); and on Monday evening, Aug. 26th, 1889, we put up the petition for TWENTY SOULS. I can never forget that memorable night. How near the Lord was to us! Afterwards we could not but feel that this was the most *daring feat* of

our lives, next to trusting as sinners to the finished work of Christ.

We got the first soul on Oct. 13, 1889. It was three months before we had another. By about May we had 8. The eleventh month closed, and no more conversions. At this time the Lord sent an Evangelist to labour in connection with the Assembly. So we (5 of us now) earnestly besought God that the twentieth should be saved before the twelve months were up. Well, to God's eternal praise, two or three days before our time expired, *the last one was brought in!* In a little more than a week after, the Lord rewarded us by adding 10 more to the number, thus making it up to 30.

We also had the joy of witnessing the baptism of 13,—9 sisters and 4 brothers. We had asked that all those saved should be gathered to the Lord's Name, as it was not His will that things should be done by halves. 13 have been thus gathered, and 17 remain to be; but these must follow.

Now, a closing word to any young men who are saved, and who may read this letter. Why should not you get another, or more, likeminded with yourself, and ask the Lord for as many souls to be saved in twelve months as you have faith for, and meet one evening each week for prayer accordingly? Would not the blessing be *wonderful*?

Yours, &c.

[The above is from the same pen as the Letter which appears in 1890 Volume, page 30. The present communication speaks for itself. We trust it shall prove a word in season, and mighty through God to the promotion of like simple faith in Him.—Ed.]

A CHRISTIAN profession exercises only a repelling influence the moment that it is suspected to be unreal or assumed.

NOT TALKATIVE.

HE who possesses spiritual discernment—who can see quickly and accurately into men and things—is not given to say much about what he sees. He observes a great deal, and yet says little. The deeper his perception, the less is he inclined to be communicative. You try to “draw him out.” But he is wary. He will not satisfy mere inquisitiveness. You may have a higher motive, it is true. Yet he refraineth his lips; and he that refraineth his lips is wise (Prov. x. 19). In matters requiring delicate spiritual perception the man of discernment finds himself with a very limited circle among whom he may speak freely. It is not every one that has his senses so exercised in the things of God as to be able to distinguish between things that differ. Thus the saint who is in fellowship with the Lord as to what is going on among men, is often hard to understand, and is often misunderstood and misjudged. The world cannot understand him; for the things of God are spiritually discerned; and it is still true, as of old, that “the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not” (Jno. i. 5). But we go further, and say that children of God not dwelling in His light shall fail to understand their brother in whom the heavenly light is shining. Christ was misunderstood by His own. It was “His own” that received Him not. Joseph was rejected by his brethren. David was misunderstood, and his faith in God

set down as pride of heart. In the day of Gideon's anointing, Israel sought his life. In all times the Lord's anointed have been misunderstood. Therefore we need not be surprised if they care not to unbosom themselves to all comers, and are careful how they reveal what may be passing in their heart concerning this evil day.

IN A BAD SPIRIT.

IF you seize the sword of Truth to attack some particular form of evil and find that you are not in the right spirit for such work, your safe course is to *lay down the sword* until you *have* the right spirit; that is, until you can carry out the divine injunction to rebuke “with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. iv. 2). A hasty and irritated spirit is not the spirit in which we are called to contend for eternal principles. A good cause can only be damaged by associating it with a bad spirit. Truth cannot have free course if it be divorced from grace. Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ (Jno. i. 17). God hath joined these two together; and if we separate them, it can only be to our loss and confusion.

Love of praise comes clearly out in a great deal of the advice given to an enquiring soul. There is a secret desire to stand well with our brother. By agreeing with his view of the matter we will commend ourselves to his judgment. Thus our vanity is flattered. That is, the flesh is gratified, and the truth is sacrificed!

NOT AN INFALLIBLE TEST.

ALTHOUGH you may have experienced the most happy "frames and feelings" at some meeting of the saints, do not conclude that your spiritual condition *must* therefore be excellent. Your experience while within the happy surroundings of a believers' meeting, is not an infallible sign that your soul is prospering. Soul-prosperity manifests itself in more ways than the mere enjoyment of a meeting. You may be walking "in the light, as He is in the light," and yet find little in the meeting to stir your joy. Or, you may be very far down as to spiritual condition, and yet experience a certain joy in hearing "smooth things" proclaimed. The question, then, is not: "How much joy did you experience while in the meeting?" but, "How much buffeting can you bear while out of the meeting?" This is a far truer test than merely measuring our joy while some gifted servant of the Lord is opening up the Word. "How much can you bear?" will test very accurately the stock of grace we may possess. It is comparatively easy to be calm and unruffled at a happy believers' meeting. But it may be altogether different when we go forth to receive the taunts of an unfriendly world, to get "the cold shoulder" from our brethren, or be wounded in the house of our friends. Can we bear it, and give nothing in return but a manifestation of the meekness and gentleness of Christ? The hour of trial, rather than the happy

believers' meeting, will tell us the depth of our joy. True Christianity has been well compared to a certain plant that yields its sweetest fragrance when it is trampled on. Happy for us if external buffetings produce a like effect in our experience.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE.

GOD hath shined in our hearts to give the light (2 Co. iv. 6). "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now ye are light in the Lord" (Eph. v. 8). Therefore, let the light shine. No grand effort is needed here. The light has been already kindled at the heavenly altar. *Let it shine.* Don't obscure it. That uncharitable thought will hinder the light; that unkind word—that frivolous expression—will cause people to wonder where the light has gone. Let your light have free course,—*let it shine.* Self-seeking will dim the light. Carnal indulgence will envelop it in impenetrable mist. The little word *let* means a great deal. It means *let not*, as applied to everything opposed to God.

And it is *your* light. The exhortation is a personal one. Brother So-and-so's light may be very dim; and we may be concerned that his light should be so feeble. But our *first* concern is to see that *our own* light is shining. Take heed to thyself. Godly concern for our brother's welfare is good. But our most convincing exhortation will be the light of heavenly love and heavenly power shining in our own manner of life.

ONLY INTELLECTUAL.

TRUE Christian character will show a happy blending of the *intellectual* and the *emotional*. Where the intellectual element, or the emotional element, is unduly prominent, there will be an ill-formed, because an ill-balanced, Christian character. The purely intellectual Christian is one who possesses a clear and well-balanced mind. His reasoning power is considerable. He can grasp the threads of an argument with great readiness: and in drawing fine distinctions he is quite at home. We have no fault to find with these qualifications. On the contrary, we hold that the brother who is high in intellectual power has reason to praise God for such an endowment. But if that brother be destitute—or almost destitute—of the emotional, his intellectual power will become a snare to him instead of a blessing. The man of mere intellect—the man who is not concerned about *heart-work*—may be very clever in laying down a line of argument. He may amaze you by his depth; he may dazzle you by the clearness with which he draws his conclusions. But you feel, instinctively, that *something* is wanting. What is that something? It is *heart*. Such a believer may cause many to wonder at his able handling of a text. But no hearts are melted; no backslider is alarmed; no Heaven-begotten purpose is wrought in the soul to live a higher and holier life. The intellectual preacher, pure and simple, may interest a certain

class of minds. But he shall utterly fail to satisfy the longings of those who are saying, like the Greeks of old (Jno. xii. 21), "We would see Jesus." Preaching that is intellectual, and nothing more, is cold, clammy, lifeless. The purely intellectual Christian must have everything to square with reason. He weighs everything in the cold scales of logic. His reasoning power lacks the sweetening, mellowing influence of a tender and sympathetic heart. What a terrible lack! Yes. Yet it is not irreparable. The brother has been cultivating only one side of his nature—the *intellectual*. What he has to do now is to cultivate the *emotional side*. Intellect can appeal only to intellect. It takes both *intellect and heart* to reach *the heart*.

THE EMOTIONAL CHRISTIAN.

BY the emotional Christian we mean one who is *all emotion*. He looks upon a clear understanding of Scripture as of little importance. He seems to think that the intellect has very little to do with apprehending the truths of revelation. He believes in appealing to the heart—stirring the heart. He judges men by their savour (or seeming savour) of godliness; and he measures a preacher's address by its power and enthusiasm. He concludes that everything that moves the emotional nature *must* have come from above. In determining what is *of God*, he depends greatly on what he *feels*. He does not

care to go to the root of the matter and sit down with his open Bible while he asks the question: "Is this in accordance with what God has said in His Word?" Instead of taking the written Word as the standard, he rather inclines to take *his own consciousness* as the standard. He is influenced more by what he *feels* than by what he *knows* (or ought to know) of the truths of Holy Writ. His movements are therefore uncertain. He is a law unto himself. Wherever the emotional is most largely appealed to—wherever there is the greatest appearance of heavenly joy—he is sure to be there. But his joy, like his movements, is uncertain and fluctuating. Why? Simply because he is not ordering his conduct according to the *unchanging principles* of divine truth. He permits himself to be led by his feelings. These have become to him a "second Bible." And, alas! what he *feels* is often acted upon, although utterly opposed to what the written Word *declares!* The dear brother—with the best intentions in the world, it may be—seems to forget that it is our Father's desire we should be "filled with the knowledge of His will" (Col. i. 9); that we be "not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. v. 17). And where shall we find what the will of the Lord is, if it be not in the pages of Holy Writ? "A sound mind" (2 Tim. i. 7) is from the Lord; and if we do not seek after an intelligent understanding of the great truths of Scripture, verily we shall be at the mercy of every wind that may blow

in the religious world. Zeal, apart from the knowledge of the Lord's will, has been well compared to *heat* without *light*. But we must *shine* as well as *burn*. It is only as we order our steps *according to the Word* that we can truly shine for God, and be a light to them that sit in darkness.

EVERLASTING COMMUNION.

WHEN the Sun stood still upon Gibeon and the Moon in the valley of Ajalon (Josh. x. 12), it was but a foreshadowing of that day when the Sun of Communion shall "stand still" through never-ending years—when the light shall no more grow dim—when evening shadows shall no longer fall. That day shall be a sinless day; and because there shall be no sin, there shall be no sorrow—no pain—no sickness—no dying,—not a single speck to mar the brightness of that eternal day. Love shall be perfect then—joy shall be full. There shall be no "ebb of tide" upon yonder glassy sea. Come then, my soul, be stirred up to bless and magnify the Lord. Thou art going home. Thou art nearing the unsullied brightness of that morning that shall never be followed by a night. "Yet a little while," and thine eyes shall see the King; and then for thee the sinless, ceaseless cycles of eternity!

—♦—
"WHAT is new is not true, and what is true is not new."

CHOSEN AND SEPARATED.

THE Lord chose Israel to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all the nations that are upon the face of the earth (Deut. xiv. 2). In Num. xxiii. 9, it is written: "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." They were an earthly people. Their inheritance, their hopes, their sacrifices, were earthly. But God is now gathering out a *heavenly* people, whom He has justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. iii. 24). We are not of the world, even as He is not of the world (Jno. xvii. 14). We are built up, a *spiritual house*, an holy priesthood, to offer up *spiritual* sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Pet. ii. 5). The earthly people gathered into Jerusalem; but God bids the heavenly gather into the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has said: "Where two or three are, having been *gathered together into My Name*, there am I in the *midst* of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). The many names chosen by man are not of God. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you" (1 Cor. vi. 17). There are some who, when they go to places where there is no gathered-out company, go back to the systems of man. They say, "I must go *somewhere*." God says, "*Be ye separate*." Jeremiah *sat alone*. He said, "*Thy Name was called upon me*, O Lord God of Hosts (margin). I sat not in the

assembly of mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone, because of Thy hand" (Jer. xv. 16, 17). *Christian, the Name of Christ has been called upon you. Can you sit in the assembly of mockers?*

We also find some who, at one time, could say to others: "Shouldest thou help the ungodly?" But now they hold the truth so lightly, that they can go back to the world's so-called churches, and listen to a sermon. They are building again the things which they once destroyed. To all this we have a beautiful contrast in Acts iv., where Peter and John, being let go, "went to their own company." They made no compromise with elder or scribe. They were satisfied with the Lord Jesus; and the people saw that they had been with Him.

Others will, to promote what they call *unity*, give up their own Gospel Meetings, and patronise work carried on by sectarian religion. They say, "It is right to have fellowship in the Gospel." They also perhaps say, "The preacher belongs to no sect," which, I expect, is only another way of saying that he belongs to any sect that may desire his services. They forget that God says, "*Be ye separate*." Concerning all such the Word of the Lord is plain: "Let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them" (Jer. xv. 19). J. R.

ALL commend patience, though few are willing to suffer.

IN prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart.

REJECTING THE DELIVERER.

WHEN Christ came, the Jews were expecting a Deliverer.

They were praying and longing for the Promised One. Their roll of Scripture bore the fullest testimony to the great truth that the Messiah should come. This much was known even to the Samaritans (Jno. iv. 25)—strangers though they were to the covenants of promise and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. And not only was the Messiah promised, but careful students of the sacred writings could discern that the time of His advent was near. Our Lord was thus an expected Messiah. But He was more. He was a *longed-for* Messiah. Yet, when He came, they rejected Him—cast Him out—crucified Him. They cried to God for a Deliverer; and, when the Deliverer appeared, they would not have Him!

The Jews were away in heart from Jehovah. Therefore they could not understand His actings. Yea, they failed to recognise the very Deliverer for whose advent they were praying! But some may say, "If they could not see, wherein lay their responsibility?" To this we reply: They were responsible for the *state of heart* which *produced* their blindness. If we apply all this to ourselves we shall find lessons of eternal value. Like the Jews of old, we also may be heard saying, "We cannot see;" while the cause of our blindness may be secret departure in heart from God. If this be going on, it need cause no surprise if we

fail to perceive the manifested power of Christ. There is much praying for the Lord to come in; but it takes the anointed eye to perceive His coming and to *rejoice* when He has come.

BREAKING THE SILENCE.

WE read of a time when the priests could not stand to minister, because of the glory that filled the house of the Lord (1 Kings viii. 11). Thus it is often where gathered ones are waiting upon the Lord in the silence of adoration. We instinctively feel that "the Lord is here"; and while the restless flesh may be wondering what these moments of quietness can mean, the adoring heart is saying, "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord God of hosts!" Then comes an exercise of heart as to the breaking of the silence; and truly it needs an exercised heart to lead out in these "moments rich in blessing." It is just at such a time that we tremble lest our voice should strike a discord upon the "silent harmonies" of Heaven! Yet, as the single eye never fails to see the light, so the subject heart is ever ready to catch the leading of God.

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HE that never changed any of his opinions never corrected any of his mistakes.

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ZEAL without knowledge is like expedition to a man in the dark.

DIVINE FORGIVENESS.

DIVINE forgiveness is looked upon by many as the mere blotting out of something which we have asked to be forgiven. But it is far more than this. There are two—indeed, we may say three—distinct steps in the great work of forgiveness,—that is, of forgiveness as relating to the child of God. (1) *Confession*; (2) *Forgiveness*; (3) *Cleansing*. True confession of sin goes far deeper than merely asking to be forgiven. It may not be at all difficult to pray in a general way for forgiveness. Many children of God may be heard calling upon the Lord for forgiveness. Yet, if you went up to them and asked if they had any special reference to certain sins they had been committing, they would at once resent such an imputation. "O no," they would say, "we had nothing special whatever before our mind!" Thus thousands are praying every day for forgiveness, while they do not know what they want forgiveness for; neither do they ever seem to get what they are seeking! At this point we are aware that Matt. vi. 12 will be brought up: "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." No doubt the question will be asked, What do we make of the prayer in which these words occur? We reply that the Lord has "made everything beautiful in its time" (Ecc. iii. 11, R.V.). And the Disciples' Prayer was beautiful in *its* time. It had its place in connection with the Gospel of the Kingdom; and the cry, "Thy

Kingdom come," was in strict keeping with the proclamation, "Repent, for the Reign of the Heavens is at hand" (Matt. iii. 2). But a new dispensation has been ushered in. The setting up of the Kingdom has been postponed. The heir has been killed. In resurrection He is Head of the New Creation, in which all things are of God. He has ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on High. The Spirit has come down; and out of the Gentiles a new people—a people of heavenly birth—are being taken for the Name of the Lord—built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. That, therefore, which was fitting while the Gospel of the Kingdom was proclaimed to the Jewish people may not be fitting while the Gospel of Christ (Rom. i. 16; xv. 19) is being preached to "all people"—whether Jew or Gentile. New wine must be put into new bottles. The Disciples' Prayer has its lessons, deep and weighty, for us. But it was specially designed for a particular time; and even for that time it did not demand adherence to the very *words* of the Prayer. It was simply, "After this manner, therefore, pray ye."

It has been remarked that in the Disciples' Prayer there is no word of asking *in the Name* of the Lord Jesus—a thing which He was careful afterwards to impress upon His followers. See Jno. xvi. 24, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name." And again "Whatsoever ye shall ask in *My Name*" &c. It has therefore been held (and rightly so) that

the Disciples' Prayer could not be a fitting pattern when everything asked and done was to be "in the Name of the Lord Jesus," seeing the prayer in question had no mention whatever of that Name. Moreover, forms which might serve certain uses under the reign of law may be found out of keeping with the reign of grace and the dispensation of the Spirit. To this some have replied that while prayer must now be made in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, all that the Disciples' Prayer needs is an *addition* to the end of it, saying that the prayer is offered in the Name of Christ. We need scarcely stay to show how this would be simply putting the new wine of the Gospel dispensation into the old bottles of a bygone age. But, taking these objectors upon their own ground for the moment, we must point out that further "additions" would require to be made to the Disciples' Prayer, not the least of which is this, that before the petition for forgiveness there must be *confession of the sin*. This is clearly brought out in 1 Jno. i. 9: "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" This is the "latest voice from Heaven" on this great subject. Nor does it detract in any way from the force of the words in Matt. vi. 12, "Forgive us our debts." On the contrary, it *intensifies* that petition. It cuts deeper. It proves itself a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The general cry for forgiveness will not avail. *What have you done? What sin is this you have committed? You need*

not try to gloss it over and have it forgotten by repeating the well-known (perhaps well-worn) words: "Forgive us our debts"—or even, "Forgive *me*." The accursed thing must be brought to the light. There must be *confession*. Our God must be told exactly what has happened—"not that He may be informed, but that we may be humbled." O but this searches us! Confession reveals whether or not we reckon our sin to be indeed the thing which God hates. Confession brings us face to face with the *iniquity* of our sin (Ps. xxxii. 5). Confession is the most powerful discipline in restoration; and to the believer it is the God-appointed channel for forgiveness and cleansing.

If we confess, *He* is faithful to forgive, &c. Mark how "*He*" comes in after, "If we confess." It does not say, "If we confess *and* pray earnestly to be forgiven." No sooner is true confession made than *God* comes in. His faithfulness at once appears,—faithful and just to forgive. His forgiveness follows hard upon the heels of confession. Indeed, the two are as closely allied as are *believing on Jesus* and *possessing eternal life*. As surely as there is true confession, so surely is there true forgiveness. And the erring one who brings his sin into the light of God and confesses it there, may be assured of forgiveness without waiting a single moment to put in a "plea." God hath spoken. His faithfulness is pledged. There cannot be God-wrought confession apart from God-bestowed forgiveness.

CLEANSING.

WE have already said that there are, strictly speaking, *three* steps in divine forgiveness. In the preceding article we have touched upon *Confession* and *Forgiveness*. But our remarks would be incomplete if we did not speak of *Cleansing*. When confession has been made, our Father, God, is faithful and just to forgive, *and* to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. This is a most important element in forgiveness. Indeed, it is *the* important element; for just as confession goes deeper than the prayer to be forgiven, so does cleansing go deeper than forgiveness. Forgiveness has to do with the sin; cleansing deals with the *state of heart* which led to the sin,—and which would *lead to it again* if nothing were done to reach the *root* of the disease. But our gracious God has made ample provision to meet *all* our need. Forgiveness apart from cleansing may satisfy the man who merely wants to have his conscience soothed for the time being. But it will not satisfy Him whose desire is that we should be *holy* in our whole manner of life. Therefore, we have cleansing in connection with forgiveness. In this we see God's wisdom as well as His grace displayed; for what would it profit us to have a certain sin forgiven in its outward manifestation, if the *inner tendency* to that sin remains untouched? What would it avail to have a certain sin forgiven, if the Lord did not deal with the *state of heart* which made that sin

possible, and perhaps easy to be committed? God's righteousness demands that the *cause* of the sin be sought out and purged. Very often the *cause*, or root, is the last thing we search for. We look at sin in its manifestation, and are willing to admit that it is heinous. And if we can be assured that it is blotted out, and that we have made "a new start" in the path of Communion, we are prone to be satisfied. But our God is not so easily satisfied; and neither shall we ourselves, *if* we have been truly brought low on account of what we have done. Superficial confession cannot be followed by the forgiveness which is according to God. There must be *heart-work*. And when the Lord has had a dealing with the heart we may then expect not only the peace of forgiveness, but the healthy and vigorous "tone" which follows upon *cleansing*. Mark the words, "And to cleanse us from *all unrighteousness*." Nothing is to be left that would give a foothold to Satan. The sword of judgment must be laid not only to the sin that has come to the surface but to *all unrighteousness*; for unrighteousness tolerated in reference to *one* thing will simply blind us to unrighteousness in *other* things; so that we cannot see in the light of God. We thus learn that *thoroughness* is the great characteristic of God's dealings with the soul.

—♦—

IF Christ be to us the great Sun that rules the day of our life, that day *must* be bright.

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COMES SUDDENLY.

YOU may have remarked that Revival from the Lord often comes *suddenly*. In bygone awakenings it would almost seem as if there had been a spiritual application of the prophetic word, "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple" (Mal. iii. 1). Places have been shaken by the great awakening power of God; and yet a few weeks—perhaps days—before, it seemed as if the slumber of death had taken hold of the people. But "God comes in," as we hear it said. Judgment very likely begins at the house of God. Then the question is asked, "Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Pet. iv. 18). After the saints—or, it may be, one or two of them—have been brought under the power of the heavenly fire, the cry goes forth to an unbelieving world: "Prepare to meet God!" The message has a wonderful effect. The ungodly may often have listened to the same words before. But now the message thrills them with a strange power. The worldling is made to feel that *God* is speaking—that the Lord has girded His sword upon His thigh, and is riding

forth to victory. Men and women tremble under the word. They are *compelled* to think upon eternity. New aspirations rise in their hearts. They are stirred by new longings. They would fain be delivered from the power of evil, and tread the way of peace, and be "for the Christ of God." But such a life seems to be beyond their reach—like some vision away in the distant future—perhaps never to be realised on earth! Then comes the thought, "What of my sins?—how shall I meet God?—how shall I face the judgment?" They are in the deep waters of conviction. But deliverance is nigh. The power of the Lord is present to heal (See Lu. v. 17). They flee for refuge—they find it—or rather *Him*—the Man who is a covert from the Tempest, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land (Isa. xxxii. 2). "What joyful converts," you say; "each one looks as happy as if he had come into a fortune." And so, indeed, he has. Yet his fortune, like the Kingdom spoken of in Jno. xviii. 36, is not of this world. Each one of that happy company, saved by the blood of the Lamb, becomes a light to them that sit in darkness. The news spreads that "So-and-so is converted"; and

although old companions may affect to make light of it, there is, deep down in their heart of hearts, an uneasy feeling that says, or seems to say: "Is it not high time *you*, too, were seeking God?"

Thus the work spreads and deepens; and believers who have been merely keeping up the outer form of profession are made uncomfortable in the extreme. They discover that they had been following Christ afar off. While giving attendance upon the outward "means of grace," they are alarmed to discover that the inner fire of communion has reached the lowest point. Then comes self-judgment and restoration. It is a happy time—happy because the power of God is more or less possessing every heart. And it is none the less a happy time although, like the revival in Hezekiah's day, "the thing was done *suddenly*" (2 Chron. xxix. 36).

But, although revival may be generally sudden in its manifestation, we must remember that hidden forces may have been long at work,—slowly but surely making for a "day of power." Before the outbreak of revival, we may be assured that definite business has been done in secret between souls and God. It is then that battles are fought and won, of which the world and the church know nothing; just as David's victories in the wilderness (1 Sam. xvii. 33-37) were the precursors of the great deliverance in the valley of Elah. Of these wilderness conflicts we might never have known anything, had there not been a needs-be for David to tell how the Lord

had given him the victory. If, then, we would see a revival time in which the Goliaths of carnal indulgence and the Philistine hosts of evil shall be overthrown, let us seek unto our God in the desert place. Let business be done in secret for eternity. Let it be our care to see that the "hidden forces" are duly at work; and with a "willing people" we need not doubt that our God will let us see a day of His power. When revival begins in the closet, it soon burns its way out into the cold, Christ-rejecting world. When there is victory for God in the desert place, it will not be long ere His power is seen in the place of public testimony.

THE CLOUDLESS DAY.

BREAK, break, O cloudless Day!
O star of morn arise:

Before thy dawning ray
Our bitt'rest anguish flies.

My spirit longs for thee,
While darkness reigns around,
And sin and misery
On every hand abound.


The whole creation groans,
While death and sorrow reign;
The very ocean moans,
Responsive to our pain.

In vain the soul seeks rest
In aught beneath the sky;
But on my Saviour's breast
In conscious peace I lie.

B. C.

OUR responsibility to be holy is great, but not greater than the means provided for its attainment.

DIVIDED JUDGMENT, AND HOW TO ACT.

N these dark and difficult days there is sometimes difference of judgment among brethren upon questions regarding which there is no special "Thus saith the Lord." In such circumstances, what is to be done? So far as we have learned of God we would humbly say, "Tarry one for another, brethren." "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" (Phil. iii. 15, 16). If I have got what I believe to be undoubted light from Heaven upon some difficulty, I must not conclude that my brethren are in a state of rebellion because they do not at once see as *I* see. Perhaps it took me a long time to learn the principles I am advocating. Therefore, I need not be surprised if these are not received by my brethren in a day. There are many things—even within the domain of clearly-revealed Truth—which God's people have to be "educated into"; and this educating process may take a considerable time. If patience be needed in that case, it is surely more needed in matters concerning which Scripture has not spoken so conclusively. Therefore, I must calmly wait until the truth (or that which I hold to be the truth) makes its way. In other words, I must seek to *carry the consciences of*

God's people with me. If there be a clearly divided judgment among us regarding some question that affects the welfare of the saints at large, and perhaps the prosperity of many of the churches, it becomes us to bear with one another—to wait upon one another—to consider one another. The law of love requires this, seeing we are members one of another. If we do not see exactly eye-to-eye upon the point in question, a divergence of judgment need cause no division of spirit. It is just at this point that Satan is ever watching to come in and score a victory. When some question as to discipline or church-order arises, there may be some difference of judgment. But this is no reason why I should at once proceed to oppose *you*, on the ground that you do not see with me on the question that has arisen. Although we may differ in judgment, there is nothing whatever to hinder us being one *in spirit*. As to the difference in judgment, we can calmly wait upon God to "reveal even this" unto us; and, in thus waiting upon Him, we shall find that our endeavouring "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," will be a wonderful help to our arriving at oneness of judgment. The more solemn the question, and the more momentous the issues involved, the more imperative is it that we *bear and forbear* one with another, seeking in all meekness to help one another, or to be helped one of another. Let us beware of hasty and ill-considered action. Let us watch our spirit. If, in seeking what

we believe to be divine principles, we find we cannot do so in the calmness of communion and the gentleness of love, we had better *wait*. If there be doubt—if there be a divided judgment—let us take the matter to the Lord, and wait for help from above. An aged brother once said, "If you come to a place where the road branches off into two, and you don't know which one to take, you must just sit down and wait for light as to your path." In times of difficulty, this is our course—calmly to wait upon God.

In seeking oneness of judgment it is of the highest importance to cultivate the love that thinketh no evil. If such love has its due place in our heart, we shall be careful in judging the *motives* of others. The heart and its secret springs of action are known only to God. Let us, therefore, give each other credit for purity of motive and singleness of eye, unless there be *undoubted evidence* to the contrary.

Where a difference of judgment exists, let us avoid anything that might unnecessarily tend to widen that difference. Sometimes certain brethren in a meeting are seeking to carry out what they believe to be divine principles. But—rightly or wrongly—they are opposed; and the opposers seem to take delight in going to the *very opposite extreme* of the thing they are opposing, as much as to say, "We will let you see how little we care for *your* principles." This reacts upon the others; and they, too, seem determined to recoil to *their* extremest point. Now, this is lamentable. If my

brother is running to an extreme with a certain line of things, I shall take the wrong way of setting him right if I rush off to the opposite extreme. There is no call whatever for us to leave the centre of the "great highway of Truth." Let us keep the even tenor of our way, brethren. If we see what we believe to be a distortion of one aspect of truth, do not let us think it will mend matters for us to produce a similar distortion of *another* aspect of truth. The rush to the opposite extreme is more likely to be the fruit of an opposing spirit than of that wisdom which comes from above. Such opposition certainly fails of any good purpose, and does not promote the things that "make for peace." In our experience of such matters, we have ever found it to be to the glory of God to honestly and candidly *admit wherein our "opponents" are right*, and to hear them patiently and respectfully; while seeking, in all meekness, to point out where they seem to us to be in error. Heavenly wisdom will never teach us to go a single inch out of our way to *differ* with our brethren. On the contrary, it will make us anxious to reach a oneness of judgment, if such be at all within the bounds of truth and righteousness.

In times of difficulty we seem to be in need of an abundant supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; for in questions of divided judgment, it is to be feared that *severance of hearts* is often the root of *severance of minds*. Be that as it may, it is only in God's light that we shall see light (Ps. xxxvi. 9). It is only as we

are drinking of the Master's spirit that we shall be partakers of the Master's wisdom, and be as the men of Issachar, who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do (1 Chron. xii. 32). We need to learn of the meek and lowly One, if we would be guided of Him in times of difficulty; for "*the meek* will He guide in judgment, and *the meek* will He teach *His way*" (Ps. xxv. 9). Moses, the great prophet of the old dispensation, was willing to be blotted out, if haply Israel might be blessed (Ex. xxxii. 32). And a similar sentiment is expressed by Paul, the great apostle of the New-Testament dispensation (Rom. ix. 3). Let it be ours to cultivate a like spirit; and divided judgment, if it *does* arise, will be only the occasion for manifesting the meekness, and gentleness, and courtesy, that should ever characterise those who are called to *show forth* the virtues of the Son of God.

LEFT WITH THE DEAD CHILD.

(1 KINGS III. 16-28).

A Nesteemed and well-known brother was not long ago seeking to help his brethren to that unity which is according to God. Feeling the momentous issues that were at stake, he referred to the case of the two mothers before Solomon, each claiming the living child. "Mark you," said our brother, "the woman who cried 'Divide the child' was left with the dead one!" And then, with startling significance he

added: "*Take care, lest you be left with the dead child.*" These words, solemnly uttered, had a powerful effect upon the meeting. Although spoken in parable, their meaning was clear. She who cried out against the sword of division had the true mother's heart, and was willing to suffer the pangs of separation rather than see that sword descend. How beautiful are the actings of love! But all this is changed when we turn to the other woman who stood before the king. She seems bereft of a mother's heart. She, too, claims the living child; but, because she cannot have *her way*, she resolves to let the child be cut in twain! Solomon had now weighed the whole matter. She is left with the dead child; and the living child is delivered to its mother.

The cry, "Divide the child," is still heard. The spirit of Division is abroad. Happy for us if, like that true mother in Israel, we are prepared to suffer, rather than see the enemy triumphant on account of division. Solomon searched the very thoughts of the two women before him. Let us not forget that a greater than Solomon is here.

YOU may have observed that brethren whose judgment we value most highly are the most reserved as to what they think of our service; while those for whose opinion we care but little are often ready to come down upon us with censure or deluge us with flattery.

MANY truths are best preached by practising them.

DIFFERENT EFFECTS PRODUCED.

YOU may be a man of God, and have a message from God; yet your testimony may be rejected. This is one of the severest trials to one who, like John the Baptist of old, was "a man sent from God" (Jno. i. 6). If ministry that comes from God is to be heard with joy, it must be received by hearts prepared of God. The burning words of a Heaven-inspired ministry may produce very different effects, even in the same meeting. When a word from the Lord is going, the brother sitting over yonder is simply delighted. True, the word has searched him—perhaps cut him deeply. Yet he rejoices. He seeks only to know Christ in his inner experience, and to be approved of God in his outward testimony. Therefore he is *at one* with God—he rejoices where God rejoices. To such a believer *ministry in power* is "a feast of fat things." But yonder is another believer, upon whom the message from God has a vastly different effect. He, too, is searched by the word. But he does not want to be searched. He finds himself uncomfortable as the beams of light flash out from the sacred page,—just upon the same principle that one long accustomed to darkness finds it extremely trying to be brought into the radiance of sunlight. The believer who is not sanctifying Christ as Lord in his heart, has no heart for a message that comes from the Throne. He will chafe under it—rebel against it—seek to minimise its

force—perhaps try to show that it is no message from God at all. Indeed, he is in a manner *compelled* to come to this conclusion, because, if he admits its heavenly origin, he thereby condemns himself. But "self" must be justified: therefore the heavenly message is rejected.

We thus see how the same address may be to one brother the rejoicing of his heart, while to another it is only waters of bitterness. A man can hardly be expected to sit and rejoice under a ministry that hews his most cherished idols in pieces. Israel could understand Gideon in the character of a deliverer; for they had been crying to God for deliverance. But when Gideon carried out the divine judgment upon *Israel's idols*, and the God-dishonouring worship of that apostate time, the people would not suffer it. They demanded that Gideon should die (Jud. vi. 30). They preferred their forbidden groves and altars to the God-appointed Deliverer! Thus it will often be found among the Lord's people. They may be crying out to God—even for revival times. They may be longing for showers of blessing. But the Lord may not come exactly upon the lines which they have laid down. He may first of all proceed to *cleanse His temple*. Many do not reckon upon this. Therefore they give but a listless ear to the message from the Throne. If they are roused at all, it is to oppose the testimony that would reveal their true condition; for the flesh will ever resist that which is withering to the flesh.

WHY REJECTED ?

WHILE the God-sent man may be rejected, we must not come to the conclusion that rejected testimony proves the messenger to be a God-sent man. If my testimony is rejected, there is a strong temptation for me to say, "O, that is just the Devil raging: he is sure to be at work when God is speaking." This may be all quite true, as a general principle. But how does it apply to *my* case? Was God speaking *through me*? I must be very sure that I have had a message from Him, before I charge His people with rejecting a heaven-sent messenger. Brethren who are not appreciated as they think they should be, are sometimes found claiming kindred with Paul. They say, "Paul was rejected, and so am I." And then they refer to that passage where the apostle says, "All they which are in Asia be turned away from me" (2 Tim. i. 15). But those dear brethren must first make certain that they are *Pauls*. Many who have neither Paul's gentleness nor his self-sacrificing spirit, are yet willing to claim fellowship with him in his rejection. But they have no right to such a claim. If we are rejected, *why* are we rejected? *That* is the point. Is it because, in the power of the Spirit of God, we are delivering His message? If so, it is well. When our testimony is rejected because of our faithfulness to Christ, we can calmly leave the issues with *Him*. But, if we are rejected because of our

own inconsistencies—if the saints turn round and say, "Your life contradicts your preaching"—it is time to come to a stand-still and ask the question, "Is this not a message from God *to me*?" The saints may reject us because we fail to manifest the marks of those whom God hath sent, or because they do not hear through us the great Shepherd's voice. In such circumstances you cannot *compel* others to acknowledge you as a God-sent man. Of this much, at least, we may be certain: The Heaven-sent messenger is a *clean vessel*—made meet for the Master's use. And he *has a message*. His words glow and burn, and search the dark corners of the heart, while withal they build-up and edify, and refresh. Where ever there is true spiritual discernment, there is no mistaking the messenger whom God has sent.

ATTRACTING THE PEOPLE.

IN the religious world there seems to be unbounded faith in carnal weapons and the arm of flesh. And these are accompanied by such an appearance of success, that the thought sometimes rises in the heart of the Christian worker: "Might not *we* also have fiddles and trumpets to improve the singing, and create an attraction. It would be sure to draw the people." Yes, dear brother, it might draw the people. But has God ordained that through musical performances He will draw souls to Christ? Do not envy the

world of its crowds. The weapons of its warfare are carnal ; but ours are not so. The introduction of novelties to "draw the people," is a virtual confession, not that the Gospel has failed, but that *you* have failed in the Gospel. That hankering after Egyptian sensations is simply a device of Satan to persuade you that the fault is *not in you*, but in the Gospel,—and that the Gospel is totally *insufficient* to promote a revival, unless fiddles and trumpets take their place "in the midst" to attract the people. Perish such a thought! The Gospel in its solitary dignity—is still the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. *Christ lifted up* is the one great instrumentality by which souls are drawn to His feet. If the Gospel be proclaimed in the energy of the Spirit of God, what need have we to go after the weak and beggarly elements of carnal attraction? Can the operation of the Holy Spirit be strengthened by such devices? Nay, verily. And if we have reason to fear that God's power is not with us, surely the right thing to do is to get down on our faces and tell Him all about it. This is the divinely-appointed way of recovering lost power. Let us see that we do not take the way of the flesh in this great matter,—which is, to flatter ourselves that all is well, and then run away after carnal attractions to take the place of God's power in our testimony!

—♦—♦—♦—
 EVERY one commends humility. Yet those loudest in its praise are often the last to "come down."

JUDGMENT FIRST.

THE prophet of judgment ever goes before the angel of deliverance (See Jud. vi. 8, 11). The circumcision of Gilgal (type of self-judgment) comes before the victory of Jericho (Josh. v. 9; vi. 2) and "the accursed thing" must be purged away before Ai could be taken (Josh. vii. 13). We learn from this that our God requires self-judgment at our hand. He will have clean vessels. There is no such thing as enjoying God's *peace* apart from *righteousness*. We need not expect to be a power for God in testimony if His cleansing power is not being experienced and manifested in our own life. If I am not willing that God should *cleanse* me, I need not expect Him to *fill* me, and I shall wait in vain for Him to *send* me. You may be willing to make great sacrifices for God—to "spend and be spent" in His service. But if there be "an accursed thing in the midst of thee"—some filthiness of flesh or spirit—some forbidden thing cherished—be assured of this, that the *highest* service you can render is to have that forbidden thing judged and forsaken. Indeed *that* is the first thing that God requires. This corresponds with the scripture which says: "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord" (Ps. iv. 5). There can be no victory at the walls of Jericho without first undergoing the self-judgment of Gilgal; and wherever the spiritual application of this great truth has been learned in power, there is victory for God.

JOY THAT ABIDES.

THE great characteristic of Heaven will be its *purity*. There will be absolute freedom from sin. While here on earth, sin is not to have *dominion* over us (Rom. vi. 14). Nevertheless, sin is present. We live in a world of sin. But in Heaven we shall be freed for ever from the *presence* of sin as well as from its power. Nothing shall enter therein that defileth (Rev. xxi. 27). No earth-born clouds shall dim the sky of our communion. And because there shall be perfect purity, there shall be *fulness of joy*. The flesh shall trouble us no more. Cares shall be unknown. Trials of the wilderness shall be past for ever. There shall be nothing to hinder the fulness of eternal joy. While we look forward to the ecstasy of that glad morning, let us not forget that Heaven's *joy* could have no existence apart from Heaven's *purity*. Therefore, while passing through a wilderness world, let us remember that we shall experience the joy of Heaven only in measure as we cultivate the purity of Heaven. They that would drink even here of the streams of heavenly joy, shall find these streams in conscious deliverance from the power of sin. Heavenly joy is not a thing that we are called to seek. It cannot be found by diligent search. It is the companion of purity. We have simply to see to the cleansing of the temple—that sin is not permitted to have dominion there—that Christ is reigning in the heart without a rival,—and we

shall find that the joy has come unbidden. Nor is that joy given in accordance with any arbitrary decree of Heaven, but in simple obedience to that law of the Kingdom, by which joy follows righteousness (Rom. xiv. 17). Yea, there is *fulness of joy* wherever Christ doth reign (Ps. xvi. 11).

Some of God's dear children travel long distances to attend Christian Conferences and Conventions, in order to be "filled with joy," as if joy were a commodity kept stored up in abundance at great meetings, for all who cared to come and carry it away. But there never was a greater delusion. We admit that at such meetings you may hear a message from God that shall lead you to lay the sword of judgment to your ways, and send you home to praise the Lord for a mighty deliverance. But the joy you may thereby experience is not confined to any particular spot or locality. It is simply the result of self-judgment, and deliverance from that which is not of God. When joy is thus the result of obedience or cleansing, it is well. But let us beware of that *sentimental something*, by many called "joy," which is expected to be found at great meetings. Believers will sometimes travel fifty miles to find it. And they come back and tell us they found it. They say they had a "precious time"—a "blessed time"—a "joyful time." We hope they had. But if they have fallen in with the true joy—if they have found the right blessing—there shall assuredly be "fruits meet for repentance." But,

strange to say, the fruits are not visible. Old idols are left undisturbed. The "bleating of the sheep"—the "lowing of the oxen"—still continue (1 Sam. xv. 14). The joy so suddenly found fifty miles away seems to have as suddenly departed. Why? Simply because it was not founded upon righteousness and purity. It had simply been that sentimental feeling of happiness that many believers experience under the spell of a great meeting. But the joy—the blessing (call it what you will) which they found there, struck no death-knell of a besetting sin—sounded no alarm in the slumbering conscience—led forth to no "desert place" of unreserved surrender to God. Therefore, their joy, like the goodness of Ephraim, was like the morning cloud and the early dew (Hos. vi. 4). When the great meeting had passed away, they made diligent search. But lo! the joy had vanished! Thus must it ever be with joy that is *sought*. But the joy that *comes unbidden*, while treading our *God-appointed path* is a joy "that no man taketh from you."

There are divers kinds of joy. There is the joy of happy circumstances—the joy of success—the joy of overwhelming numbers—the joy of great meetings—the joy even of self-complacency. But the heavenly joy—the joy of God—is only found in the way of righteousness, the path of obedience, and the highway of holiness and purity.

PRAYER without watching is hypocrisy; and watching without prayer is presumption.


FAITH IN GOD.



GOSPEL preacher must be a *man of faith*. He must be persuaded that *God is going to work*.

This "faith in God" is one of the most important elements in a preacher. It imparts life to his whole service. He has "believed God for souls." Therefore he goes on with the air of a man who is persuaded that the walls of Jericho are sure to fall. His faith gives a tone to his preaching. He preaches hopefully—joyfully. His is not the loudness of boasting; but the calmness of confidence in the living God. His faith in some way communicates itself to the saints; and they, too, are emboldened to trust in God "for souls at this time." There may be opposition, discouragement, and seeming failure. But the man of faith is not cast down. As Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and considered not the deadness of Sarah's womb, so the man of faith rises above all the discouragements that may abound. The place in which he is labouring may have been under the reign of spiritual death for years. Yet, with faith's far-seeing eye, he beholds fields already "white unto harvest." Nor is he disappointed: *faith* is never disappointed. Such a man is in direct contrast to the doubting and fearing ambassador who is "not sure if this is God's time," and is oppressed with various misgivings even when he does make a start. Faith may not be everything in a preacher. But, if he has not faith, he has nothing.


THOU SHALT BE A BLESSING.

HE Lord may, in accordance with His sovereign will, bless His Word through a cold and powerless believer. But this is quite an exception to the divine rule, which proceeds upon the principle, "I will *bless thee* . . . and thou shalt be a blessing" (Gen. xii. 2). It is those whom God has blessed that we are warranted to expect He will make a blessing to others. His *revealed* will must be our guide in this matter; and He has revealed sufficient for us to learn what that will is. First, let salvation's joy be restored; then follows, "*Sinners shall be converted unto Thee*" (Ps. li. 13). First be blessed yourself, and then you may count upon God that you shall be made a blessing to others.

This naturally leads us to ask the question: Why such a dearth of blessing? Why is testimony confirmed by so few signs following? There is in us a natural tendency to blame "the people" — to mark them down as "Gospel-hardened." Or perhaps we take refuge in the fact that *circumstances* are unfavourable. Very likely they are. Circumstances are often contrary to the progress of God's work; and sinners are often hardened against His message. But, admitting all this, may the true cause not lie in the fact that we who profess to be channels of God's power are not channels that He can use? Are we conscious that He has blessed us—is blessing us—in our individual experi-


ence? Is it out of the fulness of salvation's joy that we deliver our testimony? These questions have an important bearing upon our service. Indeed, they lie at the root of all true service for God.

DELIVERANCE CONDITIONAL.

O long as we are *in the body* we need not expect to be beyond the reach of temptation. But it is one thing to be tempted; and it is quite another thing to *yield* to the Tempter. Even our Lord was tempted of Satan in the wilderness. And if the great Adversary thus tried Him in whom there was no sin, we need not think that there shall be exemption for *us*. Yet provision has been made for "the hour of temptation." And it is noteworthy that in this, as in almost everything relating to the promises, certain conditions are attached to deliverance. Writing to the church in Philadelphia the Lord says, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation" (Rev. iii. 10). What may be the *prophetic* import of these words we do not stay to consider. Their *moral* significance lies in this, that they set forth a divine principle—a principle running all through Scripture—clearly letting us know that personal deliverance for the individual saint is ever associated with personal obedience and subjection to the will of God. "*Because thou hast kept the word* . . .

I will keep *thee*." The same thought is brought out in another aspect in Psalm xli. 1, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver *him* in time of trouble." Here, again, deliverance is conditional. This all goes to bring out the force of the saying: "What we have to do is to concern ourselves about the *precepts*, and the Lord will see that the *promises* are made ours." It is vain for us to go into the presence of God and "plead the promises," if we are not practising the precepts upon which the promises depend.

THE OPEN DOOR OF REV. III. 8.

N reference to believers preaching or working "wherever they can get an open door," it is instructive to observe what Scripture says concerning the door that *God* opens. In Rev. iii. 8, we have the word: "Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." Here, then, is a door opened by the Lord Himself. But in immediate connection with the open door we have *three* things mentioned as characteristic of those concerning whom the Lord says, "I have set before thee an open door." These three things are enumerated in the verse already referred to—"For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My Word, and hast not denied My Name." It is surely significant that the door which God opens is associated with these three things: (1) *A little strength*, (2) *Keeping the Word*, (3) *Not*

denying the Name. If we have even a little strength, if we are found keeping the Word, and not denying the Name, we need not doubt that there shall be set before us an open door. The Lord does not undertake to open a door for *any one* who wants to be a worker. The church in Philadelphia had an open door set before them *because* what little strength they had was from God—they were keeping the Word—they were confessing the Name. Such are the divine conditions attached to the "open door" of Rev. iii. 8. It is only those who are fulfilling these conditions that can be trusted to enter the door which God opens. Mark the divine order: A little strength—Keeping the Word—Not denying the Name. *Then* comes the *open door*. What God puts last is not always put last in this evil day. The open door is often sought in preference to keeping the Word and confessing the Name. Many want to be workers before they have learned to be worshippers. They would fain *serve* before they have learned to *obey*. They hold that *this* Scripture and *that other* Scripture are "not essential," and that it would not be "wise" to say anything about *the Name* of the Lord Jesus Christ as the God-given Name into which saints are to be gathered. They say, "We must *reach the people*, and avoid anything that might close a door"! They are in a hurry; but God is not in a hurry; nor will He reverse eternal principles in order to meet the impatience or self-will of His own children. *Man* may open a door

for us, and say: "There's an open door; step in." *We* may open a door for ourselves, and *go* in. But let us remember that that which man opens, man can close, as many a serving one has found to his cost; while that which God opens, no man can close. Moreover, if we truly seek to be approved of God, how can we thank Him for an open door unless we are persuaded that He Himself has opened it? Let it therefore be our care to wait upon Him for renewal of strength, to keep His Word, and not to deny the Name; and we shall not be without an *open door*. At the same time, let us remember that the door which God opens may have but little to commend it to those who look only on outward appearances. As it takes the anointed ear to hear God's voice, so it takes the anointed eye to see God's path, and to recognise His open door. In 1 Cor. xvi. 9, we hear Paul saying, "A great door and effectual is opened unto me, *and there are many adversaries.*" Thus is it often with the door which God opens. Deadly opposition is aroused. Fleshly power sets itself to oppose that strength which comes from above. The traditions of worldly religion resist that which is according to the Word; while the names of Sectarianism, though honouring each other, are yet at one in opposing the gathering into that Name which God says is *above every name!*

NO one is so ill to reach as the brother who has become "cold," and does not care to admit it.

A BAD CONSCIENCE.

OF all the elements of weakness by which we can be hampered, none has so withering an effect as a *bad conscience*. We may not have much "light," our knowledge of the truth may be limited; but if we are walking according to the light which we possess — if we are living in the power of the truth we know — we shall be delivered from the sting of an accusing conscience; and this is no small blessing.

"A bad conscience," as it has been called, will arise from doing either *wrong* things or *doubtful* things. Or, taking a wider sweep than a few isolated actions, our *manner of life* may be so much out of harmony with divine principles, that conscience is defiled. The result is, a feeling of *unrest*, together with a secret suspicion that our soul is not right with God. If such be our condition, spiritual progress is at a stand-still. Yea, the sun of spiritual prosperity is declining. An accusing conscience paralyses the arm of service. No one can truly work for God unless he is consciously enjoying communion with God. If, therefore, I am bereft of my strength through permitting evil in heart or ways, I am neither being blessed myself, nor am I being made a blessing to others. This ought surely to cause great searchings of heart. If conscience is crying out, something serious is wrong; and unless set right by self-judgment in God's presence, it is sure to lead to something *worse*.

THE POWER OF TEMPTATION.


THE power of temptation from *without* altogether depends on the response it gets from *within*.

For example, two believers may be assailed by the same form of temptation, but with very different results. One escapes, chiefly because there is in him no kindred element to respond to the Tempter's voice from without. He has been judging evil as soon as it appeared. He has been walking in the joy of an ungrieved Spirit. He has been keeping short accounts with God. The enemy from without finds no enemy from within to answer the summons to surrender. Therefore, in that case, temptation fails of its intended purpose. But the other believer, subjected to exactly the same form of temptation, falls under it. And why? Simply because there was in him so much of a kindred spirit to the temptation from without. He had *not* been walking in the joy of an ungrieved Spirit. He had *not* been judging sin in the secret place before God. He had *not* been cultivating purity of heart and chastity of thought. Therefore, the moment the Tempter knocked, there was a response. Doubtless that believer would plead as his excuse that the temptation was too strong for his faith. But the true reason was this, that the temptation was *too strong for his low spiritual condition*. If we fail to judge evil in ourselves, if we tamper with sin, and neglect waiting upon the Lord for the renewal of strength, it need

cause us no surprise that we sink under the billows of some special temptation. We need not blame God, and think that His grace has failed. His grace never fails. God abideth faithful. Moreover, the words are distinctly placed upon record: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13). Why then this sinking under temptation, seeing our God has made such ample provision to meet the assaults of every enemy in the wilderness? The reason is due to the great principle that God has *not* pledged Himself to deliver us from temptation while we are doing as we please, and failing to judge that which is evil in His sight. To such He has said: "Walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow" (Isa. l. 11). We thus see that the power of temptation does not lie in the temptation itself, but in the spiritual condition of the one who is assailed. It is a well-known scientific truth that "disease germs" fasten only upon those whose *vitality* is insufficient to resist the attack. Exactly upon the same principle do the disease germs of moral evil fasten upon the believer. If he permits his spiritual vitality to come down—if he becomes a stranger to his closet—if he secretly harbours that which will not stand the

light of God,—temptation will find a ready entrance there. A beleagured city doth not long resist the enemy, if there be already enemies within its walls; and that believer doth not long resist temptation, who is already tampering with some kindred evil in his own heart.

NO DEATH THERE.

“F Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died” (Jno. xi. 21). Well did those sorrowing sisters know that if the Master had been in the home of Bethany, the tyrant Death would not have entered there. At least they firmly believed this. To Martha and Mary it was simply inconceivable that Lazarus should have passed away while in the presence of Jesus. To their mind it would have been out of keeping with “the eternal fitness of things” for Death to claim its victim while the Lord of life and glory was standing looking on. When the sisters, one after the other, communicated this conviction to the Master, He did not chide them for entertaining such a thought; for well *He* knew that if He had been there, Lazarus had not died. Was it not the consciousness of this that caused Him to abide two days in the distant spot where the tidings first reached Him that Lazarus was sick? This is confirmed by verse 15—“And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe.” The sisters of Bethany doubtless knew a good deal of the ways of the

Son of God in the days of His flesh. To the calm retreat of Bethany He was wont to repair, after a day spent amid the contradiction of sinners. What wonderful opportunities those sisters had for learning of the perfect, spotless One! This much, at least, they had learned, that *Death*, in their own little circle, would have been sadly out of keeping with the presence of the Prince of Life. It is certainly significant that no one is ever said to have died in the presence of Him who is “the Resurrection and the Life.” On the contrary, many “at the point of death” (Jno. iv. 47, &c.) were called back to the vigour of health by a word from the almighty One. And we know that on three occasions Death had to yield up its dead before the presence of the Prince of Life. All this is but a foreshadowing of that Day when Death shall be swallowed up unto victory. It is only a fragmentary fulfilment of the great truth set forth in the simple words: “*No death where Jesus is!*” In a coming Day of glory the “family circle” of the first-born ones shall be an unbroken circle, and shall continue an unbroken circle, through never-ending years. Death cannot enter there; for the Prince of Life is there; and His redeemed are bound in the bundle of life with Him for ever!

—♦—

“LET us maintain unblunted the edge of our relish for prayer and fellowship with God, as the great preservative against the seductions of the age; for only intimacy with God can keep us from intimacy with the world.”

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Vol. VI.

BALAAM, THE SOOTHSAYER.

First Paper.

BALAAM, "the antichrist of the desert journey," as he has been well called, comes suddenly upon the page of Scripture. The conquering armies of Israel, on their march through the wilderness, had "pitched in the plains of Moab, on this side Jordan by Jericho" (Numb. xxii. 1). Trembling had fallen upon the people of the land; "and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel." Balak, who was king of the Moabites at that time (ver. 4), felt that ordinary weapons would be of no avail to resist the advancing host. "This company," said he, "shall lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field." The king of Moab therefore sent messengers to Balaam, the son of Beor, to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, "Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me. Come now, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people, for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and

that I may drive them out of the land" (ver. 5, 6). Balak had not failed to observe that a strange significance attached itself to the prophet's words. "For I wot," he said, "that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed" (ver. 6). We can easily gather from all this, that Balaam was one who had dealings with Jehovah. What was his exact relationship to the God of Israel, we have no means of determining. He comes upon the scene of Old-Testament history at a time when the line which divided Israel from the surrounding nations was not so clearly defined as it afterwards became; and, although outside the covenant, he may have had opportunities for intercourse with the God of Israel which could not have been his in a later day. This much is certain: he was accustomed to take counsel at the mouth of the Lord. This is clear from his answer to the messengers of Balak: "Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, *as the Lord shall speak unto me*" (ver. 8). Here, then, is a link of connection—or at least a bond of similarity—between Balaam and us upon whom the ends of the age are come. He was accustomed to take counsel at the mouth of the Lord; and

so are we who bear the name of Christ. We therefore unhesitatingly come to the conclusion that Balaam's history must have an interest for us. Yea, we feel certain that it is pregnant with lessons of eternal value to all who have ears to hear.

When the messengers of Balak, with the rewards of divination in their hand, have reached Balaam they deliver their message; and, as we have seen, they are told to wait until he hears what the Lord will speak. This, to the casual observer, may seem very like seeking God after the due order. Yet *He* ever looks on the heart. Dim indeed must have been the twilight of divine revelation in Balaam's soul, when he could seek counsel as to cursing that people in the midst of whom dwelt the Shekinah of Jehovah's presence! But we need not tarry here. The Lord, without waiting for the prophet's question, comes to him and says: "What men are these with thee?" Balaam makes answer according to the tenor of Balak's message. God then replies: "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed" (ver. 12). Balaam has got his answer from the Lord—an answer couched in no mysterious terms. The divine command was clear and unmistakable—"Thou shalt not go." Balaam seemed to fall in with what the Lord had spoken; but it does not take a very careful examination of the narrative to see that he got *an answer he did not want*. Before he went to the Lord he had his mind *made up* as to what the

answer must be; and although, for the time being, he *submitted* to the command, "Thou shalt not go," he was very far from *acquiescing* in the same. The inner current of his thoughts is betrayed in the words he addresses to the princes of Balak: "Get you into your land: for the Lord *refuseth to give me leave to go with you*" (ver. 13). Ah! his heart was bent on going—if he could only get leave! He would have been so glad to meet the wishes of Moab's princes. But, then, that word of the Lord stood between him and the carrying out of his secret desires—between him and the rewards of divination—between him and "very great honour." It was most trying, that his purposes should be thus thwarted by the word which God had spoken. Yet he could not get past that word, however anxious he might be to get past it. Therefore, he answers, with the air of one who is chafing under an unwelcome restraint: "The Lord *refuseth to give me leave.*"

Let us beware of going to the Lord in the spirit of Balaam—seeking counsel of God, and yet our minds made up as to what that counsel must be,—professedly seeking light from above, and yet desiring to walk in the light of our own fire! In the present day men are to be found ransacking the Bible for passages that will confirm their own opinions and establish them in their own position. And when they fall in with a Scripture, or are brought face-to-face with a Scripture, that comes down upon their cherished ideas, they are displeased.

They have not found the answer they wanted. It is evident that they wish the Bible had said something different from what it *does* say. In other words, they are of one mind, and God is of another mind. They take their opinions to the Scriptures, and say: "We want to find these opinions here," instead of going to the Scriptures and saying: "We want to know what God has said about this." If, in seeking counsel of the Lord, we have a secret wish that His answer shall chime in with our desires, we are virtually dictating to the Lord, rather than seeking His help. If we truly delight in *His* will, we shall not be displeased although His answer run contrary to *our* will.

Balaam would fain have gone with the princes of Moab. Only one thing stood in the way; and that one thing was a "Thus saith the Lord," namely: "*Thou shalt not go.*" To a loving heart this is sufficient to effect the most complete separation; "for this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 Jno. v. 3); and we know that wherever such love reigns, "His commandments are not grievous." On the contrary, there is *delight* in the law of the Lord (Ps. cxix. 70). But Balaam did not rejoice in the word of the Lord that hindered him from going with the princes of Balak. In heart he was away where the rewards and the honours were awaiting him, although in body he still remained at Pethor; and the few words, "Thou shalt not go," simply imposed upon him a yoke from which he would fain be free. Such

was the extent of Balaam's separation from the thing that the Lord had forbidden. What is the extent of *our* separation from that which the Lord has forbidden? In more things than one the Lord has said to His people: "Thou shalt not go." His word—that which He has spoken—has separated us from that which is not of Him. Do we give our hearty *Amen* to what the Lord hath spoken? Do we delight in what He has said, simply because He has said it? Or are we found, like Balaam of old, secretly wishing that no "Thus saith the Lord" stood between us and something to which our heart is inclining? If so, our separation from that "something" is of a very feeble character. Wherever there is not true separation in heart, there will be a restiveness under the yoke of Christ—a trying to reconcile God's words with the thing we are bent upon doing. Failing in this, the estranged heart will seek for a *new revelation* from Heaven,—yea, and perhaps seem to get it, as Balaam did! But this we must reserve for another paper.

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WHEN the Lord requires confession, and we refuse to confess, the next thing the flesh suggests is, to "make out that you are in the right—prove that you have nothing to confess." Thus the edge of the sword of conviction is often turned by this deep-laid plot of the Enemy of souls. Many who were once on the point of godly confession have thus quenched the divine promptings, and suffered loss incalculable.

THE CALL OF GOD.

ASERVANT of God was wending his way to the spot where the Gospel was to be preached that evening. An arm of the sea lay between him and the place of meeting, the distance across being very little, compared with the long roundabout he had to make in doing the journey by land. A brother who was with him remarked that if they had the needed faith they could go right through the sea, and thus save miles of walking. "Ah," replied the servant of God, "it is not a question of faith at all: it is a question as to *what is the call of God*. If He calls us to go through that sea, He will *take us through it*." This opened up a new line of thought to his brother. They had no *call of God* to walk through that sea; and therefore no faith was given for that purpose. This will naturally suggest to our minds the thought that before asking if I have *faith for this*, the question should be: "Has God *called me* to do this?" If He has called me to do it, then I may count upon Him for the needful faith to carry me through it. But if I have no call of God to do a certain thing, then I may be assured that I shall *not* have the faith needed for the work. This is where many err. They attempt certain work apart from the call of God; but they lack the enthusiasm of a heaven-begotten faith. They may try to "muster up" the needful faith; but faith cannot be mustered up. They may try to persuade themselves that if they could only *trust*

God for power, all would come right. But that is not what is lacking. They are strangers to the *divine call*; and that is why they are strangers to the *faith* and *power* ever associated with the call of God. In the path of service we may have the desire to excel, and "do exploits." But our first desire should be to discover if we have *the call of God*. When the Lord called Gideon to the work of delivering Israel out of the hand of Midian, faith soon followed upon the call of God. Gideon's faith at first was small, no doubt. Yet, by one token after another, the Lord strengthened faith, until His servant was "thoroughly furnished" for the work of deliverance. We need not stay to point out that Gideon, apart from the call of God, could not have believed he would smite the Midianites as one man. We might refer to Moses, David, and others, for further illustration of this great principle. But we think we have said enough to show that our first question is: "Have I the call?" and not, "Have I the faith?"

MINISTRY IN POWER.

IN the promotion of spiritual life in the Assemblies, there can be no doubt that a great deal depends on the character of the *ministry* that prevails. Ministry in power will bring forth fruit after its kind; and a dull, flat, easy-going ministry will also produce fruit after its kind. Ministry that is aglow with the heavenly fire will tend to kindle

a kindred fire. Its effect upon the saints is at once rousing and invigorating. They find themselves face-to-face with eternal realities. Longing hearts are refreshed; backsliders are alarmed; spiritual declension is in many cases nipped in the bud; while the general impression is left that if our privileges are great our responsibilities are vast. God is felt to be near, and His loving-kindness is seen to be better than life. Such is the effect of ministry that comes from the Throne. It allures to Christ; it brings the eternal glories near; it bridges the gulf that hides the seen from the unseen; it leads us into that holy Presence where the light of earthly glory dies, and says in language more eloquent than words: "Child of the Heavenly Canaan, thy true home—thy native-place is *there*." Well may we exclaim: "Evermore, Lord, give us this ministry!"

But what different effects are produced by cold and formal ministry! How it drags its weary way along! The saints, at once divining what is in store for them, settle down into their seats, as if to pass through an ordeal. The more charitable try to "hope all things"; yet they find it a hard task. Longing souls, expecting to be borne upwards in their sweet experience, as on eagles' wings, discover that a damper is slowly settling down upon their spirit. It is felt that the temperature of the meeting is coming down. But at last the address is finished—or the prayer; for they also serve who lead in prayer; and powerless prayers may leave as great a chill upon a meeting

as powerless addresses. There is now a sense of relief that the end has been reached. But what has been gained? Nothing, except it be a feeling of restlessness that may paralyse the next speaker, unless he have a special endowment of the Jeremiah fire. Powerless ministry is even worse than useless: it may do serious injury. "I thought we were going to have a grand time," said a brother, speaking of a special meeting; "but *yon address did it*—it killed the meeting"! Now, we do not believe that this is a part of God's purpose. If ministering ones are in the leading of God, a meeting will be like the Lord's ancient people on their way up to Zion,—“they go from strength to strength” (Ps. lxxxiv. 7). Line shall fall upon line and precept upon precept, until every heart that truly longs for the courts of the Master's presence, will be constrained to say: "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

Perhaps we have not been duly alive to the fact that ministry exercises a wonderful influence in "moulding the destinies" of a meeting. No doubt every right-minded believer desires to see a ministry of power, and that alone, prevailing. Yet here a trial of faith meets us in the fact that those most truly fitted to deliver the messages of Heaven are not always the most forward to do so. He whom God has sent will never force the way. He who has God's message will calmly wait for God's open door. But the restless flesh, that cannot learn to wait on God, must find room

for its "message," as if eternal loss must follow were that message not heard! What then shall we do? Let us seek unto our God that He who has the hearts of all in His hand, may thrust into the ministry whomsoever He will, and restrain that which is not of Himself. Moreover, let us who seek to be ministered unto, so wait upon our God for endowment with His power, that we shall have an ear attuned to hear His voice, and a heart prepared to do His will. We may be "only rank-and-file" brethren; but, if the true fire be burning in our bones, would-be ambassadors shall be made to feel that they run unseparated.

THE HABIT OF RESISTING.

IT has been said that *habit* becomes a kind of second nature. Some men are so accustomed to yield to temptation that it has become in a manner natural for them to yield. The same law applies to the child of faith, but in a different sense. He has habituated himself to *resist* the pleadings of the flesh; and the habit of resistance thus formed is now *part of himself*. It becomes natural for him to resist, not only temptation in general, but the very things to which in unconverted days it had been "natural" for him to yield. Thus one habit overcomes another. This shows us the importance of habituating ourselves to resist every suggestion of the Wicked One.

DEVOUT IN SPIRIT.

IT is well to be on our guard against the sin of indolence—allowing opportunities to pass unimproved—doing nothing, when we might be occupying the hours for God. At the same time let us not conclude that mere *diligence* in serving the Lord must of itself be a sacrifice with which the Lord is well-pleased. Many are diligent in service who are not devout in spirit. There are many who are great *workers* while they are not great *saints*. They have overcome the sin of indolence: no one can say that they are lazy or idle. Yea, they may be unwearied in service for God. Yet their service lacks the influence of that great "presiding genius" the adoring heart, and the Christ-like mind. They forget that "fervent in spirit" comes before "serving the Lord" (Rom. xii. 11). They forget that while many things may be desirable, "one thing is needful"—to sit at the Master's feet, and learn of Him. In the eyes of men their brilliant service may seem to merit a high place in the coming Day. But in that Day many that are first shall be last, and the last first. Man may estimate the value of our service; but the eye of the Lord, piercing through all that is outward and visible, deals with the secret springs of action. Is His lovingkindness better unto us than service?—better than life itself? "To this man will I look," saith the Lord, "even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word" (Isa. lxvi. 2).

COMFORTING TRUTH.

SERVANTS of Christ are sometimes alarmed lest, in dealing out *comforting* truth, it should be carried away by believers who are in a carnal state, and to whom rebuke or exhortation would have been a more suited word. And there can be no doubt that it is well to have some healthy alarm in that direction. At the same time, we question if it is right to entirely withhold a word of comfort, simply because there is a danger of its being appropriated by some one who has no title to it whatever. Our chief concern must be to see that we have *a word from the Lord*. If our "word" is from Him, it shall not return unto Him void, but shall prosper in the thing whereto He hath sent it (Isa. lv. 11). Yea, the same word that comes laden with the consolations of Heaven to one, may have a message of sharpest rebuke for another. Therefore, let the word of comfort and sympathy have its place. It will find its way to the proper quarter. We need not be over-anxious lest it be seized by some "stealer of the promises" -- one of that class who kick at the precepts of Scripture and yet lay claim to all the promises of God. They may nod their heads in a patronizing way, and declare that your address was "a feast of fat things." But they have not carried anything away. "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from Heaven" (Jno. iii. 27). God's message can only be received by prepared hearts. Men may rejoice in

comforting words. Yet the depth of their joy can easily be tested. After a message that is comforting to the heart, let there be testimony that is withering to the flesh; and at once the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. Witness the effect of our Lord's words in the synagogue of Nazareth (Lu. iv. 22-30). The message of comfort came first: "And they all wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." But the truth as to God's sovereignty came next--truth withering indeed to the pride of the natural heart; and the same people who had been wondering at the gracious words of the Master were now bent upon His destruction. Such is the effect of searching truth upon an unprepared heart. What a transient and unstable thing is the joy of those who are not humbled to hear the message of God!

NO REST TILL JOY RESTORED.

THERE was one redeeming feature in Peter. Although he followed Christ "afar off," his backsliding was of very short duration. This tells us that the true lover of the Lord is one who, when overtaken by sin, has no rest until he finds it in happy communion with the Lord. The religious professor who patronises the world, will find no encouragement from "Peter's fall." We point all such professors to "Peter's restoration," and ask if they know the blessedness of salvation's joy restored.

CHRIST, THE PATTERN.

BEWARE of taking your Christianity from Christians. This may seem a strange saying. Yet we are assured that it will not be considered strange by any who have observed what Scripture says on the subject. In this matter it behoves us to call no man master upon earth. "One is your Master, even Christ" (Matt. xxiii. 10). He is the pattern. One brother may set a good example in one thing, and another in something else; but there is only *One* whom we are safe to follow in everything; and that One is Christ. Even the apostle Paul did not set himself down as a perfect pattern for imitation; for we find him saying: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. xi. 1).

It is to be feared that many of the Lord's people take their Christianity from Christians, instead of taking it from the Master Himself and from the Scriptures He has given. The result has been, and could only be, a dwarfed and stunted Christianity. If we are copying a copy, we are copying imperfection; and the copy we produce has every chance to be more imperfect still.

Taking our Christianity from Christians produces a low standard of Christianity; because every successive copy has a tendency to be worse than its predecessor. Thus the temperature of our spiritual life comes down further and further, until some day we are aroused by some trumpet-call from the throne on High, saying, "What meanest thou, O

sleepers?" We had got accustomed to think that if our Christian life were about the average of what was going, we did very well. But happy for us if we have discovered, even by some startling word from the Lord Himself, that average Christianity is *not* the standard He has set before His people. Happy for us if we have learned to cease "measuring ourselves by ourselves," and to remember that our true calling is to show forth the virtues of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

In this matter of taking our Christianity from one another rather than from Christ, it will have been observed that the *worldliness* in a believer is far more likely to be copied than his *spirituality*. This is another reason why following one another tends to bring down the spiritual thermometer almost to the region of "freezing point." Brother So-and-so goes in for a bit of the world, and immediately he has a host of imitators. Another brother passes into the experience of a closer walk, a more complete separation, and a more devoted service. Yet, strange to say, he has but few imitators! The reason seems to be, that when once believers get the eye off Christ their natural tendency is to imitate that which they should avoid, and to avoid that which they should imitate. To remedy all this we need to "cease from man"; to get into the Master's presence, that we may know ourselves; and to sit at His feet that we may *know Him*, and thus be *transformed* into His likeness.

REVIVAL POWER.

WHAT we want is a wave of mighty revival power to pass over us—power that will search and wither, as well as build up and make glad. We want such a revival of power as will search out hidden corruptions, and dry up the springs of that which is opposed to God. We want such a revival as will supplant the hundred-and-one joys with which the world is seeking to seduce the people of God. We want such a revival as will sweep away every secret idol, and take possession of the whole man for God. This is the great remedy, and, we believe the only true remedy, for ease in Zion and secret spiritual declension. Such revival is our most powerful safeguard against evil doctrine and the “troubulous times” that are being experienced by many saints of God. Our great need is *God*—God in power—God in blessing—God in revival. When revival joy is at “full tide” in the believer’s soul, what a powerful bulwark is thus raised against the attacks of the Evil One! The joy of the Lord’s presence so satisfies the heart that there is no room left for the things that are “not convenient.” The hands are then filled for God, because the heart is *satisfied with God*. It is simply a case of the *greater* swallowing up the *less*. We hold this to be the right condition for a believer, and the right condition for an Assembly. It is the only condition under which true work shall be done for eternity.

But how is such a condition of things to be brought about? We believe it is to be brought about by our, first of all, *getting persuaded* that a *revival of power* is the *revival we need*. This is the vital point. The thing we *need* is not always the thing we *want*. In order, therefore, to *pave the way* for a revival of power, we hold that there must first be the consciousness that such is *our need* at the present time. Our God does not thrust His blessings upon us against our wishes. We ever find a *willing people* associated with the *day of His power* (Ps. cx. 3). If there is to be a “day of power” at this time, there must be a willing people. Are we willing? He has promised to pour waters upon “him that is thirsty” (Isa. xlv. 3). Are we thirsty? Are we longing for the courts of that inner communion in which the flesh and all that pertains to it must wither and shrivel up? Are we longing for a revival time that shall cause the hearts of God’s people to leap for joy, and constrain them to say to the world, the flesh, and the Devil: “My cup runneth over”?

What is wanted at the present time is longing hearts—one here, one there, and one over yonder—to cry out to the Lord for a revival of His power in our midst. We must be stirred up to take hold of our God in this matter. We must be on our guard against the terrible danger of flattering ourselves that we are “rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.” We must beware of the fatal delusion that because the machinery of outward service is duly in order, all

must be well. The wheels of service may go round. But are they propelled by that power which comes from the presence of God? Are they oiled by the love that "seeketh not her own"? The very abundance of our service may blind us to the fact that the fire of love is burning low. Punctual attendance at meetings—a right and proper thing, as we all admit—must not be taken as an infallible proof that one is enjoying a revival time in the soul. We must get past meetings, however blessed they may be—even unto Him who is "the glory in the midst." We must press on, through the outer court of service, into the inner court of the Master's presence,—there to sit and hear His voice—to drink of the river of His pleasures—to eat of the hidden manna—to behold His glory—to carry thence the radiance of His love, and the enduement of His power.

AN UNANSWERED PRAYER.

SOME time ago the minister of a Presbyterian congregation expressed the wish that none but true Christians would sit down at the Communion Table. This is another illustration of the saying that if some men got what they prayed for, none would be more surprised than themselves. If that dear man's wish had been granted, what would have been the result? The result would have been that all the *unconverted persons* in his congregation would have struck their names out of the

Communion roll. That is to say, the great mass of his congregation would have went off in a body; and he would have been left with the few *born-again* people that are scattered here and there over his church roll. He would have found himself with a very select company indeed; and we can only imagine the surprise that should have awaited him when he went to the Table and found only the few who were *saved* and on their way to Heaven. "What is the meaning of this?" he would say; "where is my congregation?" "Ah," some old saint would reply, "you know you wanted a separation between the church and the world; you prayed that none might come to the Communion except those who had a right there by birth—the *new birth*—the great change of Conversion to God. Well, the Lord has mercifully answered your prayer. He has cleared out the worldlings, and left you with His born-again people. Is this not what you wanted?"

We can scarcely tell what the minister would do next. His position would be a difficult one. What account would he give to the Presbytery concerning such a strange business? How would the funds of the church be kept up? Truly it would be very unpleasant for some men if their prayers were answered. But we are not afraid of the prayer in question being answered. We do not expect that the unconverted will remove themselves from the Communion roll of the congregation referred to. It is one thing to express the general wish that

none but true Christians would come to the Communion Table; and it is quite another thing to go to an unconverted member, in full standing with the church, and say to him: "You know you are not converted to God—you have never been born again; you must flee to Christ and be saved. Meanwhile, you have *no right whatever* at the Communion Table; and, if you dare to take your place there, I'll withstand you with all my might." No one can deny that these would be scriptural lines to go upon. Yet, woe betide the Presbyterian minister who would dare thus to deliver his soul! He should very soon discover that his services were no longer required. He may talk sentiment about none but true Christians coming to the Communion Table. But when it comes to the *testing point*—say, the giving out of the Communion tokens—he has to hand out tokens to undoubtedly unconverted people—people who do not even profess to be born again! Thus the congregation is kept together—the great matter in popular religion; and thus the prayer for "none but true Christians" to come forward, is rendered null and void.

We grant you that a man of God, truly longing for a separation between the saved and unsaved in his congregation, may see the answer to his prayer. But he has counted the cost, and is not surprised to find the worldly element in his congregation resisting him to the face, and bringing all the power of Presbytery to show that he should no longer be minister of that congregation!

"UNTO HIM."

AT a recent Conference a brother said: "When I *came out*, I thank God I did not come out to 'the Brethren,' and therefore I have never regretted the step." Our brother had come out to the Lord Himself; and they who go forth *unto Him* are never disappointed. Those who come out to brethren—to join a certain company of believers—are sure to find things not exactly what they had expected. So long as the Lord's work keeps bright and lively they are quite satisfied with the step they have taken. But whenever a "famine" takes place—whenever some trouble arises, or the tide of spiritual life runs low—they at once sit down to ask the question, "Am I right, after all?" But those who are truly out to the Lord Himself have no such misgivings. They were fully persuaded before they came out. They were not attracted outside the camp by crowds or success. They were drawn by the rejected One. *Unto Him* they went forth; and therefore, abiding in Him, they remain steadfast. The clouds may go and come—the tide of prosperity may ebb and flow—the winds of trial may beat upon the Assembly. Yet he who is out *to the Lord Himself*, calmly treads his heaven-appointed path. The Lord who gave the command to go forth outside the camp unto Himself, has given no command to go back to the place from whence we came. Blessed therefore are they who are *satisfied with Him*.

WHY I LEFT EXCLUSIVISM.

THE final break-up of what is known as *Exclusivism* is believed by many to be a thing of the near future. Of late years division has followed division with such frequency and such disastrous results that the wonder is how any of the "surviving fragments" still claim to be "the only expression of the Church of God upon earth." We hoped that each successive division might have taught our dear brethren in the Exclusive fellowship that a system of unity so prolific of division must be corrupt at its core. If they have not yet learned this generally, there are many signs and tokens that the godly among them are being compelled to ask themselves the question: "*Can our principles of unity be of God, seeing their fruit seems to be division and that continually?*" In case it should be thought that we are speaking from a somewhat limited knowledge of Exclusive principles, we give a few extracts from a pamphlet written by one who has been in the Exclusive fellowship for no less than *thirty years*, but who has recently separated from his Exclusive brethren, being convinced that their principles of unity are opposed to the principles of Scripture. He addresses himself to his "beloved brethren in Christ Jesus" whom he has left behind in the Exclusive fellowship. Among other things he says:

It appears very plain to me that the "unity" which you endeavour to keep by your whole-

sale discipline, is not the unity of the Spirit, but the unity of a mere confederacy of Assemblies.

Our "unity" . . . keeps cutting off, time after time, saints who are quite as godly as ourselves.

I fully believe that we have been rejecting the truth as to the unity of the Spirit, and accepting, though unknowingly, a human and pernicious principle of unity that is continually severing the godly from the godly: a principle that is born to destroy.

This evil principle, which is the root of many of our antiscritural divisions, frequently separates, not the precious from the vile, but the holy from the holy.

Confederation of meetings upon the trades' union principle spiritualised was not then even dreamt about, nor was there then anything that answered in a spiritual way to its carnal way of enforcing unity. But numbers increased, declension commenced, the place of weakness became distasteful, great leaders became masterful, new ecclesiastical pretensions were set up; and, although it was still said "that the Church was in ruins, and that all attempts to set it up again would be utterly wrong and useless," yet there was a growing disposition to set up something that should be great, or, at least, unique, upon the earth. We have lived to see the day in which these pretensions have culminated in a rather small portion of Brethren, so-called, putting forth the lofty pretension of being "the only expression of the Church of God upon earth."

They urge as strongly that they are "the only expression of the Church of God upon earth," as the Papists do that theirs is the only true Church.

Often have we decided that an Assembly, yea, sometimes scores, or even hundreds of

Assemblies have, at a given time, which we have foolishly dared to fix, ceased to be on divine ground; ceased to be expressions of the Church of God; have been no longer gathered in the Lord's name; and have ceased to possess the Table of the Lord.

I dare not go on any longer with such a Christ-dishonouring principle as the principle of unity which has been enforced amongst us at the point of the sword of excision.

This outrageous ecclesiastical despotism can no longer claim the submission of my heart or conscience. I reject it, as being utterly subversive of my liberty in Christ, and of my responsibility to Him.

It is a vain and preposterous assumption, and I am amazed and confounded that I should ever have been made willing to submit to such intolerable bondage, and have been guilty of such unrighteousness towards beloved saints of the Lord Jesus who are walking in truth.

My diligent searching did not enable me to find your principle of unity in the Scriptures, nor could I find such a thing as one Assembly cutting off another Assembly.

The voice of God is to be heard in our being broken to pieces by division upon division. In the midst of our affliction that voice is calling upon us to judge our principle of fellowship, which shuts out so many of His beloved ones, contrary to His word. If we hear that voice, it may even yet be well with us; but, if not heard, the breaking to pieces will continue, and we shall know sorrow upon sorrow, scattering after scattering, until our collective testimony will be utterly ruined; and, having made shipwreck thereof, we shall become a fearful warning to other saints to avoid our principle of division, which we have fondly, but erroneously, called "unity."

INFINITE LOVE.

("Yet will I not forget thee."—Isa. xlix. 15).

EVERY one knows that if you step out into the pure sunlight on a summer day you have a *whole Sun to yourself*—just as really as if you were the only person in all the world. The Sun's shining upon others does not cause you to have anything less of its beams; and if earth had only one inhabitant, and you that one, you would have no more light or warmth than you now enjoy. This is all plain and simple. Yet, when we apply it to the great Sun of Righteousness, many of the Lord's dear ones are slow of heart to believe. They seem to think He has so many people to look after that they themselves must come in for a very small share of attention, if any at all. But what a serious mistake they are making! Is He not the *infinite* One? Tried and tempest-toss'd follower of the Lamb, hold up thy head. Thou art the object of a love that is deeper than the depths of ocean, and higher than the mountain's height,—a love that is stedfast as the throne of God, and lasting as eternity! Through the night-watches, while the world slumbers, and there is no human ear in which to breathe thy sorrow, how sweet to know that for thee there is an ear that is never weary and an eye that never sleeps! Thou hast a *Saviour to thyself!* His love for thee is as true, as deep, as abiding, as if there were only one saint of God in all the world, and thou wert that one!

A DEEP SLEEP FROM THE LORD.

WE read in 1 Sam. xxvi. 12 that upon Saul and his company had fallen "a deep sleep from the Lord." In these dark days "a deep sleep" has fallen upon many who in bygone times seemed to be anointed for service. Their harps are silent now. Their light is dim—perhaps rapidly becoming darkness. In the things of the world they are awake—yea, active and energetic. But in the affairs of God they are asleep. And it is no ordinary sleep. It is a "deep sleep"; and the most solemn thing about it is this, that there is every reason to fear it is a deep sleep *from the Lord*. "Ah," you say, "that would be strange indeed. How could the Lord send a deep sleep upon any one?—Would He not rather try to awaken out of sleep?" True; the Lord delights to arouse His people—to stir us up that we may lay hold upon Himself. But we find from Scripture that when the Lord has called us to awake, and repeated His call time after time, He *ceases to call*. Yea, and not only does He cease to call, but He sends upon us that very darkness to which He saw we were hastening, and from which He would have mercifully delivered us. His ancient people refused to walk *in His light*; and *rejected light* was followed, as it is ever followed, by *darkness*. The Lord had wearied Himself, if we may so speak, in calling upon His people to awake. But they were bent upon treading their own path. Therefore He

fills them with their own ways. A deep sleep from the Lord fell upon them—a sleep so deep that they failed to hear the voice of their own Messiah, and had no rest until He was cut off out of the land of the living!

This principle runs all through Scripture. Some may wonder that the Lord should send leanness into the soul. Yet it is distinctly recorded that "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul" (Ps. cvi. 15). Instead of seeking to know and delight in the will of God, His people had set their heart upon a certain thing: they were *determined* to have it. And it was just as if the Lord had replied: "Very well, you shall have the thing you have set your hearts upon. But, seeing you have rejected My counsel, you must take that leanness of soul which is the portion of those who prefer not Me above their chiefest joy."

Some believers seem to think that they can tread any path they choose, and yet have God's blessing and God's joy! And they think it strange that leanness of soul should be even hinted at. But they have yet to learn that no one, be he saint or sinner, shall play fast and loose with eternal principles with impunity. The Jews of old closed their eyes against the light of Heaven: then the Lord closed them; and how deep was the darkness that followed! Let us see therefore that our professed light is from above; for "if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

SOMETHING NEW.

IN these days of novelties we must beware of new theories. A new doctrine, or some new "line of truth," may look very "reasonable" the first time it is brought before you. But take due time to carry out the divine injunction to "prove all things." Be very sure of your ground before you proceed to remove an old land-mark. Look at the new theory in all its bearings. Test it by the Scriptures. If in accordance with what is written, receive it and thank God for it. If not in accordance with what is written, reject it and thank God for deliverance from what was merely an invention of man or a device of Satan. We have known of an Assembly being suddenly captivated by the teaching of some professed servant of the Lord. The saints looked upon him as a most remarkable man. He brought such "wonderful truths" out of the Scriptures—truths they had never heard of before! He was a man with a "hobby" for a certain kind of "truth" which was afterwards discovered to be most pernicious heresy. But the dear saints received him as an angel from Heaven. He had an air of spirituality and a voice of authority. The leaven spread rapidly; and, when a faithful ambassador of Christ arrived in that place, he found the whole meeting in confusion. But he set to work; and by a simple appeal to that which is written he was enabled to deliver the saints from a snare of the Devil. How

much trouble would have been saved if they had taken due time to apply the test of Scripture, before entertaining the new theories! He that believeth shall not make haste.

A PILGRIM'S SONG.

IM a stranger with Thee, blessèd Lord,
 My Home and my rest are above,
 All the world can no pleasure afford
 Since my heart has been touched by Thy
 I'm a sojourner too in the land, [love.
 Both my birth and my hopes are divine,
 And the worldling can ne'er understand
 What a blessèd existence is mine.

With Thy peace bearing rule in my heart,
 And Thy love welling up in my soul,
 My mission to show what Thou art,
 And the mansions of glory my goal.
 Thy Word and Thy Spirit alone
 To guide and instruct me each day;
 To see Thee I'm hastening on,
 A pilgrim in Life's narrow way.

'Tis a wilderness path that I tread,
 But I trust not my wayward feet;
 And the Cloud of Thy Presence is spread
 For a shield from the scorching heat;
 I eat of the Manna of Heaven,
 And drink of the Water from Home,
 And glimpses of Canaan are given
 While here as a stranger I roam.

But my pilgrimage soon will be o'er—
 The desert for ever be past;
 And my feet shall be weary no more,
 For my Home—I'll have reached it at last!
 There the joys of the blessèd I'll share—
 On my Father and Saviour will gaze;
 And often with gratefulness there
 I'll remember my pilgrimage days.

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THE LORD'S WORK AMONG THE YOUNG.

WE were recently at a Conference of Sunday-School Teachers and others interested in the Lord's work among the young. We carried away several impressions from that meeting. For one thing, it seemed clear to us that in the Assemblies, in that region at least, there was a decided lack of interest in this important branch of service—the *Lord's work among the young*. As one of the Lord's labourers put it, he could not understand how certain brethren could professedly take such a deep interest in the *sheep*, and yet care nothing whatever about the *lambs*. There is evidently something seriously wrong at this point. And, if we are among those who need an awakening on the subject, the sooner we are roused up the better. Sunday-School work is, in many places, allowed to drag out a mere existence; while, if the Lord's people were moderately in earnest in the matter, the work might be flourishing. In some cases a very few workers are left to "battle away" with a good-sized Sunday-School; and there is certainly great cause to praise God for the "patient

continuance in well-doing" with which these "labourers" stick to their post. They are doubtless discouraged by the utter indifference of many from whom they had expected something else. But even discouragement has its "redeeming features," one of which is, that it casts the worker more entirely on God. He feels that if he has not the Lord with him he has nobody. If he has not the succour that comes from above, he is entirely powerless. Therefore he continues "stedfast, unmovable"—perhaps more so than if the Sunday-School were the most popular department of the Lord's work.

But why should the Sunday-School be allowed to languish? We do not contend that every one in the fellowship should be a Sunday-School Teacher. That is not the point we are aiming at. Every one is not fitted for that work. But we do hold that every one in the fellowship should be *INTERESTED* in the Lord's work among the young. You may feel your own inability, or unsuitability, to take a class in the Sunday-School. Your hands may be full with other work, to which you believe the Lord more specially calls you. And you may therefore not see your way to take

an *active* part in the work of the Sunday-School. Very well. We cannot lay down hard-and-fast lines for one another in these things. But what of your *interest* in the work? Are you known to be in cordial sympathy with the Lord's work among the young? Do you drop into the Children's Meeting occasionally to see how things are going? Do you instinctively put your hand into your pocket and draw out a half-crown, or a half-sovereign, or a five-pound note (according as the Lord has prospered you), and say, "Brethren, you must need money to carry on this work: I cannot *minister* as I should like: but I can do what I can: this offering may help to defray expenses of children's periodicals and such-like, and tend generally to oil the wheels of progress"? Real sympathy is a thing that cannot be mistaken; and if you are in real sympathy with the Lord's work among the young, your sympathy will manifest itself in some *practical* way. You may be perfectly clear on that point. On the other hand, if we have only a languid interest in Gospel work among the young, we will have any number of excuses for our indifference. What, therefore, is wanted, is that the *hearts* of the saints should be *exercised* before the Lord as to this matter. If our heart is really *in* a work, it will not be long until love finds means, or devises means, by which to declare its sentiments.

A well-known worker among the neglected children of the London slums, says: "*My work is to catch them at the top*


of the precipice." That is to say, he gets the children before they have rolled headlong down the precipice of sin, and become hardened in vice and habituated to iniquity. While others prefer to wait until the children have been *carried over* the precipice—to lie there bruised and maimed, the victims of evil habit and the slaves, it may be, of divers lusts and passions—the worker in question seeks to *take the first of them*—to win them for Christ before the Devil has made them right-hand men in his service. No one can deny the soundness of the principle thereby involved. *To be saved young* is attended with untold blessing, besides the knowledge of sins forgiven. It means many years of life—and indeed, the *best* years of life—redeemed for God. It means a vast amount of worldliness and sin never learned, and therefore never needing to be unlearned. In the case of *late* conversions it frequently happens that long and fierce conflict has to be waged with evil habits learned in Christless youth. The tree which has so long grown in one direction is, humanly speaking, hard to bend. The habits of a lifetime are slow to surrender. Yea, they will resist the new reign in the soul, as if each of them possessed a separate personality, and will fight it out to "the bitter end." This experience is generally known as *conflict*. But while conflict of some kind or other is the portion of all God's people, there is a great amount of conflict which would never have been known if the believer had been brought to the Lord in life's early day. A

writer on this subject says that many children of God have to devote a great deal of energy and attention to the mortifying of vices learned in youth before they knew the Lord. How happy for them if these vices had never been learned! Then, with a far less encumbered foot, they could have trod the path of service for God.

But we need not go on to enumerate advantages. The importance of early conversion cannot well be over-estimated. It is true that its importance has in great measure been recognised. But we think it will be admitted that there is ample room for a great awakening of interest in this subject.

BALAAAM, THE SOOTHSAYER.

Second Paper.

HE messengers of Balak, having thus far failed to secure the services of Balaam, return to their master and report the result of their mission. We would naturally expect this to be the end of the matter. Yet, strange to tell, the king of Moab is nothing daunted by the seeming failure of his messengers. He at once selects princes, "more, and more honourable than they," and sends them off to enlist the prophet's help. But Balak's proposals had been already rejected, and rejected on the strength of a "Thus saith the Lord." Why, then, did he renew the negotiations as if no rebuff had been received? The reason is simply this,

that Balaam's "No" was not a *decided* "No." The king of Moab seems to have understood the man he had to deal with. On the surface Balaam's refusal seemed clear enough. But a very little way under the surface Balak could read the true answer of the prophet's heart—"Yes, I would go if I dared; but this awkward *Word of the Lord* is standing in the way." In short, it was clear that Balaam was willing to be the needful tool in Balak's hand—willing to serve his purposes—willing to prostitute his prophetic office in associating the influence of Heaven with the unholy schemes of the potsherd of earth.

All this is pregnant with the most precious lessons to the people of God to-day. In Balaam's history we see the terrible danger of an *undecided* "No" to the solicitations of a seductive world. The man reputed to have influence with Heaven is not unfrequently sought out by those who are aiming at a position of influence on earth. He will suit their purpose. It is desirable to enlist his sympathy—to have him avowedly upon their side. His personal influence will always count for something; while his character as one believed to deliver the messages of God, cannot fail to "strengthen the cause" considerably. "A desirable man," says the world; "we must secure *his* co-operation. But, first of all, we must *sound* him." He is "sounded" accordingly, and at once says "No." But it is not a *decided* "No." The worldlings, quick to discern in things where their own interest is at stake, at

once perceive that he is as good as in their net; although it may take a little pains to secure him properly. They know their man. He *says* he cannot join them. But they read between the lines, and find him saying in his heart of hearts: "*I should gladly go with you, if I could only reconcile it with my Christian profession.*"

The world therefore renews the attack. At the second or third summons he surrenders; and the world marches off with him in triumph, saying as they go: "See, we have got a prominent Christian in our ranks now—one of the right sort—one who can accommodate himself to the times. The influence of his example will be considerable; for if any refuse to join us, we can point them to Mr. So-and-so, and say: 'Do you think there can be anything wrong with the thing when such a decided Christian is identified with it?'" This is one of the world's masterpieces; or, rather, it is one of the masterpieces by which Satan is now busy mixing up the people of God with the people of the world. The Lord hath said: "*Be ye separate.*" Therefore Satan—ever true to his character of opposing the word of Jehovah—must needs send forth the cry, "*Be ye mixed up.*"

When, in answer to the call of the world, the child of God gives a decided "*No*," we have quite a different "chain of consequences" to deal with. The men of the world see at a glance that it is of no use to renew the attack. It is perfectly evident to them that the man they have to deal with is one who is *clear out for God*. His heart is undoubtedly

in complete agreement with his avowed principles. In his case there is not the slightest encouragement for the messengers of Balak to make a second visit. They accordingly break off their negotiations; and the "clear-out" man, free from the withering influences of earthly strife or carnal enjoyment, is thus left to pursue in peace his path of separation unto God. But we might go even further than this, and show that the believer who walks upon scriptural lines of separation to God has a very feeble chance of being asked to join in any of the world's confederacies. Indeed, if he plainly declares his principles, he has every chance to be left unmolested. In the days when Jehoshaphat walked in the fear of the Lord and strengthened himself against apostate Israel, we never read of Ahab proposing an alliance with the king of Judah. It was only after Jehoshaphat had gone *down* to Samaria (2 Chron. xviii. 2)—thus tampering with the very evil against which he had once been on his guard,—it was only *then* that Ahab proposed an alliance, and gained his point. From all this we may learn that in the path of true separation unto God we are not only delivered in the hour of trial (See Rev. iii. 10), but are exempted from many a temptation that is the sure portion of those who fail to maintain a decided stand for God.

—♦—

To give grace to bear a burden may be as much God's manner of deliverance as to remove the burden.

THE SIN OF PRESUMPTION.

IN connection with our remarks on the call of God (page 52) it is instructive to refer to the words of Heb. xi. 29, "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned." Israel, you see, had the call of God to go forward (Ex. xiv. 15). But the Egyptians had no such call. They ran unbidden. They assayed to do what Israel had done, and were overwhelmed in the waters of judgment, as we know. We may learn, even from that hour of Egypt's calamity, how dangerous it is to act apart from the call of God. We may see another man's faith, and admire it; and we may fancy that all we have to do is to attempt the same thing in the same way. But we must have a *like call* before we can have *like faith*. If we have not the call of God, we shall assuredly be overtaken and overwhelmed by the billows of adverse circumstances.

Egypt's defeat, as compared with Israel's deliverance, reveals a *principle* of Scripture; and that principle is simply this, that if *God's call* brings us into trying circumstances, we may confidently *count upon Him* for deliverance. On the other hand, if apart from His call, or against His expressed command, we rush into danger or difficulty, we have no right to count upon Him for deliverance.

In the wilderness Temptation, the great Adversary takes our Lord to a pinnacle of the temple, and says: "If

Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone" (Matt. iv. 6). Now, there was no call of God for our Lord to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. To have done so, would not have been an act of faith, but of presumption. If His Father had brought Him into circumstances *demanding* that He should cast Himself from that dizzy height, then the case would have been entirely different. But there was no call of God so to act. There was *a call*, but it was from beneath. It was the call of Satan; and his call has ever and only one end in view—that the heavenly seed may dishonour God.

But how could Satan's end have been reached in our Lord's casting Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple? What was the special sin into which the Adversary thus sought to lead the spotless One? It was the sin of *presumption*. It was the sin of acting apart from God's call, and yet expecting God's deliverance—yea, *claiming* that deliverance, and quoting Scripture in support of the claim! For our Lord to have cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple would have been a *tempting* of God—not a *trusting* of Him. And therefore He retorts upon the Enemy: "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (ver. 7). Our Lord thus bore witness that He was in His Father's hand, and that by no act of

His own would He take Himself out of that hand. If, in the path of subjection to God—if in obedience to the heavenly call—He had to pass through dangers greater far than a casting down from the pinnacle of the temple—then that Scripture quoted by Satan should be fulfilled to the letter: "In their hands they shall bear Thee up," &c. But meanwhile that Scripture was entirely *misapplied*. The Scripture that *did* apply was one that conveyed its most withering rebuke to the Tempter himself, and to all who should thus presume to "tempt the Lord their God."

In all this we clearly see the great eternal principle that we shall count in vain upon God's delivering power if we wantonly place ourselves in a position of trial or danger. Many a child of God has fallen grievously by drawing near, with unholy boldness, to some fleshly attraction or some worldly conformity—all the time saying to himself: "There's no fear of me—I'm a child of God—the Lord can keep me anywhere." No, brother. The Lord has given no promise to keep you *anywhere*. He is pledged to keep you in the path of *faith*, but not in the path of *presumption*. If, apart from God's call, you put yourself within the circle of temptation, no deliverance is promised: you are sinning presumptuously. The general call of God to you, as to all His children, is to keep *as far away as possible* from temptation.

—♦—♦—♦—
 TEMPTATION does not make us weak: it simply shows us our weakness.

FAITH TRIED.

DIFFICULTIES have a very different effect upon different persons.

Two believers set out upon what they are persuaded is God's path. But suddenly a difficulty arises in the way. One believer takes this as a token that they are not in the right way, and proposes to retrace his steps. But the other views the difficulty simply as a *trial of faith*. He takes it as one of those visitations sent by the Lord to *test us*. These trials of faith serve a two-fold purpose: they strengthen those who are truly for God; while they let the formalist see that he is not prepared to be "all for Jesus." When Gideon's army of 10,000 (Jud. vii. 3) had set out to meet the Midianites, it would no doubt have been hard to tell who were clear out for God. But, whenever *the test* was applied, it was at once seen who were prepared to follow the Lord fully. In "coming to the water" (ver. 4), the thoughts of many hearts were revealed; and then it was found that only three hundred men were ready to fight the battle of the Lord (ver. 6). Let ours be that reality of devotion and that simplicity of faith, which shall see God's hand in the furnace of affliction and hear His voice in the storm of trial.

—♦—♦—♦—
 A HOLY life is made up of a multitude of small things. Little words, not eloquent speeches; little deeds, not miracles, nor battles, nor one great heroic act or mighty martyrdom, make up the true Christian life.

GREAT MEN'S MISTAKES.

IN studying the lives of the mighty men of the Scripture narrative, we will frequently learn as much from their failures as from their excellencies. Take Samuel, for instance. As a man of faith his name is recorded among the "worthies" of Heb. xi.; while Ps. xcix. 6 bears testimony to him as a man of prayer. On turning to his history as recorded in the Old Testament we find that he delivers Israel, carries out the divine sentence upon the enemies of Jehovah (1 Sam. xv. 33), and so walks in the path of righteousness that "the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel" (1 Sam. vii. 13). We find him rebuking Saul for having acted without a divine command. Yet it was in this very thing that Samuel himself erred in a later day. His own position in Israel was entirely of God's making. The Lord had called him, and fitted him for the work of judging His people; and the marks of the divine call were so manifest that all Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord (1 Sam. iii. 20). But, with all this experience in the ways of God, it came to pass that when Samuel was old he "*made his sons judges over Israel*" (1 Sam. viii. 1). In this matter the aged prophet acted apart from the call of God. He had no divine command to set apart his sons as judges. Their "ordination" at his hand could therefore count for nothing. Samuel's sons were

thus only man-made judges; and, this being so, they could not be the bearers of blessing and deliverance to Israel. Indeed, Israel absolutely refused to acknowledge their authority. The people groaned under a rule which they felt was not according to God. We know what was the result. The rule of Samuel's sons never yielded, and never could have yielded, the peaceable fruit of righteousness. God was not *with* them, for the simple reason that God had never *called* them. In the times of the Judges we read that "when *the Lord* raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge" (Jud. ii. 18). But the Lord was not with Samuel's sons. There was no call: therefore there was no power. Thus it has ever been with man-made judges. They fail to deliver Israel; and, if they serve any purpose at all, it is simply to give occasion for the people of God to rush into deeper departure from His ways.

Some may be surprised that a "good man" like Samuel should have done such a foolish thing as to appoint his sons judges in Israel, apart from the call of God. But we must remember that great men are not always wise (Job xxxii. 9). Aaron, "a good man," made a golden calf, and led Israel into idolatry. Abraham, the great man of faith, went down to Egypt for help. Moses, the man of the meek spirit, spake unadvisedly with his lips. We learn from all these instances that it is dangerous in the

extreme to conclude that a thing is right simply because "a good man" does it. A brother "in reputation for wisdom and honour" may do very foolish things, even in honestly seeking the welfare of the people of God. What we have to be careful about is, to see that we do not rashly endorse everything that one great in the church may resolve to do. We do not for a moment say that any encouragement should be given to that spirit which criticises everything that may be attempted in active service for God. But where a professed leader of the saints is manifestly acting apart from the call of God, as Samuel did, and going contrary to the Scriptures of truth, let the Word be brought to bear upon him. Let him be made clearly to understand that his "new departure" can not be acknowledged, for the simple reason that it is *not* in accordance with that which is written.

DISCOURAGEMENTS.

IN these declining days it often happens that encouragements to godly living are few, while discouragements are many. In these circumstances what is to be done? Are you to sit down in despair and say, "There's no use trying to live for God"? No! Ten thousand foes may dispute our passage into the blessed experience of a separated walk with our rejected Lord. But God is greater than all the powers of evil. These may be mighty; but He is *almighty*. If God be for us, who can

be against us? Take courage, brother. There is no need to be cast down. Although there be no church nor other believer in the place—although you were the only child of God in the whole region—with the stream of worldliness beating upon you from every side,—God is *able to keep you*. Yea, more—He is able to satisfy you—to cause you so to rejoice in Him that you shall be constrained to call upon your soul and all that is within you to bless and magnify His Holy Name.

ONLY AN IMITATOR.

FROM the overthrow of the Egyptians in the Red Sea we learn that no worldling can *walk by faith*. He may imitate the true seed. He may be taught to do many things in the domain of religion, which the people of God are doing. You may get him to take vows, and say "Amen" to prayers, and sing hymns of the highest Christian experience. You may get him to join with others in declaring,

"I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,
Or to defend His cause."

But he is still a worldling—a mere imitator of Christianity. Unto him these words shall yet have a terrible significance: "Which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned" (Heb. xi. 29). He shall be overwhelmed in the billows of Judgment. The redeemed of the Lord, and they alone, shall pass through the coming storm. Truly blessed is that people whose God is the Lord.

CHRIST, AND POLITICAL POWER.

THE Jews were quite willing to have Christ *and* temporal rule. If in receiving Him they could have been assured that He would deliver them from the yoke of the Roman dominion, and make them the political masters of Judea, they would have hailed Him at once as Messiah. They could understand a powerful Messiah—a conquering Messiah—a Messiah who should restore the departed glory of Solomon's reign. But they could not understand a *rejected* Messiah. Christ, *by Himself alone*, they were not prepared to receive. He spoke of a kingdom—but it was not a kingdom that “cometh with observation”; it was a kingdom within. He told of a revolution; but it was a revolution in the heart. He spoke of a new reign; but it was the reign of purity and peace in the soul. They were ill-prepared for this. They were not prepared for it at all. Therefore they cast Him out, and cried, “Away with Him.”

In the religious world to-day one cannot fail to observe the working of a similar spirit to that which prevailed in our Lord's time. The cry is still, “Christ *and* Political Power.” The religious world cannot understand a *rejected* Jesus. It must have a popular Jesus—a Jesus whose weight and influence may be utilised in fighting the political battles of the day. And not the religious world alone, but many undoubted children of God are found

contending for *Christ and political power*. They seem to forget that He is “despised and rejected of men.” They seek power—in what? In a world that lieth in the Wicked One!—a world that rejected, and still rejects, the Son of God! They seek power in a world that crucified the Son of God—a world that is enmity against God—that is *not* subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be—a world that has no room for Christ—a world under judgment—a world hastening on to its final doom! And, in order to secure that power, they join with the enemies of Christ, and sit down and confer with them as to how the world is to be ruled! Could you conceive of Peter and John sitting down with Caiaphas the high priest, to confer as to how a reign of righteousness might be promoted in Jerusalem? “O no,” you answer, “we could not think of such a thing; we could not conceive of the apostles becoming confederate with *the enemies of Christ*; for Caiaphas was one of those who rejected the Son of God—he was one of those who cried, ‘Away with Him.’” All this is clear. You admit that it is inconceivable how Peter could join a Caiaphas confederacy. But what is the difference between joining with the enemies of Christ *now*, and joining with them *then*? The child of God is forbidden now as then. “What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?” “What communion hath light with darkness?” Christ and worldly political power have never come to an agreement. On the contrary, they

have been in deadly conflict with each other. We know the result of that conflict. It resulted in the Son of God being cut off out of the land of the living. The worldly power is still in the ascendant. "The times of the Gentiles" are running their course. Satan is the god of this age. Where is Christ? He is shut out—no room for *Him*. The cry is still, "Away with Him!" How strange, then—how passing strange—that children of God should join confederacy with the enemies of Christ in seeking political power in a world fast ripening for judgment!

Some one may say at this point, "But were the Jews not seeking a right enough thing when they aimed at political power?" Yes, we reply. There was nothing wrong in the thing aimed at. Their mistake lay here, that they wanted to reign *before their time had come to reign*. And this is the very mistake that is being made to-day by many of the people of God. They are determined to reign—that is, to gain the ascendancy for their political party. But their time has not come to reign. There can be no reign for the followers of Christ so long as Christ Himself is rejected. As He is, so are we in this world. Is He rejected? So are we. Is He not of this world? Neither are we. Such is our position—rejected *with Him*; while our attitude is that of *waiting for the Son from Heaven*. There is no hope of relief for groaning creation save in His return whose presence shall cause the desert to blossom as the rose. There can be no

reign of righteousness in the absence of the Righteous One. We are here to bear testimony against the world, not to join affinity with it. We are here to suffer, not to reign.

IS GOD WITH US?

WHILE there is a faintheartedness that refuses to go forward at God's bidding, there is an unholy boldness that is determined to go forward in spite of God's restraining. An illustration of this will be found in Deut. i. 42. The message of the Lord to Israel was: "Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies." Yet, in the face of this, they "went presumptuously up into the hill" (ver. 43). We scarcely need to be told what was the result of the expedition. It ended most disastrously for Israel. Their going up to the hill was not of faith, simply because it was not of God. They were running contrary to the revealed word of Jehovah; and therefore they could expect no help from *Him* in the path upon which they had entered.

We learn from this that it is not only dangerous but presumptuous, while it must sooner or later be disastrous, to run in direct opposition to God's revealed word, in order that we may fight His battles. It may be argued, as it is often argued: "But *the cause is good*. We are seeking to do a proper thing. The people must be reached." But that is

not the point at issue. There was nothing essentially wrong in the people going up to the hill. Indeed it was the very thing that the Lord had commanded some time before (ver. 21). But now there was a most powerful reason why they should not go up; "Go not up, neither fight," said the Lord, "for *I am not among you.*" We see here that it was not a question as to whether it was in itself a right thing to go up. The question was simply this: "*Is the Lord with us?*" In the path of service for God it is to be feared that this question has not always its due weight upon our consciences. Many professed workers for God seem to march round in the same dreary routine, without ever thinking of coming to a stand-still and asking the question, "*Is God with us?*" They seem to be well content with the form. But where is the *power*? Where are the manifest tokens that God is with us? Instead of going on in the path of powerless and cheerless service, it would surely be to the glory of God and our own blessing if we called a halt and thus addressed each other: "Now, brethren, we must pause and ask the solemn question, 'Is God with us?' If He is, we will take fresh courage and go on with Himself. If He is not with us, then it is time that we should see what is wrong."

The lack of God's presence may be unobserved by many. It may even be unobserved by the worker himself—he is so much occupied with His service, and probably unwilling to think that *his*

efforts should be considered deficient in spiritual power. He therefore goes through all the usual rounds of service, while he seeks to persuade himself that "the power of the Lord is present to heal." But, if he succeeds in persuading himself that all is well, there are others whom he fails to persuade. These are longing hearts who have seen the temple of service aglow with heavenly power in bygone days, and who, it may be, are now enjoying a revival time in their own souls. These at once perceive that "the shout of a king" is not being heard—that the living water is not flowing—that the heavenly fire is not burning. They can only be charmed by a kindred music to that which has already awoken the glad hosanna in their heart. They can only rejoice as they hear that voice which is as the sound of many waters. In a word, while they thank God for form, they refuse to rest in form, or be satisfied with form. Unto them the form bereft of power only awakes the cry: "O Lord, how long?" We praise God, and rightly so, for the ark of service. But what shall it avail, apart from the God of the ark? Let the ark of our service be aglow with the fire of Heaven, and we need not doubt that over the Lord's work these words shall soon be found written—"The Lord working mightily."

—♦—

In the affairs of Heaven, as in the affairs of earth, no progress can be made, or victory gained, apart from setting our face like a flint to reach the desired goal.

WIST NOT WHAT TO SAY.

ON the Mount of Transfiguration when Peter "wist not what to say" (Mark ix. 6), his proper course was to say nothing. But, instead of that, we find him proposing to *act*. "And Peter answered and said, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles: one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias" Peter, ever hasty and impetuous, determines that *something* must be done, and that he is the one to do it. But in this he made a great mistake. It was certainly good for them to be there. The three disciples were privileged to behold a wondrous sight. How long the heavenly vision would have continued—how long they would have felt that it was good for them to be there—we cannot tell. We only know this, that whenever Peter spoke the heavenly vision faded away; the conversation with Moses and Elias ceased; and these two prophets of a bygone dispensation were seen no more. While the holy converse was going on upon the Mount, it was a time for the three disciples to *hear* and *behold*. We have seen how Peter, by his hasty *action*, brought the whole scene to a sudden, and no doubt a premature, close.

In a gathered company of the saints have we not seen something akin to that scene on the Transfiguration Mount? The meeting had gone "from strength to strength," until the "silence of adoration" seemed to be possessing every heart.

We were experimentally on the Transfiguration Mount. We had just reached a point corresponding to that occasion in the history of the earthly temple when the glory of God so filled the house of the Lord that the priests could not stand to minister (2 Chron. v. 14). Ah! it was truly good to be there. A greater than Moses or Elias was engaging the heart and drawing forth the deepest adoration of the soul. How long this "sweet moment, rich in blessing" would have continued we cannot tell. We only know this, that some "Peter" suddenly broke the spell and brought the sweet moment to a sudden and unexpected close. He wist not what to do. But he had a vague notion that *something* should be done; and therefore he resolved to *act*. He accordingly rushed in to break the silence—to relieve the suspense—to fill up the gap. But ah! it was felt that he was not in the leading of God! There was nothing necessarily wrong in his "tribute of praise" being heard; for he who is in the leading of God can never disturb that communion which is of God. The brother who is in the leading of God will catch the spirit of the meeting, and lead out *to the Lord Himself*. But he who, like a restless and impetuous Peter, knows not what to say, and yet presumes to say *something*, must inevitably disturb many a fair vision of heavenly glory.

If we are to be true helpers to the life and prosperity of a gathered company of believers, we must be in living fellowship with the Lord Himself. Thus in fellow-

ship with Him—evil in heart or life judged and put away—we are prepared to hear His voice, and follow the leading of His Spirit. But if we are *not* in fellowship with God, we can be of no help whatever to the life or power of an assembly. If we judge not that which is evil—if we fail to keep the body under—while at the same time we attempt to lead the saints of God in the solemn meeting, we shall serve no purpose, unless it be to dispel the visions of Transfiguration Mount.

OUT OF EGYPT.


LET My people go, that they may serve Me" (Ex. viii. 20). There must be *freedom* before there can be *service*. Israel must be delivered from the house of bondage before any acceptable service could be offered to Jehovah. By and by we find them sitting within the blood-sprinkled doors, feasting upon the roasted lamb. But something more than that was required. They must be delivered *out of Egypt*—separated from Egypt—before true service could begin. Pharaoh did not see that there was any need whatever to forsake Egypt. "Sacrifice to your God *in the land*," he said (Ex. viii. 25). Why leave Egypt? Serve God in Egypt. Such was Pharaoh's counsel then. Such has been the world's counsel ever since. "Be thankful that you are under the blood, and feasting upon the Lamb. Just serve the Lord where you are—in

association with Egypt: don't think of going out and being separate!" Thus the religious world reasons, as Pharaoh did of old. But what did Moses say to all this? He replied: "It is not meet so to do." The word of the Lord still went forth, "*Let My people go.*"

If the Lord was to be served acceptably, we thus find that *two* things were needed. The people must be (1) redeemed by blood, and (2) redeemed by power. They must be separated from Egypt's associations as well as sheltered from Egypt's judgment. How happy would it have been for many children of God to-day if they had learned this elementary lesson in the ways of the Lord! They are sheltered by the blood—there is no reason to doubt that they are children of God. Yet they remain in Egypt. They have been persuaded by the successors of Pharaoh that they can sacrifice to God where they are. Therefore they sit in church fellowship with the world, and pass the bread and cup of Communion to the enemies of Christ! They forget—perhaps some do not care to remember—that God's redemption includes *separation* from Egypt, as well as deliverance from Egypt's doom. Israel could never have been in the true sense of the word a *redeemed people*, if they had remained in Egypt and attempted to sacrifice to Jehovah *there*. The deliverance of God's people from Egypt must be utterly meaningless to those who remain in church fellowship with the undoubted enemies of the Lord. To all such His word is, "Awake thou that

sleepest, and arise from among the dead"
—"Come out from among them and be
ye separate."

A FALSE HUMILITY.

E are always suspicious of the preacher who stands up and says to his audience: "Now, there is no use in the world in me standing here to speak, if *the Lord* does not speak. If the word is not carried home to your hearts by the Spirit of God, anything I have to say will be as water spilt upon the ground." We decidedly object to any such introduction on the part of one who stands forth as the Lord's messenger. The preacher should have all these *ifs* settled before he ascends the platform. Questions such as these should be taken to the Lord and answered in the closet. It is well to be conscious of our complete dependence on the aids of heavenly power. We shall run in vain if we do not honour God by practically acknowledging that salvation from beginning to end is *of the Lord*. But it is no part of the Gospel proclamation to make a proclamation of our own helplessness. If the Lord is *not* with us, why do we presume to speak? And if we are persuaded He *is* with us, neither apology nor explanation is required. The preacher has simply to deliver God's message, as God's ambassador. If he begins by expressing a doubt as to whether there shall be any message from God at all, he thereby throws discredit

upon himself, and shows he is not sure if he has been *sent*. But the platform is not the place for him to discuss that question. He should come there with the calm yet assured confidence that he is "a man sent from God" (Jno. i. 6). It may look very like *humility* for us to tell the people that if God does not speak, nothing will be done. But there is such a thing as a false humility which is simply unbelief in disguise. Unbelief fears that nothing will be done; and assumes the garb of humility in order to roll the responsibility over upon the Lord Himself; piously remarking: "If the Lord does not work, of course we are powerless." And if such be the extent of a preacher's faith, or rather of his unbelief, can he be expected to be anything else than powerless? God works "through faith"—not through doubt and fear, or a false humility whose chief concern seems to be to cover its own nakedness.

When Paul was writing to the Romans we do not find him running off into the hopeless strain in which some preachers delight to indulge. On the contrary, we hear him say: "And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ" (Rom. xv. 29). This was not the language of presumption. It was the language of simple faith in the living God. No one knew better than Paul how weak he was in himself; but this is in perfect harmony with unbounded faith in God. The apostle, writing to the Corinthians, says: "And I was with you

in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (1 Cor. ii. 3). But what does he say of his message? He says it was "*in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*" (ver. 4).

When a man has a secret suspicion that the living water is not flowing through him, he not unfrequently warns his audience beforehand not to be surprised although no living water should flow. When a preacher feels that he is bereft of heavenly power, he may be heard carefully impressing his hearers that it is written: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zec. iv. 6). But that Scripture is entirely misapplied in such circumstances. The passage in question simply means that *fleshly power* has no part in working God's purposes. But that truth can prove no solace whatever to the professed ambassador who has reason to fear that he is a stranger to heavenly unction. When he prepares his hearers to expect a powerless address he thereby shows that he has mistaken his call. And when he quotes Scripture to prove that the powerless meeting is no fault of *his*, but is due to the sovereign will of God, he is certainly "wresting" Scripture for the purpose of concealing his own true condition. In contrast with all this we find Stephen, "full of *faith and power*," doing great wonders and miracles among the people (Acts vi. 8). Here we have true power from above, associated with faith in the living God. The result is—the Lord is honoured, and mighty works are wrought in His name.

NOT CARING WHAT OTHERS THINK.

RECKLESSNESS concerning the opinion of others is no mark of spirituality of character. We sometimes hear the expression, "I don't care what people think about me." But we *should* care. If we are honestly striving to walk godly in Christ Jesus, we *will* care what people think about us. But if we are *not* striving to live godly in Christ Jesus—if we are found tampering with worldliness, or manifesting an un-Christ-like spirit—we shall very likely assume a great disregard for the opinion of our brethren. But what is the secret of our taking up such an independent attitude? The secret lies in this, that we do not want to be disturbed in our downward course. When such is our condition we may profess to have got far above "the arm of flesh"; and we may turn round to brother So-and-so and tell him that it is of no consequence what *he* thinks. But all this is simply the desperate attempt to disguise our true condition of soul—a condition which we instinctively feel will not bear investigation. Are we not to exhort one another while it is called to-day? Are our works not to bear such testimony that others will glorify our Father in Heaven? If we are right with God, we shall be glad to have any inconsistency pointed out; and if, in worship or service, we are spoken evil of, we shall be ready to be shown wherein we are not walking according to that which is written.

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Vol. VI.

"CHRIST LIVETH IN ME."



IT is true that the Christian life is an imitation of that life which Jesus lived while on earth. But this is only a part of the truth. The life of the child of faith is more than an *imitation*: it is a *reproduction*. When the apostle says (Gal. ii. 20), "Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me*," we have *reproduction*. We there see that the true condition of the believer is one in which the "life also of Jesus" shall be made manifest in his mortal body. This goes deeper than imitation. Speaking after the manner of men, while you may imitate another man and do many things that he does, you cannot live with that man's life—you cannot love with his love. The reason lies in this, that there is no bond of vital union between you and him. You are not partakers of a common life. But that which is impossible with men is possible with God. It is the glory of the Gospel of His grace that it brings the trusting sinner into living union with that Man in the Glory whom God hath made both Lord and Christ. The believer, by virtue of this union with Christ, thus becomes the partaker of a new life, even the life of the risen Son of

God. Old things are passed away; all things are become new. He is a new creation; because he is in Christ Jesus—in that new creation where all things are of God. He finds that new aspirations have arisen in the heart. He is actuated by new tastes, new desires. And all this has taken place, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. In short, the believer is bound up in the bundle of life with Christ Jesus—*one with Him* in death, burial, and resurrection. Because Christ lives, the believer lives; and, if the child of God is true to his calling, he will manifest—as he cannot but manifest—the heavenly life which flows through his whole moral being.

At this point you may say, "But are we not told to follow Christ—to imitate Him?" Yes, we reply; but let everything come in its divine order. There must be the life experienced *within*, before the ways of Christ can be manifested *without*. You may set a man a pattern to imitate. But what will that avail if you cannot communicate the *power* to imitate the pattern? Men are to be found to-day, extolling Christ as a pattern, and professedly seeking to imitate Him. But they are strangers to

Christ the Sacrifice—they know not *Christ the Life*. They seek to bring the carnal mind into subjection to the law of God. That is to say, they attempt what the Scriptures declare to be impossible; and they fail. They have a pattern; but they are “without strength.” It is altogether different with the believer. He has not only the pattern, but he has the power to imitate the pattern. Yea, and he has the love that makes that imitation the rejoicing of his heart.

But why, it may be asked, should there be any need for a pattern? “If Christ lives within, shall He not lead us aright?” This question not only *may* be asked but *has been* asked. It is contended by some that the “inner voice” is sufficient to lead us in God’s path, apart from any example whatever. To this we reply that the Lord does not say so. On the contrary, He has in His wisdom seen fit to point us to the great Exemplar, as the One whom we are to follow. We see divine wisdom shining out here. Men may *profess* that Christ is living in them, and claim to be led of Him, while indulging the wildest fanaticism or the most manifest self-will. How shall we determine *if* they are wrong and *where* they are wrong? To this we answer: By an appeal to the mind of Christ as revealed in His word. We ever find Him *honouring the Scriptures*. He came to do His Father’s will. He delighted to do that will; and time after time we find His actions explained by the significant words, “*that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.*” We may profess to

have the Spirit of Christ and to hear His guiding voice within. If such be indeed the case we may be assured that the leading of *the Spirit within* shall ever be *in unison* with the teaching of the *written word without*.

If *Christ the Life* be our sweet experience, *Christ the Example* shall be our increasing delight; and, in tracing His footsteps in the path of subjection to His Father, God, we shall be enabled to test our ways by an infallible standard—even *that which is written*. On the other hand, if our experience is not that of the apostle—“Christ liveth in me”—we shall care but little for Christ the Example. If He is not set apart as Lord in the heart, we may view Him afar off as a picture to admire; but not as Him to whom we owe the deepest allegiance of the heart.

We are not called to *create* spiritual life, any more than we are called to create a world. We are simply called to abide in Him who is “*the Life*,” and in whom it has pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. We are called simply to let the Son of God take full possession—to be so yielded up to Him that *His* life shall become *our* life, and that these words may be fulfilled in us: “As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

THE heart that is most susceptible to the joys of heavenly communion, is the one most deeply pained by the workings of the flesh.

ETERNAL SALVATION.



ROMAN-CATHOLIC priest would never think of preaching *Salvation by faith*. If he were to stand up and proclaim the blessed tidings, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (Jno. iii. 36), people would at once see that everlasting life could be obtained apart altogether from the Romish church. This would never do; for if people were thus to enter upon the possession of eternal life, they might snap their fingers at the priest and the Romish system, and say: "We are united to Christ now; and neither Pope nor church can sever the chain that binds us to the throne of God." Rome has seen clearly that it would be a most dangerous doctrine—to declare that a sinner passes out of death into life through believing on the Son of God. "Ah," says Rome, "it will never do to let any man know that he is absolutely sure of Heaven. We must keep him in doubt and uncertainty as to whether he will ever be there at all. Thus we shall retain him *under the power of the church*, and be able to bring him under the terrors of the law whenever he goes astray."

Such is Rome's theory and practice. But the strange thing is, that you find exactly the same theory and practice existing in religious systems that profess to be strictly evangelical. We refer to the religious systems which hold the theory that although you are born again—a child of God and an heir of Heaven—you may nevertheless be in Hell to all

eternity! We do not find any such theory in the Scriptures. But we *do* find the blessed truth that when God saves, He saves *for ever*. "Verily, verily, I say unto you," says Jesus, "he that believeth on Me HATH everlasting life" (Jno. vi. 47). This is perfectly clear to any unbiassed mind. The believing sinner *hath*—what? Life for six weeks?—life for six months?—life for a thousand years? No. He hath *everlasting life*. Arminian* systems of religion, like the Papacy itself, saw that this would never do. It would make Salvation "far too easy and simple," as they thought. If people were thus to be made sure of Heaven they might become independent of the discipline and authority of the church. Then the terrors of the law might have very little effect upon those who held that they possessed a never-ending life. Therefore Arminianism had to devise what it fondly believed was a *more reasonable* Gospel. In its attempt to provide this "more reasonable Gospel" it has, in many respects, trod unconsciously in the very footsteps of the Papacy. Arminianism has resolved to keep the believing sinner in a state of doubt and uncertainty as to whether he will ever be in Heaven at all. It teaches

* By Arminian systems of religion we mean those systems that hold the theory that although you are born of God, and united to Christ, you may yet fall away and perish eternally. *Arminianism* takes its name from Arminius, the founder of that creed. His followers, however (as is often the case with new systems of theology), have run to greater extremes than the founder of the system. Arminianism to-day is even "more Arminian" than was Arminius himself.

that no one can be *sure* of *that*. It admits that you may be all right just now, and may continue so for years. But if, in an evil hour, you depart from God and die in that state, your doom is sealed to all eternity! It is simply amazing that any of God's saints should be found contending for such an adulteration of the Gospel of Christ. This much at least is clear, that those who hold such theories do not understand what *grace* is. We need scarcely pause to say that grace is simply *undeserved favour*. But, according to Arminian views, it is by *deserved* favour that Heaven is won.

The Arminian doctrine plainly teaches that you may be "saved to-day and lost to-morrow." Arminianism holds that it is *unreasonable* to suppose that a man who has walked godly in Christ Jesus for years and then becomes a backslider, should go to Heaven. They who hold Arminian views thus plainly declare that if *they* were the Judge of all the earth they would send that man to Hell. Let us be thankful, however, that an all-gracious God has left it on record: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord" (Isa. lv. 8). Their doctrine (we call it heresy) has thus its chief foundation on what *they* think is reasonable; and, in their eagerness to establish their Gospel of what sounds reasonable, they are to that extent setting aside the Gospel of *the grace of God*. But, taking Arminians on their own ground, we hold it is *they* who are unreasonable. Their great

argument is the supposed case of a believer who becomes a backslider and dies in that state. "There's John So-and-so," they say, "who has kept up a good profession for many years, but has now gone back to the world." The Arminians then ask the question, "If such a man were to die just now, would he go to Heaven?" This question is held as settling "the whole question," and it is freely used in attempting to shake those, young in the faith, who are sound in the doctrines of *grace*. But really the question proves nothing, although it professes to prove everything. In the first place, we can give no certificate that a man's name is in the Book of Life. The heart can be read only by the Lord Himself. The supposed backslider may be one who was never born of God at all—who merely joined himself to the company of the redeemed. In that case he is simply coming out in his true colours. But, giving Arminianism all it *supposes*, we find that its "tender mercies are cruel." Let us suppose the case of one who adorns the doctrine of Christ for ten years and then falls into sin; and, after six months' sinning, dies. Where would Arminianism send that man? *Not* to Heaven. Arminianism would consign him to everlasting woe. Is it "reasonable"? But press the point still further. Suppose a man walks ten years in God's path, and then falls into sin, and dies after being a backslider for *one day*, where would Arminianism put that man? According to its own theory it would require to

send him to the lake of fire ; for a man who is a backslider for one day is as really a backslider as if he had been a backslider for twelve months. The only difference is, that he has sinned longer in the one case than in the other. Where, then, would Arminianism send that man? It is at this point that Arminianism finds itself in a difficulty. If it sends the man to Heaven, it is transgressing its own rules : if it says he must go to Hell, it feels that this would be a most "unreasonable" thing. In short, Arminianism finds its own theory to be like 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." Arminianism makes its boast of having a "reasonable Gospel." Yet, when we take it upon its own ground, and test it by its own measuring line, we find it most *unreasonable* from every standpoint.

Let none of God's people be shaken while Arminianism points the finger to some open backslider and says, "Where will that man go?" The Judge of all the earth will do right. We cannot declare what the coming Day shall reveal concerning one who is away in heart from the Lord ; for the simple reason that we cannot read the heart. But we know this, that as in natural birth so in spiritual—he who is once a child of God is a child of God for ever. There are those who speak of the perseverance of the saints. But our confidence is in the perseverance of *the Saviour*. "He shall

not fail nor be discouraged" (Isa. xlii. 4). "He shall see of the travail of His soul" (Isa. liii. 11). These words are still waiting their complete fulfilment : "Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and *none* of them is lost, but the son of perdition ; that the Scripture might be fulfilled" (Jno. xvii. 12).

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE ?

WHEN we appeal to the Scriptures we find that God saves men on the principle of *grace* pure and simple. If the framing of the Gospel message had been left to man, he would very likely have fenced it round with a great many conditions, such as—"If you believe on Jesus, *and* persevere, *and* continue, *and* hold on, &c. &c., you will get to Heaven at last." But we find no such combination of law and grace in the Book of God. When we turn to the Master's words we hear Him saying : "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment ; but is passed out of death into life" (Jno. v. 24). We search there in vain for conditions as to the future. If conditions as to future good behaviour had been laid down, then grace would be no more grace, and the Gospel would be no more the Gospel. In the passage before us we have the definite statement, "*Hath everlasting life.*" But, in case this should by any possibility be misunderstood, we are

expressly told that the believing sinner *shall not come into judgment*. Man would fain alter this, so as to read: "*may come into judgment*." But God says, "*shall not come into judgment*." His proclamation takes in the future as well as the present. Men may cavil at God's grace. Yea, some professing to be His people may cavil at His grace, and grudge to see the trusting sinner rejoicing in the possession of eternal life. Yet grace reigns; and God answers all the cavils of men by the message of infinite grace—*shall not come into judgment*.

THE TERROR OF THE LORD.

SOME tell us that if there is no terror of Hell for the backslider, then the one who departs from God gets off without suffering any punishment whatever. But this is not so. The backslider will *suffer*. There is such a thing as the terror of the Lord (2 Cor. v. 11). If you depart from Him—if you permit sin in heart or ways to remain unjudged, God will come in and judge you, His child. He will chastise you *now*—He will cause you to suffer *now*. As surely as you are His child, so surely will He keep you in remembrance that you are His child. It is *because* you are His child that He uses the rod of chastisement. It is no light thing to depart from the living God. Those who are not His children may sin with a high hand, and seem to prosper even in the

paths of iniquity. But His children shall find it in every sense an evil thing and a bitter, to depart from the Lord. In the path of departure He will speak to us—He will deal with us—He will judge us. He will make us feel and know that we are away from Him. Yea, if we refuse to hear His voice and return to the path of communion, He may see fit to *take us away by death*. Solemn and searching truth for every child of God! When Paul was writing to the Corinthians upon this very subject (unjudged sin upon the conscience) he said, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep"* (1 Cor. xi. 30). That is, many are in their graves—overtaken by chastisement even unto death. Thus we find that God's people will not be allowed to depart from Him with impunity. Here there shall be chastisement—perhaps a premature grave; while *yonder* at the coming judgment-seat there shall be eternal loss—not of the soul, but of the reward for faithful service; for our gracious God is careful to tell us that, though a man's work may be burned, "he himself shall be *saved*; yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. iii. 15). Unfaithfulness here will not pass unnoticed by Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire.

* This word *sleep* undoubtedly refers to those who have departed to be with the Lord, and who now sleep in Christ. It is a word *never* applied to those who have perished. It is ever found referring to *departure to be with Christ*. See 1 Cor. xv. 51, where it is written, "We shall not all sleep"; and 1 Thess. v. 10, "That whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him."

SINNING THAT GRACE MAY ABOUND.

THE Apostle Paul clearly saw that the Gospel of grace would be resisted (Rom. iii. 8 ; vi. 1). He saw that men would arise, saying: "If people are made sure of Heaven the moment they receive Christ, that will just encourage them to sin. They will say, 'We are safe for eternity now: we can do as we please—let us sin that grace may abound.'" Paul saw, or rather the Spirit writing by Paul saw, that carnal reason would rebel against the doctrines of grace. We see this same spirit at work in the present day. Men are to be found resisting the blessed tidings that the sinner is saved for ever through faith in Christ alone. The reason for their murmurings is the same as it was in Paul's day. They tell us that to be saved by grace alone is a bad principle. "If you give a man a free title to Heaven at the start," they say, "he may put it into his pocket, and walk right back into the public-house." How does the apostle meet these cavillers? Does he say, "You are quite right: we must alter the plan of salvation, and put eternal life at the *end* of the journey instead of the beginning"? No. The apostle makes no such answer. He maintains the freeness of the Gospel; he magnifies the grace of God. He appeals to the great change that has taken place with the sinner who believes on Jesus. He appeals to the great truth that we *have died with Christ*. There has been death to sin—there has been resurrection with Christ. How,

then, can we that have died to sin live any longer therein? Such is the apostle's argument. You are a crucified one—crucified with Christ. How can you for a moment think of sinning that grace may abound? You are now united to Christ. His life is flowing through you. How, then, can you go on sinning? Paul never for a moment used the threat—as certain religious systems do—"Now, if you presume upon the grace of God, and go back to the world, you must be banished from God's presence for ever." Such was no part of the apostle's argument. Indeed, such a thought was entirely foreign to his argument. He makes no bargain as to the future. He takes his stand upon God's infinite grace. He shows that grace has put every believing sinner into *an entirely new standing*, as dead and risen with Christ. "Now," says Paul, "you see what God has done for you; you see where His grace has placed you—accepted in the Beloved One. How can you even think of abusing such love by continuing in sin?" The appeal, from first to last, is to what grace has done. Scripture thus gives no countenance whatever to that "legal Gospel" which would bring the terrors of Hell to bear upon one to whom there is "now no condemnation" because he is in Christ Jesus.

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TRUTH is the utterance of the divine *mind*, but law is the utterance of the divine *will*. When a father teaches his child, we see simply *mind* meeting *mind*; but when he commands, we see *will* meeting *will*.

FAITH.

SURPRISE has been expressed that *faith* does not come *first* in the fruits of the Spirit enumerated in Gal. v. 22, 23. Seeing that love, joy, peace, and others could have had no existence apart from faith, and seeing that *faith* in the order of *time* unquestionably comes first, some would naturally have expected faith to be first in the fruits of the Spirit. But we must remember that Scripture is not here speaking of the faith that saves the soul — of that supreme moment when the sinner received the Son of God as Saviour. Such faith belongs rather to *root* than to *fruit*. In the catalogue given in Gal. v. our God is bringing before us, in the Spirit's order, the various fruits that shall adorn the Christian character, if we are found truly walking in the Spirit. To us it is deeply instructive to observe that *faith* is *not* first, or second, but seventh in the list. By *faith*, in the passage before us, we understand that simplicity of confidence in the living God which *lays hold on Him for definite blessing*, — faith that obtains promises — stops the mouths of lions — overcometh the world.

From the definition here given of faith it will at once be seen that the word embraces far more than a simple resting on Christ for salvation from wrath to come. No sooner does the sinner enter into rest through believing the Gospel than he finds he is called to live a *life of faith* upon the Son of God (Gal. ii. 20).

We have died with Christ (Rom. vi. 8); yet there is to be a daily dying (1 Cor. xv. 31). In the same way, while we have trusted Christ as sinners, in that happy day when we passed out of darkness into light, there is to be a daily trusting. But this daily trusting must not be looked upon as a trusting of Christ *over again* as Saviour from wrath to come. The moment you as a sinner trusted in Jesus the Saviour, that moment the question of *sinner'ship* was in your case settled eternally. You there and then passed out of death into life (Jno. v. 24). You were brought into a *new* relationship with God. The old relationship of *sinner* was done away once and for ever, and you were brought into the new relationship of being a *child* of God. It was through faith in Jesus as Saviour that you were brought into that relationship; and the faith that brought you into that relationship *does not need to be repeated*. Faith is still to be exercised, although you are a child of God. But it is the faith of simple *dependence on God* for the supplying of all your need. In the Temptation in the wilderness we find the Sinless One our pattern in this matter of *faith in God*. We see Him there confessedly dependent upon His Father in Heaven, and retorting upon the Tempter that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." What a beautiful picture of faith! — not the faith of the sinner seeking refuge from wrath to come, but the faith of a Son confessing in depths of trial — "I

live by the Father" (Jno. vi. 57). May it be ours to imitate that faith!

But what may we learn from *faith* being so far down in the list of Gal. v. 22, 23? It seems to us that faith has not found its place there without a purpose. We sometimes hear of *great* faith and *little* faith. We hear of those who can trust God for anything, and of others who find it difficult to "obtain promises" at all. Why is there such a difference in the *faith* of some children of God, as compared with that of others? And how does it come that in many cases there is such a feeble walk of faith, and so few definite dealings with God in pleading His promises? We believe it is largely due to this, that *faith* is sought, while love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, are almost entirely overlooked. You hear of some man of God who is remarkable for faith, and who has some remarkable answers to prayer; and you instinctively say to yourself, "I wish I had *faith* like *that*." But stay. Everything must come in its due order—"first the blade, then the ear; after that, the full corn in the ear." In other words, let *love* have its due manifestation; then let joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, come in their order. When these six fruits of the Spirit are the experience of the heart, and the fair adorning of the Christian character, *then* faith comes without an effort.

There is no "short-cut" to this faith. In order to reach it you must travel by way of love, joy, peace, &c. He who is

not cultivating the love that thinketh no evil, need not be surprised that his faith is small when he approaches the Lord in prayer. The heart that knows but little of love, knows as little of faith. If we are not cultivating the six "fruits" that are enumerated before faith, our faith will be feeble in the extreme. Love is the great feeder of faith. Indeed, "perfect love casteth out fear" (1 Jno. iv. 18); and we know that fear is the very opposite of faith. Therefore, if we would increase our *faith*, let us increase our *love*, Yea, let us see that joy, and peace, and longsuffering, and gentleness, and goodness, are being brought forth abundantly in our experience; and we may be assured that we shall be found among those whom Scripture describes as "*strong in faith, giving glory to God.*"

BALAAH, THE SOOTHSAYER.

Third Paper.



HE messengers of Balak, nothing daunted by the prophet's refusal to go with them, return in due time with a more pressing invitation and promises of higher rewards. "And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me: for I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people" (Numb. xxii. 16, 17). At this point Balaam's true path is perfectly clear.

God had already spoken. He had plainly said: "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed" (ver. 12). Balaam needed no further revelation. He had simply to say to the princes of Moab: "You have already received my answer. I dare not seek for a new revelation, and you need not wait for one." This is what we would naturally expect—at least if we assume that Balaam was honestly seeking to do the will of God. But he was not honestly seeking to please Jehovah. He was bent upon carrying out his own will—if he could only reconcile it with what the Lord had spoken. It is true that he makes a very bold speech to the princes of Moab on the occasion of their second visit. To judge by his high-sounding profession he was seemingly one of the faithful of the earth. "And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more" (ver. 18). This sounds very well; but it is only *sound*. The man who has reason to suspect his own motives, is often the loudest in proclaiming his singleness of eye. The man most susceptible to the influence of flattery is almost certain to be heard declaring how little he cares for the opinion of man. When a person's resolution is failing him—when in heart he is away from the living God—it frequently happens that he is loudest in his professions of allegiance; as if he would thereby persuade himself and

others that he is a true pattern of devotion. Such was Balaam. His professed reverence for the word of "the Lord my God," was only "a fair show in the flesh." Certainly it had no effect upon the princes of Moab. If Balaam *served their purpose*, it mattered nothing whatever to them what his professions of obedience might be. Thus it is with the world to-day. If you lend yourself to the carrying out of its schemes—if you yield yourself as a tool in its hands—it cares not although you make the highest Christian profession that it is possible to make. It may listen, seemingly in respectful silence, to your vows of allegiance to the God of Heaven. But all such professions are in the world's ear only as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. The world knows its man: it has taken its measure of him. If it can secure him for its purposes, he may profess anything he pleases.

After Balaam has tried to get upon better terms with himself, by a declaration of his own faithfulness to the word of the Lord, we find him saying to the princes of Moab, "Now, therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more" (ver. 19). Ah, here we have the prophet's true character leaking out. How difficult it is for a man to conceal *himself*! How hard it is for a man who is *acting a part*, to remember that he is acting a part! He is certain at some point to forget his assumed character and to let his true character be seen. Moab's princes might for a brief moment

be staggered by the prophet's declaration that Balak's house "full of silver and gold" would utterly fail to "buy him up." But they would breathe freely whenever Balaam added the significant words, "Tarry ye here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more." They had not mistaken their man after all. He was just the man they expected him to be. They accepted the words, "Tarry ye here this night," as if he had answered, "I have no doubt I shall see my way to go with you on the morrow."

BETTER WAIT.

IF you are going to do a thing in a bad spirit, your wisest course is *not to do it*. The fact that you are in a chafed and irritated mood shows clearly that you are not in a condition *to act*. In these circumstances your strength is to "sit still." It may be quite right that a certain thing should be done; but if I am not in the right spirit I may gravely question if I am the "chosen vessel" for the work before me. At the very least I may be assured that it is not the *right time for me* to act. If I am not in the right spirit, the first work to which I am called is to *judge myself*, and seek the spirit of the Patient One. If, apart from such self-judgment, I seize the sword to deal with evil in my brethren, I shall simply learn experimentally that "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

HELP IN THE GOSPEL.

IN carrying on Gospel work it is customary to "give place" to a brother who has come in from another assembly to sojourn for a day. We have nothing to say against this. By all means let "gift" be acknowledged, whatever its measure may be. Even although the "gift" may not be great, a stranger's voice often lends interest to a meeting. But this custom of acknowledging the stranger can, like all good things, be abused; and there is no doubt that it *has* been abused. In some cases it has become customary to ask a brother to take the Gospel meeting simply *because he is a stranger*, and without any positive knowledge as to his fitness for the work. In this way Gospel meetings have been wasted. Those who have the care of the Gospel work should exercise their judgment in such matters, and not come to the conclusion: "We *must* hand over the Gospel meeting to this brother, seeing he is a stranger." There is no *must* in the matter. If you *know* him to be one who can undertake the meeting, your path is clear. But if you do not *know*, then you can exercise your spiritual discernment in determining how far he may be helpful. If a man is not in communion with God, it matters little although he may be newly arrived from the ends of the earth. Strangers are good, only if they are *on fire*. You are a thousand times better with a local man if he has the fire of God in his bones, than with a stranger who is frozen and formal.

THE FURNACE OF TRIAL.

YOU may have heard of the great "law of compensation" that runs through nature. It is that law by which a seeming hindrance turns out in the end to be a real help; and by which nature "makes compensation" for apparent difficulties, by conferring a boon that never could have been possessed apart from these difficulties. For example, the storms of winter, that threaten to tear up yonder sapling by the roots, only cause it to strike these roots deeper down into the earth, and in the end produce a hardier and a better tree. Again, it is well-known that men reared in a mountainous country, amid rugged steppes and frowning precipices, are a hardier race by far than habitual dwellers in the plains. Nature at first sight would seem to be *against* the children of the mountain. Yet the very difficulties by which they are surrounded, develop not only a physical endurance but a force of character that constitutes a wonderful "compensation" for the natural difficulties with which they have to contend.

If nature, then, is so rich in compensation, we may be sure that in the kingdom of grace the same law shall have its highest fulfilment. And so it is. The child of God may be called to suffer trials, sorrows, buffetings, so severe and so prolonged that he is ready to sink under the burden. "What meaneth this?" he says; "I cannot understand this cross I am called to bear. Surely

it is not possible for the soul to prosper in such a furnace of trial." But stay, brother. Like Jacob of old we may be tempted to say: "All these things are against me" (Gen. xlii. 36). But *God is for us*; and "if God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. viii. 31). Gold loseth nothing by being put through the fire, except it be the *dross* with which it was mingled. Trial and vicissitude cast us upon God,—and often at a time when we are prone to forget Him. The storms of life may arise and beat upon us; but if we permit them to effect their purpose they shall simply cause the tendrils of our faith to cling the more firmly to the everlasting Rock. The three Hebrew youths had reason to praise God for the "burning fiery furnace" (Dan. iii. 20). Nor was it any ordinary furnace: it was seven times heated (ver. 19). Yet all that the furnace did was to *loose the cords* that bound them; for we learn from verse 25 that Nebuchadnezzar saw them "loose, walking in the midst of the fire." Beautiful figure of that fire of affliction through which, in some form or other, we are all called to pass! The enemy of our souls may think to overwhelm us by the devouring flame of some great affliction. But strong in faith, giving glory to God, we shall pass through the fire, to discover that it has done its Heaven-appointed work, in *severing the cords* that bound us to something that was not of God. Thus even *here* there is "compensation" for all the supposed ills of life. Yet such is only a foretaste of what is laid up for the

redeemed of the Lord in a coming Day ; for is it not written that the afflictions of this present time are working for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" ?

Trial—which may come in many ways besides bodily affliction—has frequently the effect of showing us that we must seek a closer walk with God ; and that, if we are to be sustained in the trial, we must enter upon a deepened experience of God's presence and power—perhaps an experience to which we have hitherto been a stranger. Trial thus brings us to a stand-still, and demands that we take our reckoning as to our spiritual whereabouts. In this way trial often sounds the trumpet of alarm in the path of departure from God, and carries the message home to the slumbering conscience: "Return unto Me, saith the Lord." But even where there is no conscious departure from the Lord, trial is designed to lead us into the experience of a higher and a holier life. Trial, if received as coming from the Father's hand, has a mellowing, sweetening effect upon the character, that could not have been produced in a life of unbroken calm and freedom from suffering. The billows may rise upon every side—the storms of life may beat upon us with a force that seems almost irresistible. Yet, recognising God's voice even in the rude blast of the tempest, we hear or seem to hear the words: "*A message from God to thee.*" Then we sit down to hear what God the Lord will speak. Then comes the heart-searching, and the valley of

humiliation, and the breaking of the bones (Ps. li. 8). Yet joy comes in the morning. The bones which the Lord hath broken, are made to rejoice. Through the dark clouds of suffering we pass into the purer air of a sweeter communion than we had ever known before. Howe'er it be, we cannot tell ; but at such a crisis in our spiritual experience we feel constrained to praise God for the tempest of suffering through which He was pleased to lead us, that we might know Him as a present Help in time of trouble. It is in such seasons we are constrained to confess that all our springs are in the Beloved One.

NO VIRTUE.

IT cannot be too clearly stated that there is no virtue in attending meetings and listening to the expounding of "wonderful truth," *if* the truth we profess to enjoy does not become *part of* our very selves, and lead us *to act*. We may declare that a meeting is a splendid meeting. But that avails nothing if its effect be not seen in the sweetening and ennobling of our own character. We may admit that a certain meeting was powerful and searching. But that avails nothing if it has not searched *us*. We must enter our protest against that Christianity which seems to be content merely to sit and hear beautiful things, while it shows very little inclination to *arise and do*. We must be delivered from popular Christianity—

that Christianity which folds its arms and delights to hear the doctrines of grace falling like sweet music on the ear. Popular Christianity, after thus hearing some beautiful words, singing some beautiful hymns, and feeling very solemn for a little season, thinks it has done a very meritorious work — certainly as much as will keep it going for another week. Now, this is the Christianity (so-called) from which we must be delivered. Let us praise God for Heavensent teachers; let us be thankful that we are privileged to offer up the sacrifice of praise; let us prize “the means of grace” provided in our coming together to wait on God. But do not let us *rest* there, as if *hearing* and *receiving* were everything the Lord required of us. The man to whom our Lord told the story of “The Good Samaritan” no doubt thought it was a beautiful incident. He was compelled to admit that the true “neighbour” was the one who “showed mercy.” But he was ill-prepared for the words: “Go, and do thou likewise” (Luke x. 37). You can thus see at a glance how there was no virtue in the mere *hearing*, even from the Master’s lips, about the man who fell among thieves. The “virtue” was to be found in going and doing likewise. This is just the point at which we are aiming. You may rise up with the voice of an Apollos and set forth the blessedness of *giving*. You may take, for example, the Lord’s labourers — evangelists who look only to God for support — and you may show that it is simply lamentable to think *how little*

the hearts of many are exercised as to succouring those who have gone forth for the sake of the Name, taking nothing of the Gentiles. You may make it perfectly clear that in ministering to their necessity the individual saint is laying up treasure in Heaven, and offering up the sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour. You may do all this, and be extolled for your admirable address. Yea, some of your hearers may go home and declare that it was as fine an exposition as ever they heard. But what effect had the meeting upon *the pockets*? It is no breach of charity to say that in many cases the pockets are *buttoned up*, and the Lord’s servants forgotten. “Go, and do thou likewise,” is not popular theology. The religion that is wanted now-a-days is one that will relieve you as far as possible from *doing* anything at all — a religion that consists largely in *receiving*, and cares little for *giving*. The religion that is in demand is one that deals in theories and sentimentality, and truth that will cost you almost nothing to hold. But this, we need scarcely say, is not the religion of the New Testament. If we have got the right thing — if Christ has His true place in the heart — we are possessors, not of a dead theology, but of a living, acting principle, that manifests itself in the life. If such be our condition, truth “for the pocket,” if we may so speak, effects its purpose. We thus attest our enjoyment of the truth by *doing* that which the truth requires. And we know that all such are “blessed in their deed.”

A SUBTLE TEMPTATION.

WHEN Satan fails to seduce us into open sin, he soon changes his tactics. He approaches us from another direction. It not unfrequently happens that when he fails to lead us into open departure, his aim is to get us taken up with *our own holiness*. If he succeeds in this, he may gain quite as great a victory as if he had led us into the path of open departure from God. Spiritual pride is one of the most subtle forms of spiritual declension. He who has overcome the lusts of the flesh and the love of the world, must not boast as if the conflict were over, and he were laying down his armour. He is delivered from certain forms of temptation, only to be exposed to another; and the new temptation, apart from special sustaining grace, may be more dangerous, because more difficult to perceive, than a temptation to fleshly indulgence.

Spiritual pride may be long unsuspected by him who is its victim. Yet it is not by any means invisible to others. Pride of our own spiritual attainments begets an *artificial* life—a putting on of an appearance of sanctity, and assuming to have attained a wonderfully high experience in the things of God. This assumed appearance may not be easily perceived by *ourselves*. Yet it may fail to deceive others; for assumed sanctity is like ill-fitting garments—more readily observed by others than by those who wear them.

Spiritual pride may exist in those who

make the loudest proclamation of their own nothingness. Indeed, such professions rouse the suspicion that the supposed humility is only pride in disguise. He who is truly humble has little to say either of good self or bad self. True humility may be said to be unconscious of its own existence. "Not I, but Christ," is the great antidote to spiritual pride of every kind.

COMFORTING THOUGHTS.

OUR loved ones now laid sleeping
 We'll see again ere long;
 Then, joy shall end our weeping—
 Sadness give place to song.
 By grace afresh united
 Redemption's song we'll sing,
 And death, which oft had blighted
 Our hopes, shall lose its sting.
 The faith which here we needed
 To please our God above,
 By sight is superseded
 In that blest home of Love.
 And joys which here were fleeting,
 Mingled no more shall be;
 For nought shall mar the meeting,
 When we those loved ones see.
 Raised to be like our Saviour,
 With Him to dwell for aye,
 No more our misbehaviour
 Shall bring a "cloudy day."
 No unkind thought shall sever
 Us from communion sweet;
 But perfect joy for ever,
 Is ours when Christ we meet.

MAY, 1891.

E. P.

NONE keep so far from temptation as those who are experimentally nearest to God.

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Vol. VI.

ACTIONS—HABIT—CHARACTER.

T has been well said that "*actions repeated, form habit; habit persisted in, forms character; and character is eternal.*" This is solemn and searching. Every child of God is engaged every day in *building up a character*. We do not say he is engaged in building up a *reputation*; for character and reputation are two different things. Character signifies what a man *really is*: reputation denotes what he is *reputed to be*. Reputation may declare a man to be a remarkable saint; while his character—the man himself, if we could only *see* him—might pronounce him a whited sepulchre. Some men are at great pains to build up a *reputation*. Sometimes they succeed: sometimes they fail. In either case, these are they who cleanse the outside of the cup and the platter. They seek to impress others with their devotedness, and to stand well with their fellows. Of all such it may be truly said, "Verily, they have their reward" (Matt. vi. 2). Others, again, seem careless as to building up a reputation. But, in the matter of *character*, EVERY child of God is a builder for eternity. You may not mean it—you may not think of it; yet

you are a builder. Every day has its "tale of work." Each day's work goes to the formation of your character; and, for better or for worse, is affecting the destinies of eternity!

Each day has been compared to a furrow, in which the day's thoughts, words, and actions, are the seed we cast in. We are thus *sowers* in spite of ourselves; and we need not doubt that we shall be *reapers*, too, in spite of ourselves. They utterly misunderstand the doctrines of grace who suppose that the Christian may live as he pleases—permitting an un-Christ-like temper to assert itself, and indulging in things that conscience protests against—and that *grace*, in some mysterious way, will make "everything all right at the end of the journey." We need not flatter ourselves that the law of cause and effect which operates in the spiritual world, will be suspended in order that we may with impunity do the things that God has forbidden. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Gal. vi. 7, 8).

There may not seem to be much in a single action. Yet it leaves a certain impress upon character. You may not

see it, or feel it ; but the impress is there, like the stroke of a sculptor's chisel upon a stone. The single stroke seems to make no difference ; yet it is by *repeated strokes* that the finished statue is produced. Thus it is in the building of character : each action is a stroke, and every stroke *tells*.

Then an action not only produces a certain effect, but it has the tendency to *repeat itself*—to bring forth fruit after its kind. He who yields to temptation to-day is simply making it easier for him to yield to-morrow. And he who resists to-day—strong in faith, giving glory to God—will find he is *storing energy* to resist a second attack.

The repetition of an action—be the action good or bad—forms *habit*. By continuing in a particular practice, habit becomes what is called “second nature.” If the practice be a bad one, bondage is the result. You may not admit this. You may deny that the habit in question has any permanent hold upon you. But that is simply because you are making no determined effort to throw it off. The power of an improper appetite can only be discovered by *stopping the supplies*. Give it nothing to feed upon—make no provision for the flesh ; and you will soon see how far *habit* has taken possession. The captive never knows the strength of the chain that binds him, until he seeks to snap it and be free. Habit once acquired, and allowed to take possession, goes directly to the formation of character. Even a single action is not without its effect. But, when

action has ripened into habit, that habit becomes *part of the man*—a part, alas, from which, in many cases, he would fain be free, but cannot !

It is truly solemn to live ! The responsibilities of life are vast. *What kind of character are we building for eternity ?* Is Christ upon the throne of the heart ? That is the supreme question which answers every other in its turn. If He is on the throne, it is well. Sin is being resisted—overcome ; self is being denied ; the deeds of the body are being mortified ; the house of the true David waxes stronger and stronger—the house of Saul (fleshly power) waxes weaker and weaker. Thus, with Christ upon the throne, a character is being formed that is fruitful for God upon earth, and which shall be found unto His eternal praise and glory at the appearing of the Coming One. If Christ be *not* reigning in the heart, the character we are building up *cannot* be well-pleasing unto Him. Secret corruptions will remain unjudged. Actions that should not be committed, will be repeated—either through blindness or lack of the will to resist. Yea, though the flesh in its grosser manifestations may seem to be overcome, there shall be the formation of habits as withering to the soul and as dishonouring to God as those sins of fleshly indulgence upon which universal condemnation has been pronounced.



HE is wealthy that is contented : he is poor that wanteth more.

PHARAOH'S DUNGEON.

THERE is a saying that "coming events cast their shadows before." Whether this be generally the case in the things of time, we do not stay to consider. This much, at least, is clear,—that the great tragedy of Calvary had its preludes in the Old-Testament history. We find that the Betrayal, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection, had begun to cast their shadows for many hundreds of years before "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa." Indeed, the Old Testament is filled with Christ. It was of Him that Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write" (Jno. i. 45). If we had only the spiritual perception to read the "shadows" aright, we should find the Beloved One in many places where now we see nothing but Old-Testament history. We do not pretend to any complete understanding of "Christ as revealed in the types." We know only in part; and that a very small part. Yet we may point out a few of those foreshadowings whose significance is seen almost at the first glance,—foreshadowings that startle us by the completeness with which they set forth some details of the great Sacrifice of Calvary.

Take Pharaoh's dungeon, for example. Three characters are seen there. Joseph stands before us as the innocent sufferer, in due time to be exalted to the place of power; while Pharaoh's butler and baker are receiving the due reward of their deeds. No one can fail to see in Joseph

a beautiful type of Christ, suffering, the Just for the unjust. In the butler and baker we see the two malefactors of Calvary. And as there was a vast difference between the two robbers who suffered death outside the Jerusalem gate, so there was a vast difference between the two men who were with Joseph in the prison. Each of them had his dream in one night; and, in accordance with the interpretation thereof, the butler was restored to his butlership, while the baker was hanged on a tree. How beautifully this fits in with the New-Testament narrative that tells how one of the malefactors on Calvary passed impenitent to his doom, while the other was with his Lord that day in Paradise! We know the last words of this dying robber—"Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom" (Luke xxiii. 42). Yet we find that prayer foreshadowed, almost by the same words, in Pharaoh's prison. When the chief butler had been told that within three days he should be restored unto his place, Joseph added the request: "*But think on me when it shall be well with thee*" (Gen. xl. 14). On reading these lines our mind at once reaches onward to the scene on Golgotha, where the "dying thief" is heard saying, "Remember me." We do not fail to note that it is *Joseph* who says, "Remember me." Why was it not the chief butler, who would have corresponded more exactly with him who used almost the same words in a later day? This, to some minds, may seem to mar the perfection of the

"shadow." But to us it simply enriches the picture. The Old-Testament types speak to us in their *contrasts* as well as in their *similarities*. Up to a certain point all is similarity in the scene in Pharaoh's dungeon. Joseph stands forth as an undoubted type of Christ, innocent, yet suffering. *Egypt's* dungeon shadows forth Christ in the hands of the *Gentile power*; for we must remember that it was only by the sanction of the Roman governor that the Jews could put Jesus to death. In the butler we see the penitent robber; and in the baker we see him who perished in his sins. All this is perfectly clear. *The likeness* is simply striking. But then comes *contrast*. Joseph's appeal to the chief butler—"Remember me"—cannot be referred to Christ; for *He* ever and only trusted in God. He leaned upon no arm of flesh. It seems clear to us that Joseph's faith in God failed him at this point. Certain it is that he trusted to a broken reed; for the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him (Gen. xl. 23).* Joseph seeking the butler's intercession stands out in contrast to that perfection of faith with which the Son of God ever trusted in the Father. If you *will* have Joseph's words, *Remember me*, to be typical of something, you have it in the last utterance of the penitent robber. But even in that case

* Certain old writers considered that Joseph was wrong in seeking help from Pharaoh's butler—thus appealing to man, as if God had failed; and they held that the two full years that followed in the prison were sent and needed to strengthen his faith in Jehovah.

another contrast comes out. Pharaoh's butler forgot Joseph; but the dying Son of God did *not* forget the one who cried, "Remember me." Man at his best is only vanity. There is One whose love never ceases to remember. In the butler's forgetfulness of Joseph we see the uncertainty of earthly succour, and the danger of trusting in any arm of flesh, however "influential" it may seem to be. And in our Lord's remembrance of the trusting malefactor we have the pledge that in His coming kingdom, *not one of His blood-bought ones shall be forgotten!*

RELUCTANT TO CONFESS.

RELUCTANCE to make confession is no characteristic of a great mind. It reveals a lurking pride, that says: "*I will not humble myself.*" It exposes a secret vanity, that says to itself: "What would others think of *me* if I made this confession?" In either case, *self* is put first, and the glory of God second. If the simple question were asked: "What will *the Lord* think of this confession?" the whole matter would be settled at once. It is this pride of the natural heart that is ever hindering godly confession. "If I were to make confession," says one to himself, "that would be admitting that I had been wrong; and that would never do"! Just so, dear brother. That is to say, it would "never do" to do the right thing—to bring down the exalted flesh, and go into the dust before God!

BALAAM, THE SOOTHSAYER.

Fourth Paper.

NOT content with the revelation that the Lord had already made, Balaam seeks another revelation—a new revelation; *and finds it!* The Lord speaks to the prophet a second time; and this time the message is entirely different from that which had gone before. The Lord had already said to Balaam, “Thou shalt not go” (Numb. xxii. 12). But now He says, “If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them” (ver. 20). To some this has seemed truly mysterious—that the Lord should forbid Balaam to go with the princes of Moab, and then give him permission to go. Why this seeming change of purpose on the part of Jehovah? If it were opposed to *His* mind that Balaam should go with those men, why did He yet say, “Rise up, and go”? The contradiction here is only a seeming contradiction—one of those paradoxes that are to be found more than once on the sacred page, and which clearly set forth a startling principle of Scripture. The principle is simply this, that when our God has already spoken and declared what is for our good, He may, and often does, in judgment, *permit* us to have what is *not* for our good. If we, His children, have made up our minds to have a particular thing—to tread a particular path,—if we are determined upon a certain course, it is quite possible that we may *seem to get* the Lord's approval of the thing we have

purposed to do. Balaam had his mind made up as to what he *would like* to do; and in going to the Lord he sought to *have his own plans approved*, rather than to hear what Jehovah might speak. The result was, that when the Lord *did* speak, the prophet was not satisfied with the message. He therefore goes again to the Lord, professedly seeking light, but really imploring permission to tread the self-chosen path of darkness. On this occasion the Lord answers not his words, but his *desires*. It is just as if Jehovah had answered: “I have already said you are not to go. But I see you are determined to go with these men. Be it so. Take your self-chosen path: I will not restrain you longer.” Terrible judgment upon the self-will of man! Yet we have no doubt that Balaam left the presence of the Lord rejoicing that he had *His* mind and *His* approval in going with the messengers of Balak.

Balaam has had his successors in every age; and their name is legion to-day. We see them in those who are *not pleased* with what God has already revealed in His word. They went for light to the sacred page; and they found it there; for wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way, if not “by taking heed thereto according to Thy Word”? (Ps. cxix. 9). But they were not satisfied with what God has declared in the Word. It did not agree with the thing they wished to do—it did not lend its approval to the course they desired to follow. Therefore, Balaam-like, they went to the Lord for a *new revelation*. But their

thus seeking a new revelation was virtually a calling in question of the revelation which God had already given. Terrible presumption! Yet it is perpetrated with the profession of the deepest reverence for the will of God — just as Balaam declared that for untold riches he could not go beyond the word which the Lord would speak! (Numb. xxii. 18).

Those who thus sit lightly by that revelation which God has already given in the Scriptures of truth, and seek for a new revelation, may seem to get the very thing they want. Sometimes it is found in a new and fanciful interpretation of certain Scriptures. Instead of seeking for God's thoughts in the Word, they have taken their own thoughts, or some other person's thoughts, to the Scriptures, and said, "Now, we want to find these thoughts in the Bible." They searched, prayed, waited on God; and then rose triumphantly from their knees, saying: "We have found it now." And the next thing we hear of them is, that they are away with Moab's princes, and claiming the word of the Lord for permission to go! All this is solemn and searching in the extreme. It tells us that we must beware of having a biassed mind in asking the Lord for light upon our path. It warns us against having our will fixed, while we professedly enquire of the Lord what is *His* will. It reveals the danger of seeking another revelation from God, after He has plainly declared what His will is. Israel were determined to have a king. They got what they wanted. Yet trouble and

sorrow followed the gift; for their asking was not of the Lord. He gave them a king in His anger, and took him away in His wrath (Hos. xiii. 11). In the wilderness their impatience brought judgment, although they might seem to be getting an answer to their prayers. He gave them their request; and sent leanness into their soul (Ps. cvi. 15).

OUT OF NAZARETH.

"CAN there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (Jno. i. 46). These words were used by Nathanael — one concerning whom the Master said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" (ver. 47). But amiable men are not necessarily free from prejudice. The uncharitable thought may find a lodgement even in the heart of one remarkable for guilelessness of character. Natural amiability of disposition is no guarantee that you are free from the blemishes of distrust and suspicion in things which God has wrought. It is dangerous to arrive at the conclusion that no good thing can come from a certain quarter. Guileless Nathanael made this mistake, and had afterwards to discover that the great Deliverer of Israel had been brought up in despised Nazareth. Our God giveth no account of His matters. He doeth according to His will, disregarding alike the pride and the prejudice of man. "Things which are despised, God hath chosen" (1 Cor. i. 28).

"HE SHALL BEAR THE GLORY."

(Zech. vi. 13).

SING to God, my spirit, sing!
 Joyful praise and worship bring!
 He whom sinners mocked as King—
 He shall bear the glory.

He in lowly guise who came,
 Bore the spitting and the shame;
 His the highest place and name—
 He shall bear the glory.

He who wept beside the grave—
 He who stilled the raging wave—
 Meek to succour, strong to save;
 He shall bear the glory.

He who Sorrow's pathway trod—
 He who every good bestow'd—
 Son of Man, and Son of God;
 He shall bear the glory.

He who bled with scourging sore—
 Thorns and scarlet meekly wore;
 He who every sorrow bore—
 He shall bear the glory.

Monarch of the smitten cheek—
 Scorn of both the Jew and Greek;
 Priest and King, divinely meek,
 He shall bear the glory.

Where the *thorn-wreath* pressed His brow
 Sits the priestly *mitre* now;
 With the *many crowns*—O how
 He shall bear the glory!

On the rainbow-circled throne—
 'Mid the myriads of His own—
 Nevermore to weep alone—
 He shall bear the glory.

MAN of slighted Nazareth—
KING who wore the thorny wreath—
SON obedient unto death—
 He shall bear the glory.

His the grand "eternal weight,"
 His the priestly regal state,
 Him the Father maketh great;
 He shall bear the glory.

He who died to set me free—
He who lives and loveth me—
He who comes—whom I shall see—
 Jesus only!—only **HE**—
HE shall bear the glory!

Gold Fields, South Africa,
 23rd May, 1891.

W. B.

SPIRITUALISERS AT WORK.

A WORD of warning may not be out of place concerning the "Spiritualisers." But who are the Spiritualisers? you may be asking. Well, they are those who *spiritualise* the plainest statements of Scripture. They have built up a system, the foundation principles of which deny the *literal* sense of Scripture passages which are so clearly laid down that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.


The Spiritualisers hold that there is no such thing as *water* baptism. They contend that the baptism of the Spirit is everything. But, when we turn to the Scripture, we find no such theory. We find the baptism of the Spirit there, certainly; but we *also* find the baptism of water there. This water-baptism the Spiritualisers deny absolutely. What saith the Scripture? In our Lord's "commission" He says: "Teach (make disciples of) all nations, *baptising them,*" &c. (Matt. xxviii. 19). It cannot be denied that this refers to water baptism. Our Lord never commissioned any one to baptise in the Holy Spirit. "Ah! but," say the Spiritualisers, "the baptism of the Spirit had not come." Very well,

we reply ; we will pass on to the time when it had come. We will go on to Pentecost. Let us step into the house of Cornelius, some time after Pentecost ; and what do we find ? We find Peter saying, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we ?" (Acts x. 47). Here then we have persons baptised in the Spirit, and yet Peter commands them to be baptised in water. You thus see that baptism in the Spirit does *not* set aside baptism in water. The fact that they had received the Spirit was the very reason Peter gave for their being baptised in water. "O then," you say, "the Spiritualisers are clearly wrong in spiritualising the water of baptism. That is perfectly plain from what took place with the household of Cornelius. Do the Spiritualisers not admit that ?" No. They admit nothing that goes against their theories. They find the household of Cornelius a hard case. But then they take a very convenient way of getting over the difficulty : they tell us that Peter was altogether *mistaken* in commanding the household of Cornelius to be baptised with water ! That is to say, the Spiritualisers hold they are right, and contend that Peter was wrong. Yet Scripture devotes a considerable portion of its precious space to narrating the revival at Cæsarea ; and not the slightest hint is dropped that Peter made any mistake in that matter. We know that he was not infallible. On one occasion we find Paul withstanding him to the

face because he was to be blamed. But that is all made perfectly clear to us from the inspired record. In the case of Cornelius and his house, however, Peter was simply carrying out the Master's instructions. He obeyed the thing which the Lord had commanded. He acted in obedience to the revealed will of God. And to say that he made a mistake in baptising the household of Cornelius, only shows to what terrible straits the Spiritualisers are driven in order to support their theories. If they hold that Peter was mistaken in baptising those believers at Cæsarea, then they must hold that Paul was mistaken in baptising Crispus, and Gaius, &c. (1 Cor. i. 14, 16) ; and that Philip was mistaken in baptising the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts viii. 38). Indeed, they are driven to the conclusion that our Lord's command to baptise was wrong ; for Peter, Paul, and the others, were only carrying out what He had commanded. The Spiritualisers thus find themselves in no end of difficulties, in order to prop up their system. Inspired apostles, one after another, have to stand aside as false witnesses, in order that the Spiritualisers of the present day may maintain their theories. We must say we are quite at a loss to understand how any one who trembles at the word of the Lord can be influenced for a moment by the spiritualising theology—a theology that depends for its very existence upon *denying* the plainest statements of New-Testament revelation. But we are already in the last time ; and error is stalking abroad,

as if it had a licence to set forth its claims. If there ever was a day in which we required to take heed to our way according to the Word, that day is now. But we have simply to prove all things by the Word; and we may be assured that the theology that comes from God will attest its divine origin by being in agreement with the revelation He has already given in the Scriptures.

COULD NOT STAND TO MINISTER.

OMETIMES the heart is too full to find its utterance in words. Language fails. It is felt that the Lord is in the meeting in power. Every head is bowed. There is silence; but it is not the silence of barrenness: it is the silence of *adoration*. In 2 Chron. v. 13, 14, we find a beautiful illustration of this silence. We read there that "it came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord. . . that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." The overwhelming sense of the presence of Jehovah hushed every sound into silence. The priests paused—stood still: they could not minister. Precious silence! The glory of the Lord had filled the house of God: What a sacrifice of praise was there! Happy is that church which so enjoys the presence of the Lord

that there are precious seasons in which the priests cannot stand to minister. The world cannot understand these "silent times." The world says: "Why this period of doing nothing?—fill up these gaps—keep the machinery moving." Yea, even to the child of God out of communion, silent adoration is a trying ordeal. The Master's voice is being heard, though no sound breaks the stillness; consciences are being reached; the thoughts of many hearts are being revealed. To those that are truly longing for the courts of the Lord's presence the seeming silence is laden with the sweetest harmonies of Heaven.

But how came things to such a blessed pass that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the glory that filled the house of the Lord? Was there anything that *led up* to this happy condition of things?—for we must remember that as "the curse causeless shall not come" (Prov. xxvi. 2), so the blessing causeless shall not come. The same verse that tells us of the glory filling the house, tells us that the manifested glory shone forth exactly at the time when "the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make *one sound* to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord." Go, mark it well: when the trumpeters and singers were as one, the glory came down! Would we have the Lord's manifested presence in our coming together to wait on Him? Then let us see that the trumpeters and singers are making *one sound*. Let those that lead out in the voice of praise—let those who

stand forth with the trumpet of testimony—be as one man; and then shall these words be fulfilled again and again: "The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them." Whenever there are the discordant elements of envy and strife, you need not expect the glory of God to fill the house. Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with Thee? (Ps. xciv. 20). Our God will not associate His glory with the workings of the flesh. Church policy, and carnal scheming, and all of that kindred, shall utterly fail to work the purposes of His eternal glory. They may gain *their* end; but they will never bring down the glory of God, or lead to that happy consummation witnessed in the temple of old, when every one was made to feel that the Lord was there in the fulness of blessing. "Quite true," some will tell us at this point,—“all quite true; but how are we to attain to that unity in which only one sound shall be heard?” To this we reply, “By each trumpeter and singer being attuned to the heavenly standard.” Oneness of mind can do no good except it be oneness of mind *in the Lord*. You may get a number of believers—trumpeters and singers—serving ones it may be—who are of one mind. They make one sound. Yet there are no signs following—no descending glory—no manifestation that the Lord is there in power. It is because they are not of one mind *in the Lord*. Kindred spirits they may be; but they are not attuned to the standard tone of heavenly communion. This is what we

want—a ceasing from man—a ceasing from ourselves, and a getting down as individuals in the very presence of God to ask the question: “O Lord, am I in living communion with Thee?” Nothing short of this will do. You may arrange to settle your differences; you may yield a point, and brother So-and-so may yield a point; and you may say, “Surely the glory will come down now.” But it does not come. What is wrong? This is wrong, that *points* have been set right while *hearts* have not been set right. It is only hearts under the melting power of heavenly fire that shall truly weld together into one. Each trumpeter, each singer—every serving one—must have to do with God in secret, that every idol may be broken down, that every accursed thing may be cast out, and that the heart may be brought into unison with Him who forgot His thirst while winning the sinner of Sychar—who wept over a desolate Jerusalem—and who rose above the anguish of Calvary to assure a dying robber of being that day with his Lord in Paradise! Let hearts be thus attuned into unison with Christ; and they shall be in unison with each other. It cannot be otherwise.

—♦—

“IT does not excuse inconsistencies, because the inconsistent brother has a high name and a fervent spirit. Crookedness and worldliness are still crookedness and worldliness, though exhibited in one who seems to have reached no common height of attainment.”

BACKSLIDERS—WHO COME OUT TO THE MEETINGS.

DOUBTLESS you will have heard prayer going up for the restoration of backsliders — especially backsliders who do not come out to the meetings. But how rare it is for prayer to go up for backsliders who are *regular attenders at meetings!* Seldom indeed do you hear a brother stand up and say: "O Lord, we pray not only for backsliders who absent themselves from meetings, but for backsliders who are scarcely ever absent — who keep up the form of godliness, and yet in heart are away from Thee"! Petitions of this kind are rare. But why they should be rare we cannot tell. An opinion seems to prevail that if you come regularly to the meetings you are a saint of no mean standing. Attendance upon the means of grace is thus looked upon by many as an "infallible proof" of spirituality of mind and devotion of character. The brother or sister who is rarely seen at a meeting is suspected of being in a poor condition of soul; while one who comes out well to the meetings is recognised as "going on steadily for God." Now, we do not wish to be misunderstood here. We have no sympathy whatever with those who forsake the assembling of themselves together (Heb. x. 25). As it was in a bygone day, so is it now — "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another" (Mal. iii. 16). If a brother is in living fellowship with the Father, he will

not be able to restrain the desire for fellowship with his brethren. If we are enjoying secret prayer, there will be the longing to bend the knee "where kindred spirits meet." Therefore, let no backslider try to comfort himself by saying, "I can be a good enough Christian, and not attend any meetings." One of the first instincts of the new life is to seek to share its joys with our brethren, and to blend our voice with theirs in the united cry to our Father, God. The company in Heaven is not made up of isolated units—each one sitting apart by himself, on the principle that you can enjoy the bliss of the redeemed, perfectly well, without coming together to praise the name of the Lord. No. Fellowship unbroken reigns above; and the more we have of "Heaven upon earth" the more we will see the need, as well as the beauty, of coming together to wait as a united people upon God. But, all this being granted, we must beware of rushing to the conclusion that attendance upon meetings is an unfailing test of spiritual prosperity. A person may attend meetings with unvarying punctuality, and yet be afflicted with great leanness of soul. You cannot make outward observances the test of inward purity; and it is the attempt to do this that has increased the number of backsliders who come well out to the meetings. With many it is an understood thing that there is a sort of *merit* in attending meetings. The man who is habitually absent runs the chance of being visited and addressed plainly as follows: "How is your soul prospering?"

—We are fearing that something serious is wrong." But, by going out well to the meetings, all such awkward questions can be avoided; for who would suspect you of being a backslider if you are a regular attender on "the means of grace"? Nevertheless, regular attender though you be, there may be abominations unjudged—sufficient to stamp you in God's sight as a backslider as far away from the Lord as those who are seldom seen within the doors of a meeting-house. Circumcision availeth nothing, and uncircumcision availeth nothing; and attendance upon meetings, of itself, availeth nothing. Are we feeding upon the hidden manna? Are we cleansed from secret corruptions? Are we growing in likeness to the altogether-lovely One? These are the questions that have weight with God, although with *man* the great question is often this: "Are you coming out to the meetings?" We must get away from this. We may cry, "The Ark of God! The Ark of God!" (1 Sam. iv. 5). But the Ark of God—the form of godliness—will not deliver us. We must have *the Lord Himself* reigning in the midst. Then—with Christ reigning as Lord in hearts—backsliders of every kind shall be reached. Backsliders who have been coming out regularly to the meetings shall discover that they have been keeping up the form, while strangers to the power; and backsliders who have almost deserted the meetings will hear that "good report" which shall make fat their bones.

TAMPERING WITH FALSE DOCTRINE.

WHENEVER a man begins to tamper with some false doctrine, he rapidly goes from bad to worse. *One* false doctrine does not satisfy him. He must have others. He generally commences with one; but no sooner has he proved (to his own satisfaction at least) that the false doctrine is "good for food," and "a tree to be desired to make one wise," than he goes steadily forward in his downward course. We question if you will ever find a case in which a professed child of God stops short after embracing *one* heresy.

When one departs from the Faith, and goes over to some "body" not builded together upon the principles of Scripture, he is almost invariably found embracing the doctrines of the new body wholesale.

Yonder, for example, is a brother who has gone over to "Exclusivism." He professes now to be firmly persuaded that he should gather "on the ground of The One Body"—although there is no such *ground of gathering* revealed in the Scriptures. It is evident that he has left the simplicity which is in Christ, in order to embrace the unscriptural dogmas of the Exclusive system. But let us follow his movements for a little. What do we find? We find that he does not stop short with the error into which he has fallen. He has entered upon a downward course; and we are therefore not surprised to see him embracing errors which not long ago he resisted with all his might. Once upon a time he was

delivered from the world's heresy of infant baptism. He saw that it was utterly out of keeping with Scripture to baptise an infant. He was accordingly baptised as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and was a witness for *the Faith*, so far as Believers' Baptism is concerned. But no sooner did he embrace the error known as "The ground of the One Body" than we find him going right back again to the baptising of infants! Is there such a thing in Scripture? No. Yet our brother is now contending as strongly for the baptism of infants as in bygone days he resisted that popular heresy.

But, it may be asked, where does our brother get his authority for baptising infants, seeing there is no vestige of such a thing in the Scriptures? He professes to get his authority by reasoning, and inferring, and concluding that "no doubt infants were baptised in New-Testament times." If you demand chapter-and-verse with a divine command that infants are to be baptised, you wait in vain for an answer. If you ask for an *example* from Scripture, of any infant having been baptised, you wait in vain for the example; for there is none. Instead of "Thus saith the Lord," you are presented with a far-fetched and bewildering chain of reasoning, which of itself affords the strongest proof that the Exclusive case for baptising infants is weak in the extreme. If Scripture reveals infant baptism, then we have no need for human reasoning to establish it. If it is in the Word, let it be pointed out. If it is not in the Word, let this be candidly

admitted. Exclusivism cannot point you to the Word for the baptism of infants. It may point, as it has pointed, to some brother, once great in the Church, who wrote a pamphlet telling the saints how he had discovered that infants were to be baptised. And at once hundreds in the Exclusive fellowship believed it—evidently because a great man said it! But where did he discover it? Not in the Scriptures; else we would have had chapter-and-verse for it long ago. Therefore *discover* is a wrong word. Infant baptism was *not* discovered: it was *invented*. And the strange thing to us is, that brethren who once produced "Thus-saith-the-Lord" to prove that infant baptism was not of God, are now found producing a carefully-arranged chain of human reasoning to prove that infant baptism *is* of God! But they never reached this point until they had embraced the error of gathering "on the ground of the One Body." The one error, you see, simply paved the way for the other. Whenever a brother sets aside the example of the Bereans (see Acts xvii. 11), and seeks to found eternal principles upon the reasonings of men, you cannot tell where he will stop. Yesterday he embraced the theory of "The One Body, the only ground of gathering;" to-day he accepts infant baptism; and to-morrow—what will it be? He cannot tell just yet. But we need not doubt that the *leaven* of error will go on working. The warning in all this is plain. Prove all things by the Word. "Take heed what ye hear."

“FOLLOW THAT MAN.”



HERE has been a great deal of preaching on the subject of *humility*. It has long been a favourite theme with ministering brethren. But it is to be feared that the *practice* of humility has not received the same attention. It is a very easy thing to theorise about pride, and testify against it. It is easy to commend humility—to point out its peculiar marks—to dwell upon its beauties, and show where it occurs on the sacred page. But it is quite a different thing to *manifest* it in our every-day life. We may tell others what humility is. But what is far more needed is to let others *see* what it is. We all know that practical illustration is the most powerful preaching. In nothing does this apply with greater force than in the matter of humility. He who manifestly possesses a fair share of self-conceit may vehemently exhort his brethren to the grace of humility. But his exhortations fall flat and powerless. Testimony is vain, the moment you are found urging others to walk in a path you are not treading yourself. A true minister of the Word will *lead* as well as guide. If he fails to *lead* the way, it is utterly vain for him to stand afar off and point out the way.

So far as we can see, humility does *not* consist in *trying* to be humble. It is not attained through our attempting to “come down” a certain distance, nor in making ourselves “smaller” than any of our brethren. All such *attempts* at

producing the humble mind can only result in making us “proud of our own humility.” We believe that true humility is only to be found in sitting at the Master’s feet, and learning of Him who was meek and lowly in heart. In exact measure as we drink of His spirit shall we manifest His meekness. Humility is not acquired through studying humility, but through studying *Christ*. One night we were seeking our way to a country railway-station. A bystander pointed us to a traveller who was passing, and said: “Do you see that man?—follow that man, and you will get to the station without any trouble.” We followed “that man,” and we did not need to care whether we were going up-hill or down-hill. We reached our destination—by the shortest way, and with no anxiety. Thus it is in regard to humility. Do we see the Man of Nazareth—the Man of Sychar—the Man of Calvary? Let us follow “that Man,” and we shall assuredly reach our desired haven. If we are following Him—tracing His footsteps—walking in His counsel—we do not need to care whether the path leads up or down. We do not need to concern ourselves about *self* at all. In the eyes of some we may be too obscure; in the eyes of others we may seem to be taking “too much upon us.” But, if we are following *the Man* Christ Jesus—if we are letting that mind which was in Him be found in us—we shall be well-pleasing to the Lord, we shall do the work to which He has called us, and serve our generation by the will of God.

POSITION AND CONDITION.

TWO things claim the attention of every child of God—(1) to be in a *right church position*; and (2) to be in a *right condition of soul*. Let nothing move us from these two things. There may be great din and bustle going on around us in the things of God. But we do not need to be moved. The Lord was not in the earthquake, but in the still small voice, in Elijah's day; and we need to bear this in mind in these days. Some are apt to be stumbled by reports that "such-and-such believers are blessed in conversions: *therefore* they are in the right position." But this reasoning is entirely misleading. Their prosperity may prove that these believers are in a good *condition*, or that God is doing as He pleases; but it cannot alter His word concerning the gathering together of His people into the one great Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, such reasoning is in itself unreasonable; for, if guided by it, you would be kept running hither and thither, according to the appearance of outward prosperity. If you walk by such a rule you would find that what was the right position yesterday would be the wrong position to-day. But, beloved, the Word of the Lord is like Himself: it is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever—it never changes. Standing on the rock of His truth, we are not called to *step off the rock* even although God may be pleased to "use" those who are not gathered together in accordance with

His word. In the exercise of His sovereign will He may do things which we cannot understand. But His *sovereign will* is not our rule. It is His *revealed will* that is to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Giving heed thereto, we shall be steadfast, unmovable, while always abounding in the work of the Lord. And while rejoicing if souls are saved, through whomsoever the Lord may please, let us bear in mind that the Day shall declare every man's work of what sort it is. The judgment-seat shall tell what conversions were conversions *unto God*, and make manifest what service had His approval. Meanwhile—"in the little while between"—let us take heed to our way *according to His Word*. Let us see that we abide in Him, and so bring forth fruit to His praise. We must be delivered from being content merely with a correct church position. We must not act as if that were everything. To be in the right place is good—yea, blessed. Let us be thankful if we are found builded together according to the Word. But a right position will of itself confer no power to resist temptation and walk with undefiled feet. What about our condition of soul in the sight of God? Do we contend as earnestly for personal holiness as for being in a scriptural church position? If so, it is well. If not, then our testimony, like the legs of the lame, will be unequal. If we profess to walk in the path of truth and do not tread the path of holiness, *judgment* shall assuredly intervene.

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Vol. VI.

A WORD AS TO RESCUE-WORK AMONG THE YOUNG.

 SHORT time ago we were dealing with Gospel work among the young, with special reference to Sunday-School work. We now follow up that subject by calling attention to the vast importance of rescuing the young "waifs and strays" of our great cities from a life of sin. No doubt "waifs and strays" are to be found everywhere—in country towns and even in rural hamlets. But it is in the great cities where the stream is at its deepest and its foulest; and it is there, therefore, that the most determined struggle must be made to rescue the "innocents" before they are borne on the tide of vice and impurity to a life of shame and infamy. In the great centres of population children are to be found whose name is legion—nurtured in the haunts of vice—brought up in association with every form of wickedness—taught from their earliest years to earn the wages of iniquity. At a tender age they are thrust forth to earn a precarious living on the streets—which means to become hardened in sin and dead to every finer feeling of humanity. Now,

it is perfectly clear that it is a most important work, to get these boys and girls in life's early day, before they have rolled down the great precipice of moral evil that yawns before them; to rescue them from that abyss; to lead them to the Saviour's feet; to guide them in His ways, and watch over them during their years of greatest peril. We say that such a work is a great and a blessed work. We question if we are entitled to rank it second to any other work in which one could be engaged. We do not of course refer to mere outward reformation; although this is included, on the principle that the greater includes the less. We refer to the great work of bringing these outcast children to the Saviour, Jesus, and gathering them in, with this one great purpose, that they may be converted unto God in the morning of life, and thus have *life's day*, instead of *life's dregs*, to give to Him who gave Himself for them. We think every one must be agreed that all such rescue-work is a very great work. It is admitted on all hands that you are engaged in a great work if you are preaching Christ to hardened sinners—wrecks of humanity—victims of drink—slaves of sin. It is surely, then, as

important a work—in one sense perhaps more so—to carry the message of salvation to those perishing ones *before* they have become victims—slaves—wrecks.

Rescue-work among the world's outcast and abandoned youth proceeds upon the great principle that prevention is better than cure, and that if certain forms of wickedness are never learned they will never need to be unlearned. This rescue-work proceeds upon the safe assumption that the tree is easier bent at ten or fifteen than at fifty, and that if a lad entering upon the path of vice can be arrested at that point and won for Christ, a life will be saved as well as a soul. The rescue-workers among the street arabs of our great towns have thus every argument in favour of their work. They truly carry the Gospel to the poor. They make great personal sacrifices. They deliberately choose a work which has in it nothing to draw the carnal eye. They make it their *life-work*, though well they know its sorrows, its vicissitudes, its difficulties, its discouragements. Yet they know its joys, too; for it has its joys—the joy of seeing many a lack-lustre eye beam into sudden life on beholding the beauty of Christ—the joy of leading wanderers to the feet of Jesus—the joy of causing many a desolate young heart to sing, and making the friendless and forlorn to feel that “there is One that sticketh closer than a brother.” Thus many a young life has been saved for God, and made a blessing to the world. We do not hesitate to say that there are thousands to be found

to-day leading honest and useful lives, serving God and their generation, who but for rescue-workers among the young would, humanly speaking, have become masters in iniquity.

Surely this great work demands our attention. It may not be in our power to do much actual rescue-work ourselves. The need may not be great where our lot is cast. But there can be no doubt that the need is truly great in centres of congested population. In these centres there are workers who have laid their life on the altar for the great work of *rescuing outcast children for God*. We know at least some of these workers—their names are household words. Doubtless you know or have heard of some of them, too. Now, the question that arises is this: Are we holding up their hands? Are we succouring those whom we believe the Lord has sent? We have no wish to dictate to any one in this matter. We simply seek to arouse consciences, and awaken interest in a great work. Perhaps you are already taking a deep interest in such work—dipping your hand into your pocket, and sending brother So-and-so a shilling, a half-sovereign, or a five-pound-note, *according to your ability*. If this be the case, you will be delighted to see us seeking to stir up interest in this matter. If, however, you have rather *overlooked* this great department of Christian work, you will kindly bear with us in bringing it before you. You must admit that it is truly a great work. What, then, are we spending upon rescue-work among the young? If nothing at

all, and if we are able to give *something*, that would mean that there is no work of this kind going on with which we are in sympathy! This would surely be lamentable—yea, almost inconceivable. Perhaps we have to extend our range of vision, and *seek* for opportunities to succour those who, in the world's wildernesses of sin and wickedness, are seeking to save helpless little ones from a life of sin and an eternity of woe. We do not wish to deal with the question: "How much shall I give?" We wish, first of all, the question to be answered: "*Will I give at all?*"—Is this a work which the Lord would have me to support?—if I have anything to give." That is the simple question. If you find the answer to be "Yes," then, as saith the Scripture, "To do good, and to communicate, *forget not*: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. xiii. 16). Therefore, having come to the above conclusion, *do not forget to give*. If it is only a sixpence, *give it!* The Lord may make that sixpence a wonderful blessing to your soul! We sometimes hear of blessing received at great meetings, and a great deal said about how to get "the blessing." But many forget that wonderful blessing is to be had through *giving*; for "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 35). Therefore, do not withhold the sixpence, brother; do not forget the sixpence, sister. You say it is really all you can spare. Just so; and no doubt it is. Nevertheless, *send it on*; and we are greatly mistaken if your next offering does not turn out to be *a shilling!*

SUDDEN AND IMPULSIVE.

BEWARE of sudden and impulsive giving for the Lord's work. We do not say this because there is a danger of your giving too much on the "sudden and impulsive" principle. We simply warn against that principle, because it is not the fruit of waiting on God and calmly considering the matter in His presence. Too often it is to be feared that the sudden and impulsive gift is merely the salve for an uneasy conscience. A servant of Christ engaged in aggressive work among the masses of a great city, was one day visited by a brother seeking to know something of the work that was being carried on. At the close of the interview his visitor—greatly impressed with what he had witnessed—held out a sum of money as a donation to the funds. "Never mind that just now," said the servant of Christ; "lay the matter before the Lord; take due time to consider if you ought to give, and what you ought to give." His visitor did so; and the result was, that he soon sent an offering many times larger in amount than the sum he had held out on the sudden and impulsive principle. In that case the offering was *increased* on taking the matter to the Lord in prayer. Of course it might have been otherwise. There might have been a *decrease*, caused by the heart being larger than the purse. We simply point out the principle that should guide us in honouring the Lord with our substance (Prov. iii. 9).

“ALL SHALL BE THINE.”

IN the Temptation in the wilderness the Devil claimed all the kingdoms of this world; and our Lord did not dispute the claim. This is both instructive and significant. In Luke iv. 6, 7, we hear the Tempter saying: “All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If Thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be Thine.” Satan distinctly asserts his right to the world's kingdoms. “This power” had been delivered unto him. It was now in his “gift,” and the Tempter disposed of it to whomsoever he chose. Our Lord does not deny this. In point of fact the Devil—liar though he was—spoke the truth concerning his right in the world's kingdoms. Scripture plainly sets him forth as “the god of this world” (2 Cor. iv. 4), “the prince of this world” (Jno. xii. 31), “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph. ii. 2). But when and how did he come into possession of those kingdoms? He came into possession of them by *conquest*. Satan's power in the world was the result of the conflict in Eden. He was victorious there, as we know. Our Lord renewed the conflict—or, rather, met the renewed attack of the great Enemy—in the wilderness. We there behold the second Adam, and a second Eden—although it is no longer a *garden*. The first Adam received it as a garden, but left it a wilderness. In the wilderness, therefore, the conflict is renewed.

The Tempter has already made two assaults (Matt. iv. 3–8) and been repulsed. He now prepares for his final attack. The prize he holds out is nothing less than *a world* and its glories—a prize which he would not have dared to hold out if it had not been his to offer.

We thus see the world identified with Satan. He is its god. You may say that it is by *usurpation* on his part, and *permission* on God's part, that he has taken possession of the world's kingdoms. Be it so. They are none the less his in the meantime. Scripture gives him his title as “the prince of this world”; and John, recognising the broad line that divides the kingdom of darkness from the kingdom of light, says to his “little children”—“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the Evil One” (1 Jno. v. 19, R.V.). This, then, is sufficient to settle the whole question as to whether a Christian should seek the friendship of the unconverted, and strive to gain political power in the world. If I am “of God,” how can I seek to reign in a world that lieth in the Evil One? How can I aim at political power in a world that has Satan for its god and its prince? You may say, “But is it not a right thing that God's people should reign over the world?” Yes, we reply, it is quite a right thing. But they cannot reign *until Christ reigns*. The time has not even come to restore the kingdom to Israel (Acts i. 6); and we know that *that* must take place before Israel's Lord shall have dominion from sea to sea.

It was quite a righteous and proper thing that our Lord should possess all the kingdoms of this world. He knew the day was coming when He should possess them. But that day might be in the far future. "Why should there be any such delay?" the Tempter seemed to insinuate. Why postpone the reigning time to such a far-off day? Why not enter *at once* upon the possession of those kingdoms? Why go away round by Gethsemane and Calvary, and be the Despised and Rejected of men through centuries of the world's history, when by a single bend of the knee all those kingdoms could now be His? Then what a binding up of broken hearts there should be!—what a setting right of all that had been wrong!—what a deliverance of the captives!—what a reign of righteousness!—what a manifestation of the Father's glory! The picture was beautiful in the extreme; and it seemed so easy to pass from the prospect to the reality! But before the Tempter would part with those kingdoms and that power, he must have a *price* paid down; for he never willingly parts with his authority except for "value received" in some shape or other. In the wilderness temptation he weighs a world in the balances and declares the price—"If Thou, therefore, shalt *worship me*, all shall be Thine." A single bend of the knee, and all those kingdoms would have at once reverted to their rightful Lord. But ah! what was involved in that bend of the knee? Make obeisance to the great enemy of God! Never!

No such price would ever be paid by the Holy One. He would yet dispossess Satan of those kingdoms; but He would do it in a *righteous way*. It might take a considerable time. It might involve suffering—rejection—the Cross of shame. It mattered not. By the God-appointed way, and *by no other*, He would reach the throne of His glory.

What do we learn from all this? We learn that in seeking to dispossess Satan of his power—in striving to promote the reign of Christ, be it in the world or in the church—we must act *in a righteous way*. Our God will not have the help of carnal weapons in the things of His kingdom. We may not do a wrong thing in order to reach a good end. We have no warrant whatever to "do evil that good may come" (Rom. iii. 8). A "praiseworthy object" will never justify the unrighteous means taken to reach it. The Tempter may show us a very easy road to a position of influence; he may suggest a very short way out of our difficulties. But we may be sure that the price to be paid must be a bowing down, or a having recourse, to that which is *not of God*. Is evil believed to be in the Assembly? Then let it be dealt with in a righteous way; that is in a *Scriptural* way. The right way—God's way—may lead us through a furnace of trial and put our patience to the proof. But the end thereof shall be peace—God-wrought peace. On the other hand, man's way of escape may offer many advantages. It may undertake to do the whole work at a single blow, and promise

a millennium of peace and contentment by some bold stroke of carnal policy. But the fruit thereof shall not be holiness; and the "short-cut" that promised so much, shall turn out in the end to be a dreary waste; for the Lord had not been leading there!

"I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE."

THOUGH I know not what awaits me—

What the future has in store,
Yet I know that He is faithful
Whom I've often proved before.

He has said He will not leave me,
That He never will forsake;
I will trust His word unchanging,
And new hope and courage take.

He'll be with me in the sunshine;
I will need His keeping power;
In the calm I might forget Him;
Yes, I need Him every hour.

He'll be with me in the twilight,
When the lights of earth grow dim;
And when its scenes are fading
Let me calmly rest in Him.

He will take me to be with Him
In His happy home above,
Where no sin or pain can enter,
And all is joy and love.

There for ever safely resting,
All my earthly journey past,
I shall gaze on Him who loves me—
Fully satisfied at last.

June 29, 1891.

E. J. I.

"I AM large about redeeming time," said Baxter, "because therein the sum of a holy life is included." A wasted life is the result of unredeemed time.

FULLY PERSUADED.

WHEN you find yourself purposing to do a certain thing, and yet not clear as to whether it is a right thing, you must wait for further light. What you want is, to be fully persuaded that it is right or that it is wrong. You want either to have the assured confidence that God is with you in the matter (in which case you do the thing boldly, and with a good conscience); or you want to discover that the thing is not according to God. In that case, you act decisively in having nothing to do with it. We thus see the advantage of waiting on God until you have His mind as to the course you should take. When you enter upon a particular path while you are not clear as to whether you should tread it or not, conscience makes its protest. This genders to bondage. You act tremblingly. You tread your path with the hesitating step of one who is not sure of his way. You question if you have the Lord's approval. This causes the knees to wax feeble. In such circumstances you may bid farewell to hearty and vigorous service for God. Service, to be acceptable and effective, must be associated with "a good conscience," and have no affinity whatever with the son of the bondwoman (Gal. iv. 30). One of the most powerful incentives to joyful service is the settled conviction, born of patient waiting on God, that "*this* is the path the Lord would have *me* to tread, and the work He has allotted to *me* to do."

TO WALK WITH GOD.

IT is not absolutely necessary that we should do mighty works, causing the church to admire and the world to wonder. It is only necessary to *walk with God*. This great fundamental truth is in danger of being forgotten in a day in which dazzling service is so often made the test of a man's spiritual condition. We know that Enoch was a witness, and bore testimony (Jude 14, 15). But it is not as Enoch the witness that he is best known. His name has come down through the ages as one who *walked with God* (Gen. v. 24); and with that walk he shall be associated to the end of time.

A brother who had passed through a long experience as a Christian, and had seen much service, remarked at the end of years: "Ah! it is the walk with God I want now." He had discovered that there was something higher than service—something apart from which the most brilliant service was only a beating of the air. And that something was the *walk with God*.

But do we cease to *serve* after we enter into the experience of a walk with God? No. It is only then that we begin to serve. There can be no true service apart from walking with God; and wherever there is the walk with God, we may rest assured that there shall be service of some kind. He who walks with God will be no idler—no sentimental dreamer. The walk with God

begets the desire to serve. Yea, such a walk is in itself service; for who is such a witness to the truth as he who walks with God? The preacher who merely *tells you how to walk* may pass current for one who is great in service; but a far greater preacher is he who *shows* you how to walk—whose manner of life is a manifestation of the truth, however few his words of testimony may be.

To walk with God implies agreement with God; for two cannot walk together except they be agreed (Amos iii. 3). This cuts at the root of self-will and self-pleasing. To walk with God is a practical thing. It is not to be reached by theorising about it. You may talk about it, and view it on every side, and admire it, and yet be an utter stranger to the walk with God. It is not enough to examine the path, to extol its beauty, and be persuaded of its blessedness,—the path *must be trod*. It is just here that the testing-point is reached. To walk with God means death to the flesh—death to all that is not of Him. You instinctively feel that there are many things which shall find no place in the holy calm of a walk with God. The gossiping, and the evil-speaking, and the backbiting, and the foolish talking, must wither and shrivel up, if there is to be a walk with God. Carnal weapons and unholy strife must then be no more. Things like these would come in as a harsh discord upon the sweet harmony of a walk with God. You feel that there could be no room for these. The unseemly things, and the things that are

not convenient, are all shut out from the walk with God. Truly this walk is a most separating truth—or, rather, a most *separating experience*; for we must know the truth in our experience before it can be manifested in our ways.

Our God has not promised to walk *with us*. He will not come down to our level. We must walk *with Him*. This involves the forsaking and laying aside of that which He has forbidden; for the throne of iniquity cannot have fellowship *with Him*.

In walking with God we find ourselves in an atmosphere that makes manifest the hidden things of dishonesty—an atmosphere in which we quickly perceive that which is not of Him. Things which were “allowed to pass” before, are now judged and forsaken. What we formerly called “righteous indignation,” is now discovered to be the wrath of man; while much that passed current as “zeal for God,” is now seen to be the energy of fleshly power. Walking in the light makes manifest many a spot and stain unsuspected while we were “at ease in Zion.”

The walk with God implies power for service. We do not say it implies power for *any* service. But it implies power to do our *God-appointed work*, whatever that work may be. In walking with God we have *His* mind about things. We discover our true place in the body. We find out the particular corner which the Lord has fitted us to fill; and we fill it. Thus we fulfil our ministry, and serve our generation, and do the will of

God. The walk with God makes service easy and pleasant. If the iron be sharp, very little effort suffices to do the work; but if the iron be blunt (Ecc. x. 10)—if we are not abiding in the secret place with God—fleshly energy must be put forth; the result being, that the work is not done in a manner “worthy of God.”

The walk with God settles not a few doubtful things which many believers are not sure whether to do or to let alone. While these are considering how much of the world they may have, and yet keep up a profession, the man who walks with God is not troubled with “fine points,” so-called. He is so well satisfied with God in the wilderness that he does not sit down to consider how near he may pitch his tent toward Sodom’s gate. The walk with God is a satisfying portion—is *the* satisfying portion of the child of God. All who walk with Him can truly say:

“God is the portion of my soul—
The source of lasting joy.”

Therefore, let the walk with God, and the blessedness of that walk, exercise the heart of all who would know what it is to be true witnesses for an absent Lord. There may be diversities of gift, and you may be called to a work which I can never hope to accomplish. But the walk with God, like the way into the holiest, is open to all who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ.

“WE want not merely a high theology, but we want that theology *acted out* in life; embodied in daily doings, without anything of what the world calls ‘cant’ or ‘simper.’”

"I SAT BACK."

IF there is believed to be evil in the Assembly unjudged, the way to deal with the evil is *not* by sitting in the back seat. Great confusion has been brought about by so doing, and worse evils have been thus created than those it was attempted to remove. It is quite proper that evil should be dealt with. But we must be careful that we deal with it in a *righteous way*. You may have heard a brother saying, "There was evil unjudged in the Assembly; so I took the back seat." Or you may have heard another saying, "Because So-and-so was sitting at the Table, I sat back." Now, all this may be done with good enough intentions. By such a course you may think to *compel* the Assembly to act—to *shame* it into doing what you believe to be the right thing. But the question before us is simply this: Is sitting back the right and scriptural way of dealing with the alleged evil? We will not question your motives. We give you credit for honestly seeking the glory of God. But we humbly desire to point out that in "sitting back" as it is called, or in staying at home from the meeting, you are not taking the God-appointed way of dealing with the evils over which you mourn. God's way—the scriptural way—of dealing with evil is to *purge it out*, as it is written, "Purge out therefore the old leaven" (1 Cor. v. 7); and again, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. v. 13). It is thus clear that in the judging of

evil you are simply to stand where the Lord has set you, and there contend for *The Faith*. If you take the back seat you will reverse God's order of dealing with evil. Instead of seeking to purge out the evil you begin by purging out what you believe to be the godly—namely, yourself, and perhaps others who may be of the same mind. You thus act without Scripture warrant; yea, you act contrary to what Scripture says is to be done. If, in spite of your taking the back seat, the Lord brings about a happier state of things, unto Him be glory. He may in His sovereign will so act. But if your sitting back results in confusion and strife, such confusion and strife are simply the consequences of acting in an unscriptural way. "He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good" (Prov. xvi. 20); but he that handleth a matter unwisely, because unscripturally, has no right to expect "good" to follow his action. No doubt want of light from the Word has been the main cause of "sitting back." Where this *is* the cause it only needs a little light from the Word to show what the will of the Lord is in this matter. We have felt called to draw attention to this evil; for the practice of sitting back is an undoubted evil. It may seem harmless enough at the moment, and may perhaps promise a speedy deliverance from the evils against which it professes to be a testimony. But its general tendency is simply to intensify existing difficulties, or to provoke the policy of doing "anything for the sake of peace."

If you withdraw from the circle of the fellowship, you leave the spot where you can act for God in the Assembly. Instead of standing your ground and seeking to deal with the evil, you thereby put yourself in a position in which you cannot deal with it.

By "sitting back" you weaken the hands of those in the Assembly who may be groaning as deeply as you over the evil in question. If, as you say, there was not sufficient power to deal with the evil, do you not see that your withdrawal only *lessens* the power to deal with the evil? If any godly brethren follow your example, the power to deal with the evil becomes less and less. In these circumstances it is a very easy matter for the absentees to turn round and say: "See what a condition the Assembly is in!" But do you not see that its present weakness is largely owing to the fact that you and others have taken a position which neither the Assembly nor the Scriptures gave you?

You need not think to dispense with any healthy member of the human body, and yet expect to be as well equipped as before. The loss of a right hand, or a left hand, or an eye, or even a finger, is *felt*. It cannot be otherwise. And in carrying out the rule of God in an Assembly, we need not disguise the fact that weakness of some kind must result from one or more sitting in the back seat while they should be in their place in the fellowship, and seeking, according to their measure, to see the will of God carried out in the Church.

FORCING MY OPINIONS.

IN seeking to deal with evil in the Assembly, I must see that I do not attempt to *force* my opinions.

Perhaps there are brethren in the Assembly who differ with me as to the extent of the evil. Or, it may be, that while agreeing with me as to the evil, they do *not* believe that *my* way is the godly way of dealing with it. What then? Am I to seek to have my views carried out *in spite of* my brethren? Nay, verily. I dare not thus ride over their consciences, even although I could carry my way by sheer force of will. I must remember that each of my brethren has a conscience as well as myself. I profess to be seeking the glory of God alone: so do they. I profess to aim at the purification of God's house: so do they. The likelihood is, that they are just as honestly seeking to carry out the will of God as I am. "Then, what is to be done?" you say. *Wait on God*, we reply. Seek patiently to instruct those whom you think are in error as to what should be done; and be at the same time willing to be shown where you yourself may happen to be in error. Thus humbly seeking to be "of one mind in the Lord," the Assembly, and not a mere part of it, can act for God in purging out that which is evil.

To consider one another is of the very essence of fellowship; and at no time is this "considering" more needful than in lifting the sword of judgment to deal with alleged evils within the circle of

fellowship. We are all familiar with the principle upon which believers are received into the fellowship. It is *the Assembly* that receives. It is not some leading brother, or even the oversight, however highly these may be esteemed in love for their work's sake. In like manner it is the Assembly that *puts away*. In excommunication, then, as in reception, it is *the Assembly* that acts. We thus see the importance of seeking, "with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering," to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. iv. 2). In the world's confederations it is the majority that rules. The weak must give place to the strong, and might is held to be right. But it is entirely different in the case of a company of saints whom the Lord has gathered together into one. With one mind and with one mouth they are to gloryify God (Rom. xv. 6).

In the world's affairs a divided judgment is the signal for a show of hands or a counting of votes. But in the Church gathered upon divine principles, a divided judgment is the signal for us to get down upon our faces before the Lord, and seek so to be brought into unison with His mind that we shall be of one mind *in Him*.

You may say, as one said the other day, "But there are those in the Assembly who hinder us from carrying out the will of God. Are we not to act?" O yes, dear brother, you are to act; but you must act according to God. Those whom you term hinderers are evidently persuaded that they are resisting the *will of man*

being carried out. They consider that *you* are in error. You say you are groaning over their blindness to the true remedy. Yes; and they, too, are no doubt groaning over the ill-advised remedy which you are so impatient to apply. You see, brother, that the argument cuts both ways in every case. Your brethren may have just as single an eye for the glory of God as you have. What, then, are you to do? Instruct them as to what you believe ought to be done. Enlighten their minds; exercise their hearts; declare unto them your "more excellent way." Thus you shall carry their consciences with you; or they may carry yours; for it is quite possible that you have been wrong after all!

LOVE WILL MANIFEST ITSELF.

YOU may have observed that whenever there is a real interest in a particular department of the Lord's work, such interest will *manifest itself* in some shape. Love soon discovers a way to the object of its affection. Jonathan might not find it an easy thing to have a meeting with the persecuted David; but he *managed it* (1 Sam. xxiii. 16). When love cannot *find* means to reach its object, it *devises* means to that end. And if you have the *will* to help—say in the great work of rescuing those who are already almost in the breakers of moral ruin—you will soon find a *way* to help. If your *heart* is enlisted in that work, all that follows is simple enough. He that

deviseth "liberal things" (Isa. xxxii. 8) will have no difficulty in putting his liberal projects into execution.

TRUST.

"Behold the fowls of the air."
"Consider the lilies of the field."
MATT. VI.

THIS world is a scene of sin and strife,
And its trials I must share,
But mine is a sweet and a happy life
With a Father's love and care ;
I only need to be clothed and fed—
My wants are but few and small ;
And the Lord who loveth me hath said
That my Father knows them all.

Let others barn and storehouse build,
And about to-morrow weep ;
Each hungry raven's mouth is fill'd,
And they neither sow nor reap ;
And never a care need cloud my brow,
Nor a tear mine eye bedim,
For my Father watcheth o'er me now,
And my needs are known to Him.

Though long be my absent Master's stay,
And far be my heavenly home,
I am called to live from day to day
In the hope that He shall come,
And with artless ease His grace to show,
'Mid worry, and strife, and din,
Who hath taught me how the lilies grow,
Though they neither toil nor spin.

Thus, simply, O Lord, would I trust in Thee
Till the days of trust are o'er ;
One word from Thy lips is better to me
Than the miser's hoarded store.
And when Thou art pleased my trust to try,
And my weakness fain would yield,
O tell me again of the raven's cry,
And the lilies of the field !

W. B.

Gold Fields, South Africa.
June 10th, 1891.

A LOVER OF SOULS.

YOU must be a *lover* of souls before you can be a *winner* of souls. You may get up a wonderfully "effective address," as it is called, and after its delivery you may say to yourself: "There should surely be results now." But you are disappointed. You cannot understand it. You are not getting the "grip" of the people. "Strange," you say. Yet not so strange, perhaps, after all. Are you a *lover* of souls? Do you know what it is to travail in birth for souls? The Master—the great Lover of souls—wept over Jerusalem. The outcasts of society drew near *unto Him* (Luke xv. 1). They seemed to feel that His great heart of love was going forth for *them*. We must *follow Him*, if we would become fishers of men. The winner of souls needs more than a text—more than a well-prepared address—more than a love for service: he must be a lover of souls. Whenever there is this bond of love between preacher and hearer, the word goes home with a power, of which the eloquence of mere words knows nothing. The eloquence of love has a pathos that cannot be acquired in the world's schools. The testimony that is immersed in love, has in it an attractive power that cannot be manufactured—cannot be pumped up. Such testimony makes no laboured efforts. It is calm, hopeful, joyful. It is not a question of intellect battling with intellect: it is a question of heart reaching heart.

THE SEARCHING QUESTION.

ON at least two occasions we find our Lord enquiring what was the subject of conversation among His disciples. In the one case He gets an answer; in the other case He gets none. In the one case they were ready to answer; for He Himself had been the theme of their converse. In the other case they were *not* ready to answer; for their disputation had been of such a nature that they had no wish that He should hear it.

We are all familiar with the journey to Emmaus (Lu. xxiv. 13-32). The two sorrowing disciples were wending their way thither, speaking of Him whom they had hoped to see exalted to the throne of David, instead of nailed to the Cross of shame. While thus conversing, Jesus Himself drew near, and asked the question: "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" (ver. 17). They had no hesitation in answering Him. Their conversation was not of a nature that required concealment. It is true that "their eyes were holden, that they should not know Him" (ver. 16). But it was the Beloved One, nevertheless; and their hearts burned within them while He talked with them by the way (ver. 32).

On turning to Mark ix. 33 we find our Lord asking a similar question—"What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" The disciples here had no answer. "They held their peace: for

by the way they had disputed among themselves *who should be the greatest*" (ver. 34). They were self-condemned. They felt that their conversation would not stand the light. They were evidently convinced that a dispute as to who should be greatest would have been unseemly in *His* presence, and would have sounded harsh in *His* ear. Therefore they were ashamed before Him at His coming upon them suddenly with the question: "What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?"

The Lord hears all the conversation that goes on among His saints. He perceives the tone, He marks the spirit, He notes the subject,—perhaps some worthless piece of gossip—some slanderous report as to an absent brother—some dark insinuation—some unwarranted suspicion. That "same Jesus" hears it all—sees it all—feels it all. If suddenly He were to appear in person in the midst, and say, "What communications are these that ye have one to another?" would we not be ashamed and silent before Him? We would feel in a moment that such a conversation is entirely out of place in *His presence*. But is *He* not present, although unseen by the eye of sense? "He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?" (Ps. xciv. 9). Has it really come to this, that we *forget* that the Lord is present—hearing, seeing, beholding, all that passes, as we talk one with another by the way? Are we drifting towards that thought so common in the religious world, that at the solemn

meeting we go into the presence of the Lord, and whenever the meeting is over we go out of His presence? If this be so, we have fallen upon an evil day in our spiritual experience. There are those who act as if they believed they were in the Lord's presence at a prayer-meeting; but have a license for "foolish talking" as soon as the hour of prayer has expired. The moment we thus come to the conclusion that we are *at a distance from God*, there is the temptation to walk carelessly. But why do we come to the conclusion that we are at a distance from God? Is it not because there *is* a distance? Coldness has set in. There is not the conscious nearness to the Lord that there once was. To this, perhaps more than to anything else, is due the frivolous conversation of which we have been speaking. The solemn meeting may put a temporary check upon this form of departure from God. But the *real man* is seen as soon as the meeting comes out. It is not the short hour spent in a meeting that determines what a believer really is. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he (Prov. xxiii. 7). If he thinks he is not in the presence of the Lord, you may confidently expect him to act accordingly.

CONFERENCE NOTES.



BROTHER writes: "I have just returned from two days' happy Conference Meetings with fellow-saints at ———. From 150 to 200

were together. Prayer was earnest, and proved effectual for 'reviving again.' The light of the Word shone into our hearts, leading to honest confession, and fervent prayer for restoration.

The speakers, though not very clever, were honest. Practices were laid side-by-side with God's pattern; and many of us were ashamed of what we had done (Ezek. xliiii.). But 'Nehemiah' encouraged us in the midst of discouragements. Persevering patience was enjoined by precept and example. Our relationship and responsibility toward each other made the love of God burn more brightly as we heard His voice speak to our heart of these things.

The last meeting was wholly occupied with the subject of Prayer. Heart-searching words were read from the Old and New Testament; and humbling confessions were made regarding the general state of our prayer-meetings. Supposed and real causes were looked at. We were entreated to lay aside formality, hypocrisy, and sham, in our prayers to God, and to be honest, brief, and earnest.

Altogether we were made to know that *God is*, and that He is the *Rewarder* of them that diligently seek Him. Our closing hymns were sung with grace, making melody in our heart unto the Lord. We found it hard to part from each other at the end; and it might have been said of us truly: 'Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.' G."

—♦—
TRUE joy cannot exist apart from a good conscience.

REFORM IN THE PRAYER-MEETING.

FROM the Conference Notes that we have just given, it seems that there has been a conferring as to Reform in the prayer-meeting, and that a recommendation was made that prayers should be brief and earnest. We quite agree with our brethren who have been taking counsel in this matter. The question is an important one—how to get life into the prayer-meeting. Long prayers have been evidently recognised as an undoubted hindrance; and it is recommended that these be done away with. The recommendation is good; but the difficult thing will be to have it carried out. You go to the prayer-meeting, expecting a time of strength being renewed. But lo! brother So-and-so rises and offers a prayer of such extreme length and formality, that you feel you have lost even the little spark of enthusiasm you had when you entered the meeting. He seems to have prayed for “everything under the canopies.” More than once he was on the point of closing; but he suddenly discovered something that he had omitted to mention, and made a “new start”—evidently labouring under the delusion that the chief virtue of a prayer consists in its length! By the time such a prayer is finished there is a dull want-of-life sort of feeling over the meeting. The result is, that the Spirit in others is quenched, and the meeting loses “words of cheer and edification” which it would have heard, but for yon long, dreary

prayer. What is to be done? “O,” you say, “just tell the brother, in a gracious way, that his long prayers will never do: they are simply killing the prayer-meeting.” Very good. And happy are those meetings where there is such spiritual vitality that this can be done. But what if the spiritual vitality is so low that a false charity rises up to say, “You have no right to judge”? We do not say that faithfulness to God must close its mouth because of opposition. We merely point out that in dealing with “Decline in the prayer-meeting” you may safely reckon on opposition. Those whose prayers have the most deadening effect upon the meeting will in all probability resist you to the face. They will be the last to believe that their prayers are lacking in power or excessive in length; and if their hands are strengthened by the flattery of some unwise sympathiser, your task of reformation will be all the harder. Nevertheless, let there be *testimony*. Let us deliver our souls. In the low condition of many prayer-meetings there may be causes at work which are beyond our ken. But there at least *some* causes that are not beyond our ken; and not the least of these is the long prayers of brethren who are manifestly not enjoying the Lord in their own souls. To resist this state of things successfully, there must be *individual revival*—one here and one there being so endowed with heavenly power that the element of long dreary prayers shall be made to wither up of its own accord.

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Vol. VI.

EAGER FOR THE BATTLE.

SAUL the king stands clearly out on the page of Scripture as the type of fleshly power. He was emphatically the people's man. They chose him—or, at least, one of like description—before the Lord appointed him. They carefully described the king they would like (1 Sam. viii. 19, 20), and the Lord gave them a king after their own heart,—in His anger, as we elsewhere read; and in due time to be taken away in His wrath (Hos. xiii. 11).

It need not be surprising that Saul, the type of fleshly power, was great in professed service for God. In 1 Sam. xiv. 36 we hear him saying, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them." We see him here as one eager to fight the battles of the Lord. Were the Philistines not the enemies of Jehovah? Was it not right that they should be pursued? Verily it was. But was Saul in a condition to fight the Lord's battles? Was he the chosen vessel for the work in question? Was it a time for service? or was it a time for judgment? Saul did not pause to ask any of these

questions. "There is the work to be done," he seemed to reason with himself; "why should it not be done?—and why should *I* not do it?" He did not see how any argument could be brought against his project. Then he had *the people* with him. "And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee." This seemed to make his path perfectly clear. The people were quite agreeable that the expedition should at once set out. There was a certain amount of daring about it that commended itself to the popular mind. By a bold attack, under cover of the darkness, the Philistines were to be annihilated—by morning light "not a man of them" was to be left. Surely such a victory should tend to strengthen the kingdom of Israel, and extend the glory of Jehovah's name. Such may have been the thought of many who were with Saul that day—perhaps he might himself be laying claim to such a "motive power." But such was not the Lord's thought as to the purposed battle. Saul and the people were of one mind as to the attack upon the Philistines. Perfect harmony seemed to prevail. But suddenly a discord is heard. After the flesh has had its "flourish of trumpets," and has

declared what it is going to do—after the people have expressed their delight to have it so—one man is heard to speak. He is God's messenger. He has been silent while fleshly energy was declaring what it intended to accomplish. But his time has now come to speak. "Then said the priest, *Let us draw near hither unto God.*"

What a hush of silence would follow these words!—what an upsetting of Saul's plans!—what a disappointment to the people's expectations! It was not a time to go forth in active service for God. It was no doubt right that the Philistines be dispossessed, as dispossessed they should be in due time. But before Saul and his company could set out upon that work there must be *a meeting with God!* They might make preparations for the fight, and shout with a great shout, as they did on another occasion (1 Sam. iv. 5). But above the din of fleshly confidence the voice of the priest is heard, saying that there must first be *a meeting with God.*

We see in Saul not only the type of fleshly power but an example of that restlessness that cannot take time to wait upon God. Saul was eager to fight the Lord's battles; but he had no corresponding anxiety to hear the Lord's voice. It is the same *now* as it was then. There is no lack of service to-day. We live in a time when the place of public testimony is coveted by many. To stand in the breach for God—to take up the sword to fight His battles—has in it a certain attraction, at least to those


who do not look beyond the surface of things. "We must fight the battle," they say; "we must go forward for God; we must be a testimony for Christ." All very true. But is there anything to *settle first?* Is some idol walking at large?—some sin unjudged?—some unclean thing tolerated? If such be the case, the anointed ear shall assuredly perceive the startling and significant words of the priest: "Let us draw near hither unto God." Sin must be judged—defilement must be cleansed away. Everything must come in its order. "Not the place of public testimony just now," says the priest; "but the *desert spot alone with God.*"

The thoughts of Saul and the people were centred on the signal victory that was to be gained over the Philistines. But one man's thoughts were in another direction altogether; and that one man had the mind of God. This reminds us of another scene in a later day when four hundred of Ahab's prophets proclaimed with one voice that his expedition to Ramoth-gilead would be a triumphal march (1 Kings xxii. 12). But on that occasion, too, the chorus of flattery was rudely interrupted by a solitary voice declaring that the expedition would be disastrous. That one messenger delivered the mind of God, and Ahab's four hundred prophets were proved to be false.

There is many an expedition to Ramoth-gilead—there is many a battle with the Philistines—that would never have been undertaken if we could only have caught the message from the


Sanctuary which says, "*Let us draw near hither unto God.*" If we are to serve acceptably, there must be a drawing near—a renewing of strength—a girding of ourselves with the aids of heavenly power. If we care not to hear the Lord's voice in the calm of priestly communion, what cares He for the most brilliant service that we may render? He sends none, except from His own presence; and if we go not forth from that hallowed spot we run unsent and fight unbidden.

THE WONDERS OF CREATION.

E have heard it remarked that you will scarcely find a sceptic among the ranks of competent astronomers. We are not surprised at this. From their study of the starry heavens they cannot fail to see the wonders of the Lord in the great "deep" of space. Through the eye of the telescope they behold untold worlds whirling around—many a tiny star in the dim distance being a sun far excelling in size and brilliancy the sun that shines in our own heavens. With additional telescope power these scientific men are finding new worlds constantly opening up to their view. But far as their eye has reached, they have not yet struck the "border-land of space." They stand in wonder and amazement at the work of the Creator in the starry depths. These students of astronomy feel that with all their knowledge they have only touched

the *fringe* of creation's wonders. Take, for example, the remotest fixed star that can be brought within the sweep of the most powerful telescope. Beyond that point there seems to be nothing but a great wilderness of space. But, supposing it were possible for the astronomer to suddenly transport himself to yonder remotest star, what would he see? He plants his telescope anew, and looks; and lo! a new universe is revealed to his wondering gaze! Far as the telescopic eye can reach he beholds worlds piled upon worlds! Let him repeat the experiment, and the same result follows. He finds that he is only *beginning* to learn something of the starry depths of space. Little wonder then that those who study "the heavens above" are constrained to admit of these myriad bodies spinning through space, that the hand that made them is divine!

EVER THE SAME.

HERE is One who changes not—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Heb. xiii. 8). He is ever "this same Jesus" (Acts i. 11). How different from us, who are subject to so many changes! You want a person you can confide in—one who is ever the same; and you are almost baffled in your search. How few there are whom you may expect to find the same a year hence as you leave them to-day! Yea, a passing week often makes a difference, in these lukewarm

days; and the cold look of suspicion greets you now, where once upon a time it was the glance of love. Yet what a comfort to weary hearts to know that there is One on the throne above who never changes!

Then we change with advancing years. "We all do fade as a leaf" (Isa. lxiv. 6). Our hair becomes grey, though not always with years—it may be with some great sorrow known only to Him who knows all the secrets of the heart. Time and its trials leave their impress behind them; and it is not with us now as in the days that are past. But this is not so with Him who sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He is there in the perfection of beauty, and in the power of an endless life. Ages have made no wrinkle on His brow—untold centuries leave no furrow on His cheek. His is the dew of never-ending youth. He was—He is—and through eternal years shall be "the Chiefest among ten thousand."—(*Thoughts from an Address to Believers*).

WE SHALL SEE HIM.

AFTER all has been said about Heaven that can be said—after we have described its glories, and dwelt upon the supreme felicity and the spotless purity that is there—this great truth remains the most precious of all: We shall see the *risen Jesus* there. It is not the *place* but the *person* that will enrapture our gaze and satisfy our

heart. When you go to a far country where there is not one loving heart to greet you, and where you do not know a single person, you find it a cold and cheerless place, although its scenery may be the finest in the world. Or if you had some loved friend there whom you expected to see, but whom you could not find, your sense of desolation would be complete, although in that land you had many smiling acres all your own. Thus is it with the believer and Heaven. What would we care for its splendours if there were no JESUS there? When we cross the river of death, or are caught up without passing through the grave (1 Thess. iv. 17), Heaven with all its glories would be nothing better to us than a wilderness, if the great Lover of our souls were not waiting to receive us. But He will be there; and His presence shall be the Heaven of Heavens unto our souls. Has He not said, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (Jno. xiv. 3). Has He not said, "I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me" (Jno. xviii. 24). Wherever He is, there shall also His people be. We shall see His face. We shall behold Him in all the glory of His person—in all the perfections of His character. Joy shall then no longer "ebb and flow"; for in His presence there is fulness of joy, and at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

SOME REMINISCENCES OF WILLIAM G——.



OCCASIONALLY heard William G—— preach in the early days of the Revival movement in this place. He was a remarkable preacher, although, strictly speaking, he did not preach: he *talked*. He was too much in earnest to preach—as many in these days understand that word. He had no desire to shine as an orator. Others might get up “splendid addresses,” as they are called, and become masters in word-painting and adepts in the manipulation of the voice. But G—— knew nothing of these arts of modern preaching. He was not thinking upon his gestures, nor upon the rise and fall of his voice. “How shall I reach a heart in this company?” Such was his thought. “How shall some poor wanderer be brought to the Saviour’s feet?” Such was his aim. If it were a Gospel Meeting he only saw souls going down to eternal death. If it were a Believers’ Meeting, he saw children of God whose whole after-life might be affected by the message he would deliver. Therefore, instead of giving out an eloquent harangue, he simply *spoke* to the people about Christ and eternity. There was no “beating-about-the-bush”—no far-off hints. He came straight to the mark. He was not seeking fame as an elocutionist; and he did not find it. He was seeking souls; and he found them.

On life’s journey he was accustomed to speak to men personally as to the

realities of eternity; and his close and pointed manner of speaking on these occasions followed him to the platform. He seemed to imagine that he was still talking to the poor waif he had encountered at the street corner, and was merely continuing the conversation. His platform utterances were thus remarkable for their reality. There was no “padding” in his addresses—nothing introduced to fill up a gap, or spin out the time. He was never at a loss for a word. He was great in love; and love will find a “channel of communication” when studied eloquence has to stammer and hesitate.

G——, strange to say, was not one of your preachers who wax vehement with their subject. His fire did not *blaze*; but no one could fail to see that it *burned intensely*. His preaching was remarkable for its calmness and deliberation. He was in no hurry. He frequently paused between his sentences, evidently to leave time for “conscience to answer.” So far as *noise* was concerned you would have said it was a quiet address. Yet every sentence seemed to *tell* upon the people. Heavenly power was in his words; and that is why they could afford to do without a great deal that is now considered indispensable to a “powerful address.” For the same reason he had no need to assume airs of devotion, or to imitate another man’s style. He who has God’s reality has no need of man’s counterfeit.

His service was singularly free from *labour*; yet he was ever about his

Master's business. Service was no more of a burden to him than wings are to a bird. His soul was habitually happy in the Lord. Thus, with very little effort, he contrived to do a great deal of work. He preached a "joyful Gospel"; simply because he told it from a joyful heart. And he was great in *faith* as well as *power*; for we question if you will ever find these two divorced. He did not indulge in the mournful strain of some preachers who are constantly bewailing their own barrenness and trying to excuse themselves on the plea that "Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but it is God alone who gives the increase." He was as firmly persuaded as they that the increase could come only from God. But his faith rose higher. He believed that God *would give the increase*. He counted on the Lord to confirm the Word by signs following. Nor was he disappointed. According to his faith so was it done unto him. He saw—yea, he was constantly seeing—the fruit of his labours.

He did not dwell much on "the terrors of the law." While firmly convinced of the doom of the impenitent, his great work was to extol Christ—to show sin in the light of Calvary, and Hell in contrast with the Heaven of Jesus' love. Many were arrested by the serene calm that pervaded his life. It was clear that he possessed and enjoyed the truth he was proclaiming; and that joy either communicated itself to others, or caused them to wish that such joy were theirs. When going to the Gospel Meeting he

was wont to start several minutes too soon, so that if he chanced to meet some wanderer he might have time to say a word for Jesus. He was of a sweet and gentle disposition, and was widely beloved; though at one time he had to pass through the fires of persecution for his devotion to the truth of the Gospel. But he came forth as gold (Job xxiii. 10). He has now gone to his rest. Yet the savour of his life still remains.

EXCEEDING ZEALOUS.



F the Devil cannot get us asleep, his aim will then be to have us exceeding zealous as to something which the Lord would not have us zealous about. We need to be on our guard at this point. Instead of taking up the sword of self-judgment there is a natural tendency to lay it down and take up some other sword, and for some other work. Perhaps that other work is commendable in itself. But if self-judgment is our *first* work, then it is clear that for us to wax zealous in any other work is simply to blind ourselves to our true condition before God. Many can wax vehement in denunciation of evil in others, while the Agags in their own heart and ways are allowed to walk at large. The great Adversary keeps them busy judging the flesh in their brethren, so that they may have no time to cool down and quietly ask the question, "Now, I wonder how much of the flesh I have to mortify in myself."

INCREASE OF TEMPTATION.

ABUNDANT grace and the endowment with power from on high must not be looked upon as a pledge of exemption from conflict, but rather as the powers by which you are furnished to overcome the Wicked One and stand in the evil day. It is well known, at least by all who have set their face stedfastly toward the Jerusalem of an abiding communion, that a deepened experience of the Lord's presence seems to be the signal for Satan to make his most determined attacks. There are never so many drawbacks, hindrances, and irritating things in our path, as at the time when we are entering upon the enjoyment of a more abundant life in the risen Son of God. This is quite in keeping with the character of our great Adversary. He disputed our Lord's passage through the wilderness from the obscurity of Nazareth to the place of public testimony as the Messenger of the Lord (Matt. iv.). Later on, he sought to hinder our Lord's going up to Jerusalem (Matt. xvi. 23). Then, in the case of those already in Satan's power, we know how the great Enemy did his utmost to thwart the purposes of grace (Luke ix. 42, &c.). He has ever been reluctant to give up his prey, and ready to hinder everything that makes for a closer walk with God. Therefore, let no hungering and thirsting believer be surprised at the increase of temptation that often seems to follow an increase of grace. It may be that you have entered into a new

experience of the joy and presence of the Lord. The darkness is past; and upon your path "the true light" is now shining. But suddenly some harassing temptation comes up, or some comparatively "little thing" arises to cross you; and you are discouraged. But there is no need for discouragement. The Lord gives us no guarantee of freedom from trial or suffering. But He *has* promised that His grace will be *sufficient*. The enemy will dispute every foot of our way through the goodly land of the promises. But what matters it while He that is with us is greater than all that can be against us?

YIELDING AT THE FIRST SUMMONS.

WHEN you yield to temptation without striking a single blow of resistance, it is clear that things have come to a low pass in your spiritual experience. If a brother gathers up all the energies of his being, in order to resist something he knows to be wrong, it is clear that he possesses a certain amount of spiritual vitality. His heart is pointing in the right direction, if we may so speak; although his faith may be small. In *his* case that Scripture verily applies: "Unto him that hath shall be given." But if you yield at the first summons of the enemy to surrender, surely *that* betokens a condition of heart alarming in the highest degree. It is not a question of your *ability* to resist: it is a question of your *will*. As to

ability, *God is able* to make all grace abound. But if you place your *will* at the will of the enemy, you leave no room for God to act. If the will is weak through often yielding, you need not try to *work up* power to resist. There must be a returning to the Lord. The *will* is weak, because the *heart* is not right with God.

ONE OF THE HARDEST THINGS.

IT is one of the hardest things in the world to convince a brother that he is under the influence of any other person. "So-and-so is a fine brother," you say, "and would be such a useful man; but then he is thoroughly under the influence of one who *stands behind him*." Such influence, you plainly see, is not for good. You perhaps go to the brother about it; and, while giving him credit for the commendable points in his character, you tell him as gently as possible that there is a weak point: he is far too easily influenced by a certain brother. But he holds up his hands in astonishment, and declares that the brother in question has not the slightest influence in the world over *him*. To admit that he is influenced in any such way would be simply to admit that to a certain extent he is a tool in the hands of another, and is not the master of his own mind. Such a confession would be far too humiliating. In fact, he becomes indignant at the thought that *he* should require to have his opinions moulded for him. You find

you are upon dangerous ground. But never mind. Perhaps your arrow has gone home. Your friend's indignation is itself a token that you have not been far off the mark. When he cools down and calmly turns the matter over in his mind, he may come to the conclusion that perhaps there is *something* in what you say—although he would not admit this to you for the world. But whether your arrow has found its way between the joints of the harness or not, this much is clear, that there is many an excellent brother whose usefulness is seriously impaired by the influence of some one with whom he is intimate. He may be utterly unconscious of being under the influence of any man on earth; but this makes the influence none the less real and none the less injurious. Of course we are speaking of *bad* influences; for no one can have anything to say against being influenced in a *right* way. Have we not all had occasion to be thankful that we have been influenced by the godly walk, or godly counsel, of another? Is not this the object of our testimony here—that we may influence our fellow-saints for God? It is utterly idle for any man to say that he is subject to no external influence. Tell me his surroundings, and I will tell you how he is being influenced. Tell me what company he keeps—what kind of literature he devours—what kind of conversation he delights in; and I will very soon tell you whether he is being conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. viii. 29) or becoming like them that go down to the pit (Ps. xxviii. 1).

THE BUSINESS OF THE PREACHER.

THE great business of the preacher is to lift up Christ—to unfold Christ. Some addresses consist greatly in the asking of questions. Now, there can be no objection to a pointed question now and again. But if the preacher tries to make up for scarcity of matter by a superabundance of questions, with a long and painful pause between each question, the suspense becomes painful, while its effect is questionable. You may drive your audience into a corner by the force of logic; and yet fail to present Christ. It is not sufficient to urge them to believe: you must tell them *what* to believe. It is well to call upon them to fly to Christ; but be sure you tell them *who Christ is*. Not only urge the people to trust Him, but show them *why* they should trust Him. Tell out what His love has done, and suffered, and provided. Point out the perfections of His sacrificial work—the power of His risen life—the beauty of His peerless person—the glory of His coming Kingdom. Point the people “*off* unto Jesus.” Describe Him—praise Him—extol Him; and then, if you like, you can ask the people what they think of Christ—if they are pleased *with Him*, and how they are going to answer the great question: “What shall I do, then, with Jesus which is called Christ?” It is well to tell the people that God has a feast provided. But it is better if you can tell them something of what is on the table. All this, and a great deal more, is

embraced in the words, “We preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord.” The preacher is a mere finger-post, and the further he stands aside the better; so that Christ may be exalted, and seen, and trusted.

GRACE TO DIE FOR CHRIST.

WE have heard of those who said they loved Christ so well that they could die for Him. But it is only few—in these days at least—that the Lord takes up to Heaven in the martyr's fiery chariot. We question if grace is ever given to sustain us in a trial through which we are never called to pass. We incline to the theology of the dear brother who, when asked if he had grace to die for Christ, said, “No; but if I am called to die for Him I shall have grace when the hour comes.” When we are on the Transfiguration Mount of happy fellowship with God we are prone to think that we have grace to do some wonderful exploits—perhaps even to go to the stake for Christ. But the “daily dying” of our pilgrimage journey may prove a far severer strain upon our “grace” than the sudden call and the brief passage to a martyr's crown. “Teach me *to live*,” says one; “’tis easier far to die—on earth's long night to close the weary eye, and waken in the realms of day.” If to die for Christ be not in God's appointment, the grace to do so will not be in His provision. It is therefore sufficient for us to know that

as our day so shall our strength be. I only want grace to carry the burden and discharge the duty of the present hour.

THE GREAT PURPOSE.

NO doubt there are many purposes for which I, as a child of God, am left down here in the world. But *the* great purpose of my life is this—that I may be conformed to the image of God's Son. All other purposes depend upon this one great purpose. The believer is called to be a witness; but if I am not being conformed to the image of Christ, I am nothing better than a false witness. The believer is called a light; but if I am not shining with the light of practical conformity to the mind of Christ, I can give no light to them that sit in darkness. The believer is spoken of as the "salt of the earth"; but if there be not the Christ-like mind, truly the salt has lost its savour.

To breathe the Master's spirit gives a heavenly tone to service, and the highest eloquence to testimony. This great work of being conformed to the image of the altogether-lovely One, is apt to be lost sight of in the bustle of these perilous times. There is so much work that "*must* be done," as we speak, that our greatest work is in many cases thrown aside. We forget, for a time at least, our calling; and Rom. viii. 29 becomes to us a dead letter. We are so busy, it may be, resisting evil in others and groaning over what is wrong around us,

that the vineyard of our own soul is neglected, and we waken up to find that we have not been *considering*, as holy brethren, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession (Heb. iii. 1). We have not been beholding the beauties, and tracing out the virtues, of the Son of God. We may have been diligent in contending for the truth. But there may be great zeal, and yet great leanness of soul! Misapplied zeal is only "strange fire." "Seek ye *Me* saith the Lord." He Himself must have the first-fruits of our energy. His glory demands it; and the prosperity of our own soul demands it. We must in spirit sever ourselves from the bustle of service and the din of testimony, and return into the wilderness to sit down alone and ask the great question: "Is the divine purpose being carried out in *me*?—Am *I* being conformed to the image of Christ?" If this work of the Lord be not prospering, nothing else can prosper, so far as I am concerned. We may seem to accomplish a great deal, and our brethren may be loud in their praises of our usefulness. But, if we have not been diligent in the great work of practical conformity to the image of Christ, we are living an unreal life and earning an undeserved reputation. Our unreality may deceive many; but it will not deceive *all*. He that is spiritual (1 Cor. ii. 15) shall discern that something is wrong; while in due time the judgment-seat shall make everything manifest, although it may have to entirely reverse the verdict pronounced by our brethren upon our testimony here.

POWER.


WE hear a great deal about *power*—power for testimony, power in prayer, and so on. An idea seems to prevail that power is a mysterious something that takes possession of a man in some unaccountable way, and departs in the same unaccountable way. But *power*, in the scriptural signification of that word, is no such mysterious thing, and acts in no such capricious way. Power exists, and can only exist, in strict accordance with certain "laws of the kingdom." Power is simply the *effect* of certain causes operating in the believer's heart and life. If these causes are not there, you will search in vain for the effect: if these causes *are* there, the effect (that is, power) will be there; and you need not try to have it otherwise.

Purity is one of the great causes in the production of power. Unjudged sin was ever leading to Israel's defeat. Their discomfiture before the walls of Ai was traced to "an accursed thing in the midst." Victory in the field and defilement in the camp could not exist together. Apart from purity there could not be power. But no sooner was evil judged and put away, than Jehovah's power again led forth the hosts of Israel.

In Eli's day there was no power to deliver. Why? Because there was defilement in the priesthood: and we must remember that the priesthood was that which represents the believer in the aspect of *communion*. Eli failed to judge

his house. Defilement was tolerated instead of being frowned upon. Seeing, then, there was failure in the inner circle of the priesthood, we are prepared for that which follows—failure in the outer circle of Israel's hosts. They could not stand before their enemies. Their power had departed. But let us not fancy for a moment that their power had departed in some unaccountable way. The lack of purity in the inner court was the cause of Israel's failure in outer testimony. And that which caused loss of power to *them*, will cause loss of power to *us*. If there be failure in the inner court of communion we need not expect to see God's power manifest through us in the outer court of service. There must be purity in that inner circle where no eye but God's can see, before there can be victory in that outer circle—the place of public testimony, where many are looking on. There can be no doubt that failure in priestly communion—failure to cleanse the inner court from defilement—is one great cause of powerless service. You may be at great pains to "get up" an address, and you may get up one with some new and startling things in it. But there is one thing you cannot get up: you cannot get up *power*. It defies all the art of man. You may have your subject correctly arranged; you may have a choice selection of words; and you may deliver your message with a thundering sound. But there may be all this, apart from the power that comes through the abiding calm and purity of priestly communion.

RULING MY OWN SPIRIT.

 I would seek in any measure to care for the saints, and guide them into God's paths, I must first of all see that I *rule my own spirit*. That is my first work as a "pattern man." I must begin at the very centre of the circle. I must see that God's rule is carried out *there*. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Prov. xvi. 32). If rule is according to God, it will have the stamp of reality about it. You will not find it assuming to be what it is not. If a man is "just" and "ruling in the fear of God" (2 Sam. xxiii. 3), his godly fear has taught him where to begin, viz., *with his own spirit*. He who cannot rule within the small circle of his own spirit, need not attempt to bear any rule whatever in the *greater* circle of his brethren. If the ABC of rule is too much for me, it is only to my own shame and confusion if I attempt to do what comes afterwards. If I am helpless to bear rule over my own spirit, how can I expect the saints to acknowledge me as over them in the Lord? If I am not keeping myself in subjection to the Lord, it is idle for me to teach saints what subjection to the Lord is. If I have failed to learn the lesson myself, I cannot teach it to others. This may seem a very elementary truth as to rule among saints. Yet it is none the less needed to be brought up. It is no breach of charity to say that there are those who take a prominent position

among the Lord's people—professing to lead in the ways of God,—and yet it is clear that they have never brought their own spirit into subjection. We are not demanding perfection; nor are we expecting it. Rulers among the saints are men "of like passions" with ourselves; and it is just possible to demand from them a perfection of walk which could not be found even in Apostolic times. But what we wish to point out is, that the man who does not *habitually* rule his own spirit is to that extent unfit to be a ruler among the saints. We do not say that the man who *does* rule his own spirit is therefore qualified for that work. Other qualifications are necessary. "Not soon angry," is only *one* of the things that are needed (Tit. i. 7). But if he lacks that one thing, he had better set himself to the work of conquering in the kingdom of his own heart, before he seeks to stand before the saints as one over them in the Lord. Mere knowledge of truth does not make an overseer. He must know how to apply it—where to apply it—when to apply it. And in order to have this clearness of vision he must first apply the truth to his own heart and ways—taking the beam first out of his own eye, in order that he may see clearly to take the mote out of his brother's eye.

—♦—

"IN living for Christ we must follow Him fully; not copying a copy, but copying Himself; otherwise ours will be an imperfect testimony, bearing the marks of imitation, if not of forgery."

RULING MY OWN HOUSE.

HAVING learned to rule within the circle of my own spirit, I then find that there is a wider circle in which I am to bare rule, before I seek to rule in that widest circle of all—the Church of God. The circle referred to is the circle of *my own house*. Scripture is clear and explicit on this point (1 Tim. iii. 4, 5)—“One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity ; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?). There must be rule in the smaller circle before it can be attempted in a greater circle. Everything comes in its due order—“first the blade, then the ear ; after that, the full corn in the ear.” In other words, first rule your own spirit, then rule your own house ; then (so far as these qualifications are concerned) you may stretch forward unto oversight work among the saints.

A brother was once asked by his wife why it was that he was not an overseer. “O,” he said, “I am disqualified. An overseer must rule his own house ; but that’s not the case with me ; for it is *you* that rules the house.” This blunt answer had its due effect ; and in a single moment the “weaker vessel” learned more than she had ever known before as to her place of subjection to her own husband. It would be well if there were a deeper exercise of heart, as to this qualification for taking the lead. A brother may fancy that oversight work may be done

although he is not ruling for God in the family circle. He may say to himself, “It is a pity that the Church should lose the benefit of my gift and my care, because my wife or my family is beyond my control.” Very true. But the Lord foresaw all that, and He made no provision whereby the man of brilliant parts is entitled to set 1 Tim. iii. aside, in order to give the Church the benefit of his rule. The Lord has plainly declared that the family circle must be ruled before you can even attempt to rule in the larger circle of the Church. Failure to rule in the family will be a sorry credential for our assuming to rule among our brethren.

The rule that is according to God will ever be found honouring His word ; while the rule that is according to man will not be particular to observe what the Lord hath said ; although it may be loud in its professions of obedience (See 1 Sam. xv. 13). The rule that is according to man seeks merely to gain its end, whatever that end may be ; while the rule that is according to God seeks only to gain *His* end, and proves its heavenly origin by subjecting itself to His revealed will—yea, and rejoicing in the same.

It may seem a hard thing that an unruly wife or children should set aside a man who might otherwise have been such an undoubted help to a meeting. But this is only the verdict of our own shortsightedness. The Lord knows exactly what is for the good of His Church ; and if we attempt to do oversight work, or have it done, in plain

violation of the conditions He has laid down, the result will be neither for our profit nor to His glory. What we have to open our eyes to is this, that if a man is not bearing rule in the inner circles of his own spirit and his own family, such a man's rule among the saints would be a source of *weakness*, and not a source of *power*. We are always safe to keep upon God's lines. Let us have the right thing, although we may be able to have very little of it. A very little rule that is according to God is better than a numerous and "influential" oversight who do not bear the scriptural marks of God-appointed men. Let us not be eager to see "oversight vacancies" filled up. Let us rather pray that they may be filled with men of the right stamp; and, if such men are scarce, let us calmly wait upon the Lord for help from His holy hill. It is better far to wait upon Him in a state of confessed weakness, than put on an appearance of strength which we do not possess.

DIVERSE OPINIONS AS TO POWER.

THERE are many and diverse opinions as to what power in an address really is. One brother is completely "carried away" by a certain address, and declares the preacher to be a man of great power. But the brother sitting beside him heard only a great "flourish of trumpets," and realised no power in the meeting whatever. This diversity of judgment need not be

surprising. It is caused by a diversity of *spiritual experience* in those that hear. He who dwells experimentally within the veil is not easily deceived by what passes in the religious world for *power*. He that is spiritual *discerns* what is going on. He refuses to be satisfied with the husks. He must have that which comes from God. While others are getting enthusiastic over a "powerful address," he may be found saying to himself, "They have taken away my Lord." On the other hand, those who are in a careless condition of heart are ready to mistake power of voice for the power of God, and to be delighted with any display of "great swelling words" that does not awaken them to their true condition. We simply need a change in our spiritual experience—to take a new standpoint, in fellowship with God; and there would at once be a great change of opinion as to much that now passes for *power*.

Our opinion is, that in the religious world generally there has been a decided falling back in the power to discern that which is of God. Once upon a time a far greater solemnity was demanded in the Lord's service than there is to-day. Not a great many years ago the sensational methods of modern "evangelising" were groaned over by those who seem now to love to have it so. Yea, they persuade themselves that the "modern" way of doing things is accompanied by remarkable power! But wherein has the change taken place? There has been no change in the Scriptures. It still remains on record

that we are to serve God "acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. xii. 28). But the religious world wants itself entertained with something beside *the Gospel*; and the religious world has got what it wants. Yet God's power remains the same; and he who is of God shall discern His voice, and refuse to acknowledge the voice of the stranger.

THE SACRED HOUR.

"I rejoice at Thy Word, as one that findeth great spoil."
(PSALM CXIX. 162).

TELL me not of worldly lore,
And treasures of the earth!
To him who has no room for more,
They can be little worth.

I sail a sea of Love divine,
Unfathomed and unbound;
I search a deep and wealthy mine
Where gems of Heaven are found.

The Spirit's breezes gently blow,
That I may sail this sea;
His is the light to search and show
God's deep, deep things to me.

O Book of wondrous depths and heights—
Of wisdom ever new;
Which in ten thousand various lights
Brings Jesus into view!

Whatever truths in thee I trace
New aspects meet mine eye,
And of His glory and His grace
Page unto page doth cry!

Of Science and Philosophy
I've heard the spreading fame;
"They're broad, and deep, and urge," they say,
"Full many a growing claim."

'Tis said Philosophy hath charms
Which prove her higher birth;
That Science, with distending arms,
Grasps Heaven in grasping earth.

I know not, neither have I tried,
Their claims to disallow:
A trusting heart is satisfied
With neither *why* nor *how*.

They come from God, if they be right;
If true, they lead to Him;
Yet, who would leave the noonday light
To grope 'mid shadows dim?

And who would leave the Fountain Head
To drink the muddy stream
Where men have mixed what God hath said,
With every dreamer's dream?

How dim is every earthly light
When suns celestial glow!
No earthly visions lure the sight
Where God His face doth show.

'Tis sweet in prayer on God to call,
While He my voice doth hear;
But sweeter when His sayings fall
Upon mine opened ear.

For this I leave the paths of men,
And shun my friends' abode;
No earthly claims can stay me when
My spirit thirsts for God!

O! not for wealth, nor fame, nor power,
Nor love, nor truest friend,
Would I forego the sacred hour
Which o'er God's Word I spend.

I steal it from the hours of sleep,
If leisure be not given;
For only thus the soul can keep
In touch with God and Heaven.

And, thus, to hearken unto Him
For one sweet, fleeting hour,
Is balm to wearied heart and limb—
Restoring grace and power.

Dear Book of treasures all divine,
My precious, priceless store,
How rich am I since thou art mine!—
How poor was I before!

Gold Fields, South Africa,
23rd July, 1891.

W. B.

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ONE WAY STILL OPEN.

HEN the German armies surrounded Paris as with a band of iron, every way of escape seemed to be closed. Yet there was one way of escape which the Germans could not close—the way that led *straight up* into the ethereal blue. There were some who made their escape from the city by that way—borne smoothly and calmly upward in the car of a balloon, while hostile bullets followed them to no purpose. There was thus *one way* which all the power of the enemy could not close. And what was true of Paris in the hour of extremity is true of every child of God in this day of difficulty. You find perplexities on the right hand and on the left; you have to encounter opposition both before and behind. You are surrounded by influences, all more or less hostile to the progress of divine life in the soul. Worldliness is increasing; divine power is waning in many hearts; lights, once bright, are becoming dim; while the giant of idle gossip and evil speaking is threatening to take the place of heavenly communion. Yet profession abounds. All the usual forms are kept up. But confidence in one another has

been disturbed. There is now suspicion where once there was unbroken trust. Yea, perhaps your own familiar friend, in whom you trusted, hath lifted up his heel against you (Ps. xli. 9). You are at your wits' end. You do not know which way to turn. You are tempted to say, as some have said: "Well, there are so many troubles and trials and hindrances that I don't see how it is possible for one's soul to prosper." But let us be of good cheer, beloved. Though storms may rage around—though difficulties may frown upon us on every side—there is *one way not closed up yet*—and that is the way that leads *straight up* from the believer's heart to the throne of God. Neither persecutions in the world nor storms in the church can block up the way which leads through the azure depths into the very presence of the great "I AM." All the power of hell cannot reach it; all the wrath of man cannot touch it. It is in your power, and your power alone, to block that way; for, alas, it may be blocked. But let us be clear on this point, that it cannot be blocked by external circumstances. Unless you give your *inward consent* to the blocking of the heavenly way, all the power of earth and hell combined cannot

break your "line of communication" with the throne above. You may see much to hinder the operation of God's Spirit. You may witness the flesh exalting itself in the domain of the Lord's work, and lifeless ministry being accepted as if it had come straight from the presence of God. You may see the reign of formalism strengthening its hands as if it were eternal; and you may be almost driven to say, "This adverse tide is too strong for *me*." But ah! my brother, *God has not failed*. One way is still open—the "path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen" (Job xxviii. 7). O but there is still a "large place" for each one of the redeemed! In spite of every hostile circumstance—in spite of all the plots of men—in spite of all the machinations of the Evil One—the path is clear and unencumbered that leads straight as a beam of light into the presence of the risen Lord Jesus Christ! We have only to be assured that we are treading God's path; and then, let surrounding circumstances be what they will, we can rise on the wings of faith into the region of the everlasting calm.

Men talk as if it were a very hard task now to live for God. They point out the difficulties in the walk of faith and the discouragements that meet you at every turn, and say, "As long as these things exist there is no use expecting the presence of the Lord in millennial power." But how dare we thus limit the Holy One of Israel?—so far, at least, as our own individual experience is con-

cerned. There are no difficulties in the way that leads "upward, heavenward, homeward," save the difficulties of our own making. The individual believer is left utterly without excuse if he be not enjoying "the fulness of the blessing." He need not flee to the false refuge of declaring that his brethren are in a bad condition. If such be the case, the loss will be theirs; but the loss need not be his, unless with his consent. If surrounding difficulties and discouragements have their due effect, they will strengthen faith, they will send us to our knees, they will allure us to the desert place,—there to learn that God is greater than our difficulties, and that in spite of all that can be against us we may *walk with Him!* Let no one rob us of our birth-right privileges—let no circumstances, however harassing, be permitted so to depress our spirit that we sit down and lose heart on our heavenward journey. A thousand foes may arise to dispute our passage into the land of a deeper experience and a sweeter communion. But the way *upward* remains open—unassailed and unassailable. "Hostile bullets"—the fiery darts of the Wicked One—may follow us thither, it is true. Yet with the shield of *the FAITH* (Eph. vi. 16) we shall be able to quench these fiery darts. The upward way leads to God's pavilion, where He keeps His redeemed from the strife of tongues (Ps. xxxi. 20)—where He hides them from the pride of man, and preserves them from the path of the Destroyer. The upward way leads to His own presence, where there is fulness

of joy; and where the child of faith, when every earthly stream has failed, is constrained to magnify the goodness of the Lord, and to exclaim: "*All my springs are in Thee.*"

SOME ELEMENTARY TRUTHS.

(*First Paper*).

AMONG born-again people it is generally admitted that the Scriptures of Truth are very clear as to how a sinner is saved. When revival work is going on, and people are saying, "What must I do to be saved?" the anxious souls are at once told that a full and complete answer is found *in the Scriptures*. Those at work in the "enquiry room" may be heard saying: "It does not matter what *you* think, or what *the Church* thinks, or what a great *preacher* thinks, about the way of salvation. It is simply a question as to *what does God say?*" Man and his traditions and creeds are shut out; and rightly so. The revealed will of God is made the first and final appeal. Perhaps the cherished ideas of a lifetime have to be thrown aside; perhaps standard theories of the religious world have to be rejected. It matters not. "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. iii. 4). Thus awakened souls pass out of death into life, through simply receiving the Scripture testimony concerning Jesus.

But no sooner are souls saved than they are found asking, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?—How am I to

worship and serve Thee, now that I am saved?" Is there an answer to these questions? There is. Is the answer to be found in the Scriptures? It is. It would surely be passing strange if that Word, which is so clear as to how to be saved, should be all uncertainty as to how I am to act, now that I *am* saved. When the question is asked, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" Scripture at once makes answer, "By taking heed thereto according to *Thy Word*" (Ps. cxix. 9). "I have given them *Thy Word*," said the Master; "and the world hath hated them" (Jno. xvii. 14)—a result which, in greater or lesser measure, must ever be true of those who "hear the Word of God, and keep it" (Lu. xi. 28). Both in what the New-Testament saints were told to do, and in what they actually did, we have the clearest Scripture testimony as to how a newly-converted soul is to proceed in seeking to walk in the ways which be in Christ.

Take yonder village of A—, for example, where there is no testimony to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. A God-sent man goes to the place and preaches the Gospel. Sinners are saved. What takes place then? Does the preacher tell the young converts that he has nothing more to say to them, and that they must just worship God in *whatever way they think best*? No. He did not tell them to be saved in *whatever way they thought best*. He referred them to "that which is written;" and in the matter of worship he simply keeps to

“that which is written.” The man whom God hath *sent* is not ashamed of what God hath *said*. Therefore he shows from Scripture that those who have been converted to God are now to be baptised. Christian baptism is in the preacher’s “commission” (Matt. xxviii. 19). “Go ye therefore,” said the Master, “and teach (or make disciples of) all nations, baptising them” &c. (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). You see that the command to *baptise* is thus co-extensive with the command to *preach the Gospel*; and you have no more right to throw aside the one than to throw aside the other. And not only have we the *command* to baptise, but *we have the example*, yea, many examples. In Acts ii. 41 (R.V.) we read that “they that received his word were baptised;” and again (Acts xviii. 8), “Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptised.” But we need not multiply passages. Believers’ baptism is clearly set forth in the New Testament; and we know that Scripture recognises no such thing as *infant* baptism; while the word “baptise” signifies *to dip, to plunge*. It therefore follows that, in the village in question, “they that received the word were baptised;” that is, plunged, or dipped—for a *sprinkling* of water could not set forth a *burial* and *resurrection* with Christ. In the Name of the Lord they are accordingly “baptised into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

The question arises, “What next?” The Scriptures are again appealed to, and it is discovered that there is only

one Name into which the Lord gathers His people. “Where two or three are, having been gathered together into My Name,” saith the Lord, “there am I in the midst” (Matt. xviii. 20). And again it is written, “Gather My saints together unto Me” (Ps. l. 5). These two passages summarily dispose of the names and divisions of Christendom. God’s saints are to be *gathered together*. This completely settles the question of various sects and bodies. And the gathering together is to be into the Name of His Son as Lord and Christ. Yea, the gathering together is to *a person*; for the Name points to a person. Hence we read, “Let us go forth therefore *unto HIM* without the camp, bearing His reproach” (Heb. xiii. 13). The young converts (still keeping by that *which is written*) accordingly go forth outside the camp unto the rejected Jesus, whether it be the world’s ungodly camp, or the world’s professedly religious camp. They refuse to acknowledge any of the religious names of Christendom. As Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, so do they refuse to be called by any of the names of Sectarian division. And why do they refuse to recognise any of these names? Simply because Scripture refuses to recognise them; yea, because Scripture condemns them (See 1 Cor. iii. 3, 4). Scripture never says, “If a man suffer as a *Baptist*, or as a *Wesleyan*, or as a *Presbyterian*, or as an *Episcopalian*, let him not be ashamed.” But Scripture does say, “If a man suffer *as a Christian*, let him not be

ashamed." And then a few significant words are added: "but let him glorify God in THIS NAME" (1 Pet. iv. 16, R.V.). See what honour God puts upon the Name of His Son! And that Name has been called upon us; for we—for all the children of God—are *Christians* (Christ's ones). O the divine simplicity and beauty of that Name! Yet many are not satisfied with that Name. They must have another name—they must marshal themselves under a banner with some name *besides* the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And yet that other name, by man invented, shall have as little recognition in Heaven as it has now in the Scriptures of Truth. But the converts before us are in no perplexity as to the denominational names of the religious world. They are going *by the Scripture*. Through *that which is written* they found God's way of salvation. Through *that which is written* they discovered believers' baptism—figure of death and resurrection with Christ. And through *that which is written* they have gone forth outside the camp *unto Him*, abundantly satisfied with that Name "which is above every name" (Phil. ii. 9), and having no desire to be known by any other.



THE moment the Tempter's suggestion is received and considered, that moment the battle is lost. There must be no entering into negotiation with the enemy. In other words, there must be no tampering with anything that is known to be sin.

ONE MIND AND ONE SPIRIT.

WE are exhorted to oneness of mind and oneness of spirit; and these two ends will be gained just in measure as *grace* and *truth* have free course in our experience. *Truth* will give us the one *mind*, and *grace* will give us the one *spirit*. Thus in the mouth of these two witnesses our unity shall be established before an unbelieving world. But you need not try to divorce these two witnesses. You may make your boast in truth—that you know the truth, and that you are in subjection to the truth. But, if the machinery of the truth be not lubricated with the oil of grace, there will be a lamentable creaking and straining at every attempt to move. A cold, dry, mechanical holding of the truth will never commend Him in whom "grace and truth" were blended in divine harmony. On the other hand, you may make your boast in grace, claiming that grace is everything, and sitting lightly by that which the Lord has revealed in His word. But grace apart from truth (if there be such a thing) will never work the purposes of Him by whom grace and truth came. In silencing the one witness you render powerless the testimony of the other. That which professes to be grace apart from truth, is simply the strange fire of fleshly compassion, combined with the self-confidence that would be wise above what God hath revealed. Let us seek to be delivered from both of these extremes.


LACK OF POWER.

“**W**HY is it that many preachers lack power?” Well, it may be due to one of two causes (always assuming the preacher to be a child of God). He may be what is known as a gifted man, and yet be in a bad state of soul. He may have the ability to preach, and seem to do it fluently enough; and yet, through failing to drink habitually of the Master’s spirit, his utterances lack power. His preaching fails to arrest. He is a mere trafficker in truth—nothing more than a manipulator of words. His abilities, however great, are not immersed in love—they are not fragrant with purity—they are not charged with the electricity of Heaven—they do not breathe the Master’s spirit. Hence even his words of eloquence seem to fall flat and powerless.

But the lack of power may be due to another cause. The brother standing in the place of public testimony, may be *in his wrong place*. He may be attempting a work to which the Lord has never called him. Hence the lack of power. The brother may have much about him that is excellent. But, if he is attempting a work to which the Lord has not called him, there must be a lack of power. There can be no divine equipment apart from the divine call. The man with *two* talents need not attempt to do as much business as the man with *ten* talents. If every man were to “minister as of the ability which God giveth,” it would make a wonderful change in many quarters.

But then one brother thinks he has just as good a right to minister as a certain other brother, and is quite as well fitted as *he* is to occupy twenty-five minutes. This is just where a great mistake is made—“comparing ourselves among ourselves”—looking at the place of public testimony as an honour to be snatched at, instead of waiting on God’s call, and being content to give out that which *burns its way out*, like the Jeremiah fire of old. If every ministering brother kept within the measure of his ability, then we would bid a long farewell to dreary and powerless addresses. We would then have a veritable millennium of power, simply because we would have a millennium of *reality*; for wherever there is reality there is a certain amount of power. The man in communion with God, keeping within his measure, may have a very short message. Yet it is felt to be a message of power. And why? Because it is *real*—because it is according to God—because it assumes no airs, and does not pretend to be what it is not. Such a message keeps within the lines which God has drawn, and is therefore accompanied by the power which He provides. You wonder that the message was so short. But that is only an evidence of its power. You could have listened longer. Yet, if the brother had gone on—giving some message of his own *after God’s message was delivered*—you would soon have felt that he was only beating the air; and, in wishing for the end, you would likely have lost the blessing you got at the beginning.

EGYPT, THE WILDERNESS, CANAAN.

SRAEL in Egypt, in the Wilderness, and in Canaan, must not be taken as illustrative of *three* different believers, but as setting forth three different aspects of one believer's experience. If we are walking in the ways of God we shall find, as a matter of experience, that we are in Egypt, the Wilderness, and Canaan, all at one and the same time. *Egypt* represents the world, *in* which we are, but *of* which we are not. We come into contact with the "Egyptians"; we meet them in business—in our daily work—in the affairs of every-day life. But there is a clear line of separation. We are separated by the Blood—typified by the blood of sprinkling on that night in Egypt when the passover was slain.

The *Wilderness* brings the world before us in another aspect. The wilderness tells us that here we have no abiding city. It tells us that this is not our rest. The man of the world is quite at home in the world. He views it as containing all that heart could wish. But to the child of the heavenly Canaan the world is a wilderness, because Christ is not reigning there. His absence makes it a wilderness, just as His presence shall yet cause it to blossom as the rose. The world is also seen as a wilderness in this, that we are merely *passing through it* to our inheritance that fadeth not away.

Canaan typifies the believer in the heavenly places in Christ. We have died with Him; we have been buried

with Him; we have been raised with Him, and are now seated with Him in the heavenlies. It is thus our privilege to experience, even here, the rest of abiding communion. Before entering the promised land Israel are seen crossing the Jordan—type of the believer's death with Christ. Then comes Canaan—not a type of Heaven, but of our experience in the heavenly places. There was conflict in Canaan: indeed Israel's conflict, properly speaking, did not begin until they entered the land of promise. But there will be no conflict in Heaven. Therefore Canaan, although it may be used in many respects as illustrative of that rest which "remaineth for the people of God," is primarily typical of communion's rest and our conflict in the heavenly places, as it is written, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. vi. 12, R.V.).

We thus see that Egypt, the Wilderness, and Canaan, all typify different aspects of the believer's life on earth. At the same time, these three aspects are not equally true of all believers. If we are in our "normal" condition—a healthy spiritual condition—we shall find our experience to be of that three-fold character. But Egypt, the Wilderness, and Canaan, can have no such meaning to us if we fail to set apart Christ as Lord in the heart. Hence it comes that there may be great variety of

experience among professed believers. There are those who seem to be so much at home in Egypt that they do not see the world to be such a bad world after all. They are loth to think it is a world that lieth in the Wicked One! In their eyes Egypt possesses a certain beauty to be desired. There is therefore very little wilderness experience, while the Canaan of heavenly communion is but little known. Others, again, seem to have left Egypt; but, in accordance with Pharaoh's proposal, they have not gone very far away. There are still bonds which bind to Egypt. Then there are those who, professing to have left Egypt far behind, seem never to get beyond the wilderness. They shrink from the Jordan waters of death. They are not prepared for the searching knife of truth that meets them at Gilgal. Therefore the fruits of the goodly land are not found, and the victory of Jericho is not achieved. Yet their true rest is in the "good land" which the Lord their God giveth them. It is only as we are enjoying the experience of being seated with Christ in the heavenlies that we can see Egypt in its true light, and understand how this world is only a wilderness to the child of faith.

THERE is only one darkness we may fear—the darkness of being separated from God by sin.

THE hour of sorrow reveals what we truly are. A man is in reality what he is in his deepest affliction.

NO DIRECT CALL.

IN reading the miracle of our Lord walking on the sea of Galilee (Matt. xiv. 25-31), we cannot say we are surprised that Peter's faith began to fail. What strikes us as significant is, that he had *no call of the Lord* to step forth on the sea. There was *permission*, after Peter had desired to make the attempt. But a *permission* is quite distinct from a *call*. If our Lord, apart from Peter's desire, had called him to step out upon the waves, we should have expected the disciple to be sustained—we should have been ill-prepared for what actually happened, Peter crying, "Lord, save me." There is ever a certain *power* associated with God's *call*. Peter had no direct call to leave the boat and meet the Master. The necessity for his doing so is not quite clear, unless it were the promptings of love. Yet love never behaves itself unseemly (1 Cor. xiii. 5); and in Peter's proposal to leave the boat there was the tendency, if not the intention, to cast the other disciples into the shade by the boldness of his venture—just as on another occasion he is heard declaring, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I" (Mark xiv. 29). To this spirit we can see a gentle rebuke in our Lord's allowing him to begin to sink. The Master permitted him thus far to feel his own weakness—to discover that he did not so far excel his brethren as he had fondly imagined, and that in every venture of faith it is well to test our motives, and calmly wait for *the call*.

ONLY TO WALK WITH THEE.

ONLY to walk with Thee !—
 No tongue of eloquence I crave,
 Nor faith to tread the stormy wave,
 Nor power to touch and melt the heart :
 Be mine, O Lord, the better part—
Only to walk with Thee.

Only to walk with Thee !—
 Although obscure my path may be,
 Although no eye but Thine can see ;
 On busy street, or lonely shore,
 I covet this—I ask no more—
Only to walk with Thee.

Only to walk with Thee !—
 When tides of heav'nly power are high—
 Above my head a cloudless sky ;
 When all is well, O teach me then
 That lesson unknown to the sons of men—
Only to walk with Thee.

Only to walk with Thee !—
 When with Thy saints 'tis a golden hour,
 The fair noon-tide of Thy Spirit's pow'r,
 Let me praise Thy name, my God, and yet—
 No blessing for me if I forget
Only to walk with Thee.

Only to walk with Thee !—
 Though clouds of trial gather fast,
 And Thy people are toss'd by the stormy blast,
 While across the deep no light is seen,
 O be it mine, quiet and serene,
Only to walk with Thee.


Only to walk with Thee !—
 Though every earthly stream shall fail,
 And foes increase, and man prevail,
 This still is left—this still is mine—
 O blessed heritage divine—
Only to walk with Thee.

Only to walk with Thee !—
 Thus shall Thy Word its treasure yield,
 And the desert of life be a fruitful field,
 And the heav'nly light all radiant glow,
 While this is my portion here below—
Only to walk with Thee.

Only to walk with Thee !—
 Till, days of testimony o'er,
 I cross to yonder happy shore—
 Till morn shall break, resplendent, clear,
 Be this my highest service here—
Only to walk with Thee !

MAYBOLE, 28th Sept., 1891.

MORE THAN RESOLUTION NEEDED.

F you have been away in heart from God, something more is needed than merely a resolution to make a "new start for glory," as it is sometimes called. If your repentance—your turning again to the Lord—is real, you will discover, when you go to deal with Him, that superficial work will bring neither glory to God nor abiding peace to your own heart. You may proceed to a new "dedication of the temple"—to lay yourself "anew upon the altar." You are firmly determined that, by the help of God, you will lead a different life. You are thinking of nothing less than a full surrender ; "and surely," you say to yourself, "the Lord will be pleased with *that*." But with all this you are not satisfied. The more conscious you become of the presence of the Lord you are the more impressed with the thought that there is *something wanting*. What is it? It is *confession*—real, honest, downright confession before God, of departure from Him and of the sins that have marked that departure. It is not enough that there be a new *dedication* of the temple: there must be a new *purification* as well. And, in order to this purification, there must be confession in the presence of the Lord. The flesh shrinks from this going into details as to evils we have committed. The pride of man cares not to go down into the valley of humiliation. But the claims of the flesh and the suggestions of the pride of man must stand aside, if there is to be a

true turning again to the Lord. He requires confession—not a general confession such as, “I have not lived as I should have done, but I want to do better now.” There must be a probing of the wounds—a going to the root of the matter—a narrating, before God, of the sins which we have committed—“not,” as one has well said, “that He may be informed, but that we may be humbled.” And wherever there is this God-wrought humbling, there will be God-wrought restoration. The humiliation of honest confession is ever followed by the “promotion” of true restoration. Shame, which is the promotion of fools (Prov. iii. 35), will also be the promotion of all who attempt to reach restored communion by any other path than that of confession and self-abasement. The measure of our confession is the exact measure of our restoration. The depth of our *descent* determines the height of our *ascent*. Failure to apprehend this great truth is the cause of much of the superficial restoration that is to be found to-day. Our God will have no covering up of an old sore. The fact that we are His children can never induce Him to sacrifice His righteousness. If we have departed from Him—if we have gone after other gods—there is only one divinely-appointed way by which we can return,—confession on our part, followed by the Father's forgiveness and restoring grace. The house that stood the storms and floods was one of which it is written that the builder “*digged deep*, and laid the foundation on a rock” (Lu. vi. 48). In

like manner we, too, must dig deep, if we seek the restoration of salvation's joy. The foundation of godly confession must be laid upon the solid rock of eternal truth; and then we may expect a restoration of which it can be said: “And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat thereon; and could not prevail against it; for it was founded upon righteousness, and sustained by power divine.”

CONSIDER THE TENDENCY.

IN seeking to act for God we must consider the *tendency* of an action as well as the *intention*. Our intention may be good and praiseworthy. Yet, for want of duly considering the possible issues, we may produce quite a different effect from what we intended. It is quite true that in simply going by what is commanded in the Scriptures we do not need to care what the effect of our obedience may be. But there are many things in which we must wait upon God as to whether we should meddle with them or let them alone; and it is to such things we refer. If tempted to take up the sword, it is well to remember the word: “With good advice make war.”

NOT the brilliancy of success, but the purity of endeavour, will decide as to the value of a man's life.

MANY preachers can preach splendidly about man, while they can only mutter a few common-places about Christ.

LETTER AS TO PERFECTIONISM.

DEAR BROTHER,—I believe you have got a blessing—perhaps a great blessing. You have evidently entered into a new and deepened spiritual experience; and I can with unfeigned joy praise God for what He hath wrought. But you seem to me to be drawing unwarranted conclusions from your new experience. I do not say you are on the straight road to perfectionism. According to your own profession you have already reached that point. You look upon it as out of the question for a hasty word to escape the delivered believer, or an un-Christ-like thought to be discovered. You say, “If this be the case, where is the deliverance from sin?” Now it is clear that *you* have professedly reached a condition in which a hasty word or an un-Christ-like thought can find no entrance, and seemingly can have no existence. I must say I am sorry we are separated by such a long distance; for I should like much to have a little talk with you—not only to see your face again in the flesh, but to meet with an *out-and-out perfectionist*. I am no enemy of that class. I am persuaded that wherever the perfectionist is an *honest* man he is very likely enjoying a close walk with God. He has got the right thing; although, unfortunately, he is calling it by the wrong name. In my experience I have come across at least one thorough-going perfectionist—a man of an excellent spirit. He declared the “old man” to be dead completely. Well, you know, dear brother, I had my own opinion about that. I could perceive the working of the old man, even in the course of a brief conversation. But then it was hopeless to try to convince him of anything that ran counter to his theories. It

needed time for that; and time did the work. He discovered in the sanctuary of the Lord's presence that he was not so perfect as he had fondly imagined; and to my mind he is a more perfect Christian to-day than when he claimed to be completely delivered from everything pertaining to the flesh.

You seem to look on your past life as a blank—that is, up to the time when you entered upon “full salvation.” Well, as to that I cannot speak. You know your own experience best. But I would counsel you against the danger of concluding that your brethren who do not see eye-to-eye with you, are in a lamentable condition. You must not make yourself a standard of experience, and look down on those who have not travelled to Transfiguration Mount by the same path as yourself. I suppose there is a “second-blessing” sect who have a kind of commiseration for all who have not passed through the “second-blessing” experience. Well, what I say is this: If a brother finds a “second blessing”—if he passes into the experience of a communion unknown before—let him praise God for it; but don't let him look down upon all outside the “second-blessing” circle, as if they were in darkness even until now. He may have arrived at an experience, which has been *enjoyed for years* by many who are not making any profession of perfection! Indeed, I have remarked that believers professing the most absolute deliverance from the flesh, manifest in various little details that they are *not perfect yet*. On the other hand, there are those whose separated walk—whose Christ-like spirit even in the little details of life—cause you to say to yourself: “If there be such a thing as perfection on earth, I have found it now!” But lo! you discover that the brother makes

no such profession! He does not believe in the perfection theory! How he would have adorned the doctrine of "perfectionism"! What a living witness he would have been! Yet he lays no claim to such an attainment. To me this is significant. It tells me that there is a humility in true godliness—a humility that teaches the believer not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, and to give others credit for devotion and singleness of eye, although instead of a *second* blessing they can point to many, and look forward to many yet to come.

It is the lamentable lack of humility that is the most serious drawback to perfectionism. It is just here where it seems to me Satan has got in—although I know well that *his* share in the matter is utterly denied. A brother has, it may be, been leading a life at ease in Zion, when suddenly he becomes alarmed as to his condition. It is simply a matter for *confession and restoration to God*. But at this point an advocate of perfectionism comes upon the scene, and persuades him that he *never was right and never will be right* until he get the "second blessing"—"the blessing of a clean heart"—or "complete salvation." (It goes by various names). The brother, allured by a school of thought that promises an experience never reached before, yields himself anew to the Lord. He attributes his restoration to the *discovery* of "the truth" of perfectionism, and at once constitutes himself an ambassador of the new theology. He becomes lifted up with the thought that he is *perfectly delivered now*, and he looks down, as from a pinnacle, upon his brethren—who, it may be, have been going steadily on in faithful testimony all the time he was at ease in Zion! But now he has attained to an experience which they have never known!

Such, at least, is his claim. That he is *lifted up* there can be no manner of question. It is in this being "lifted up" that Satan gets his advantage. Failing to cultivate the meekness and gentleness of Christ, the perfectionist fails to adorn his own doctrine. And yet children of God who really adorn the perfection doctrine would be the last people in the world to lay claim to such an attainment!

Perfectionism, by whatever name you may choose to call it, has been weighed in the balances, and found wanting. The Scriptures of truth do not support its claims; and the lives of its professors do not confirm its teaching, however excellent many of these professors may be. Your aim is right; and I am satisfied that your motives are beyond question. But you err, dear brother, in the *absoluteness* of the perfection to which you lay claim. Your doctrine sounds well, and promises great things—even to adorn the believer with all the graces of the Christian character, and deliver him from every vestige of "the old man." But, if it is to produce these effects, it must *come down from its eminence*. The "lily of the field," which eclipsed Solomon in all his glory (Matt. vi. 29), is found in *the valley* (S. of S. ii. 1); and, if your doctrine is to have its due effect, it must *come down to the valley*—down from its pinnacle of self-complacency—to that valley in which *humility* shall be its fundamental tone. In fact, if modern perfectionism were adorned with the grace of *humility* it would be all that could be desired. But then, you know, it would cease to be perfectionism!

Yours, &c.

—♦—

STN is easily detected while we walk in the light. Where the light is brightest the shadow is darkest.

ITS OWN ATTAINMENTS.

PERFECTIONISM seems to dwell almost exclusively on the perfections of its own attainments. The thorough-going perfectionist is ever extolling his own experiences, rather than pointing you "off unto Jesus." But do we not believe in experiences? We do. And do we not believe in referring to what the Lord has done for us? We do. There is such a thing as saying, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God; and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." But that merely comes in "by the way." It is not the centre of our theology. Our great work here is to shine for God, and bear witness to Christ. You may say, "But is the trumpet of testimony not to be sounded?" Most surely, we reply; but the trumpet of testimony is not for the purpose of proclaiming *how brightly our own light is shining*. Others will be found the best judges as to *that*. When the sun rises, it needs no proclamation written across the sky to tell us that the night is gone. And if our dear brethren who profess to be dwelling in fadeless light were simply to let their light be its own witness, they would have a power that mere self-assertion can never possess. We make no extraordinary statement when we say there are many who, if they had not professed to have reached a perfection state, would never have been suspected of being in that condition. It is well to let our own perfections speak for themselves. Moses did not stand

before Israel to proclaim how his face was shining. He did not even know that it shone!

FRAUGHT WITH SERIOUS EVILS.

THE teaching of absolute perfectionism is fraught with far more serious evils than may appear at first sight. It seeks to establish such a lofty standard of experience that the brother who espouses its cause soon finds himself in a difficult position. He discovers that his actual experience does not agree with the theories of perfectionism. It has led him to expect too much. Yet he is loth to admit that anything is wrong with his perfection theories. If some little failure crops up, what is he to do? Conscience at once says, "Where is your perfectionism now?" Is he to throw up his profession of "absolute deliverance from all that is of the flesh"? He feels that this would be a most humiliating proceeding. It would virtually mean that his perfection theories were a mistake, and that he had taken up an untenable position. This would never do! Seeing, then, that he cannot square the perfection theory with the facts of his experience, there is a strong temptation for him to square the facts of his experience with the perfection theory! The "little failure"—the hasty word—the uncharitable thought—is accordingly "explained" and shown, to his own satisfaction, to have had no connection whatever with the workings of the flesh!


The brother is simply *compelled* to do this—or throw his perfection theories overboard. The standard of vital godliness, thus lowered, goes on descending as occasion may require, until the brother's profession of perfect deliverance becomes like Saul's profession of obedience,—plainly contradicted by the lowing of the oxen (1 Sam. xv. 14) which can be perceived by any one who has ears to hear. Perfectionism may begin with a most exalted standard of godliness; but in the end thereof the standard is low enough. Perfection tends to create an unreal and an artificial life, simply because it flatters the man that he is what he *is not*. If he makes the smallest slip he is tempted to conceal from others—and even from himself—that he has contracted the slightest defilement. This nips confession in the bud, covers up the germs of evil, fosters self-sufficiency, and inevitably leads to spiritual bankruptcy.

NO EXCUSE.

IT is no excuse to be silent because you believe your testimony will be rejected. A time may come when, in the leading of God, you may bring your testimony to a close. There is such a thing as hearing the Lord's voice saying, "Ye have compassed this mountain long enough" (Deut. ii. 3). There is such a thing as delivering your soul, and then leaving your message with God. But the mere fact that your testimony is "sure to be rejected" is no argument

why you should not deliver it. He who bears God's message has no need to "have anxious thought" as to whether it shall be received or rejected. His responsibility ceases with the delivering of the message. God will be honoured even in the rejection of His message. It will not be without its effect. It will have *this* effect at least—it will *make manifest* what is not of God. "Whatever doth make manifest is light" (Eph. v. 13). This is ever the case, more or less, with God's message. You may say that it is without any effect. But there is an effect, if we only had the eyes to see. It *manifests those who reject it*. God's message brings to light the hidden things of darkness, and shows clearly that the Lord's message is not wanted simply because the Lord Himself is not wanted. Our Lord's testimony was so utterly rejected in the days of His flesh that His Jewish brethren had no rest until He was "cut off out of the land of the living." His testimony was rejected; but it was not therefore fruitless. It served to tear off the mask of hypocrisy that concealed the deadly enmity of the human heart. It manifested what was in man. But while the thoughts of many hearts were revealed (Lu. ii. 35), there were those who accepted the counsel of God against themselves, and received the Promised One. Thus it is ever with heavenly testimony. Though it may seem to be rejected on all sides, it is yet doing its heaven-appointed work—the full effect of which will not be seen till the Day of Christ.

THE WOMAN OF CANAAN.

“ END her away,” said the disciples ; “for she crieth after us” (Matt. xv. 23). Give her what she wants, they seemed to say ; or bid her depart. Their patience was worn out ere its trial had done more than make a beginning. And why should the Master be troubled by this woman of an alien race?—one who had no *claim* upon His blessings—a veritable “stranger to the covenants of promise.” If He chose, in grace, to do anything for her, they had no objection. In any case, there was no use in prolonging the scene. But the Master in His infinite wisdom saw fit to deal with the woman in a different way. She was no “trouble” to *Him* : she did not weary out *His* patience. And although He might seem deaf to her pleadings, His heart of love had already devised a far greater blessing for that “sinner of the Gentiles” than had entered the thoughts of His disciples. But *grace* must flow through *righteousness*. He must set the woman in her true position. A blessing would have done her no good—would indeed have been impossible—while she was in a false position before God. Before *grace* could reach her, *truth* must do its work. “It is not meet,” said the Lord, “to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.” This at once set matters in their true light. Did she see—did she acknowledge—that she had no claim whatever on the riches of His grace? The position which the truth gave her was humbling in the

extreme—even to remind her that she was only one of the Gentile dogs (for without are dogs, Rev. xxii. 15), who are outside the circle of covenant relationship with God, and who have no right to the children’s bread. The woman at once acknowledges the truth of all that the Lord had spoken. Yet her already dawning faith turns His own words back upon Himself and says, “Truth, Lord : yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table” (Matt. xv. 27). A “crumb” of grace from *Him* will be a store of grace for *her* ; and according to the tenor of His own words He surely will not refuse the needed “crumb.” This was all that our Lord wanted. She had seen *herself* : now she would see *Himself*. The truth had done its work : now grace would flow like a river. The woman had overcome Him with His own sword, it is true ; but it was He Himself who had placed that sword in her hand. He patiently, lovingly, led her out, through the truth, to the treasures of His grace ; and then she was free to help herself to as much of these treasures as her faith could carry away. Precious lessons are here for all who would win souls for Christ, and be true workers “of God.” Truth, apart from grace, would have sent the woman empty away ; and grace, apart from truth, would have put her into a false position, and therefore conferred only a false “blessing.” But *grace and truth* magnified God’s righteousness, reached the woman’s heart, and then sent her away laden with blessing.

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REVIVAL AT HAND.

HE impression is gaining ground that we will, ere long, be visited by a revival of spiritual power from the presence of the Lord. Signs and tokens are already visible that point to revival times near at hand. Even the bare prospect of a "day of power" is sufficient to cause every devoted heart to rejoice and leap for joy.

But why should revival be looked for at this time more than at any other time? We cannot tell. We simply note the signs and tokens, and the circumstance that revival is already going on in individual hearts. Doubtless, from many a "closet" and many a "desert place" the prayer has been going up, "Wilt Thou not revive us again?" God's people feel that their prayers have been heard. They have got the ear of the Lord as to this great matter. They already feel the revival fire beginning to glow in their own hearts. They have a foretaste of what is coming. Their faith is strengthened accordingly. They are persuaded that the Lord will soon ride forth unto victory—that He is about to "come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth."

Explain it as you may, it seems ever to have been God's manner of working to refresh His heritage by *Revivals*, these being separated by longer or shorter periods of time. We know there are those who advocate *revival all the time*—who hold that God's people should never be in any other condition than a revival condition; in which case no *special* revival time is necessary. Quite true. But then God's people are not always in the condition they ought to be in. Our God graciously condescends to deal with them *as they are*; and when they are saying, "Long hath the night of sorrow reigned," lo! He is preparing for them such a revival time as will cause their faces to shine.

Revival from the presence of the Lord brings untold blessings in its train, and produces effects which, to all appearance, could not be produced by any other means. One of the first fruits of revival is to *raise the standard of vital godliness*. Wherever revival light is shining the hidden things of dishonesty are made manifest. Consciences become sensitive to the slightest defilement of the flesh. Whatever may have been *customary* in the past, it is felt that nothing will do *now* except that which will bear the light

of God. The formalist feels that his long, monotonous prayers are out of date in presence of the revival fire. Lifeless ministry has to stand aside abashed. God's people are feasting on the shew-bread of the heavenly sanctuary, and they refuse to be satisfied with anything that has not come *from above*. Then worldliness has to hide its head. A certain amount of worldly conformity might escape the sword of truth while "things were quiet." But it is revival times now; and there is *no mercy for Agag*.

Revival creates soul-thirst for God, and thus tends to *deepen communion*. In a revival atmosphere it is simply a delight to wait upon the Lord. It is then that the courts of His immediate presence are thronged with adoring hearts, drawn thither to have a little time "alone with Jesus," and to "behold and admire the beauty of the Lord." The darkness is past; the true light is shining; and the saints of God are so abundantly satisfied with their heavenly portion, that they wonder how they were ever allured by the weak and beggarly elements of the world. It is noontide in their experience. The revival sun is in the zenith; and their longing desire is, that they may never see that sun haste unto his going down.

Then revival means great prosperity in all departments of the Lord's work. Witnesses arise on every side to bear testimony to the goodness of the Lord. The word is preached in power. God's messengers stand forth in the boldness

of faith, and the tenderness of love, to tell out the tidings of salvation. The ungodly are made to feel that the Kingdom of God is come nigh. Many see it, and fear, and trust in the Lord. God's people find themselves called to rejoice over lost ones found, and wanderers brought back to God. They are amazed as they behold the lovingkindness of the Lord. They can only bow their heads and worship, while saying, "It is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes."

Therefore, let us seek unto God that we may hasten the coming of another great *Revival Day*. Satan does not want such a day; he will resist it with all his might. But while Satan is *mighty*, He that is with us is *almighty*. We need not expect a unanimous cry to go up to Heaven for a flood-tide of revival power. Such a flood-tide would no doubt sadly disturb the reign of formalism; and those who tread that well-beaten track would find a revival time a *trying* time. The new wine would burst the old bottles. The Lord hasten that day, unto the praise of His glory!

"WHAT JOAB THE SON OF ZERUIAH DID TO ME."

WHEN David was handing over the kingdom to Solomon, his son, two men were specially singled out for judgment—Shimei, the son of Gera; and Joab, well known as the captain of David's host. Leaving Shimei

alone for the present, let us glance briefly at David's dying charge concerning Joab. "Moreover," said he, "thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet. Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace" (1 Kings ii. 5, 6). Joab is here accused of *three* things, (1) the death of Abner, (2) the death of Amasa, and (3) something that Joab had done to David himself. But what was that something? We find it on turning to 2 Sam. xix. 5-7. The Absalom rebellion had just been brought to a disastrous close by the battle in the wood of Ephraim. The king, before his three captains had set out for the battle, had given strict commandment concerning Absalom. "Deal gently," he said, "for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom." "And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom." Yet, in spite of this express commandment of the king, Joab thrust Absalom through the heart while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. With Joab's *reasons* for this action we have little to do. He had received a plain commandment, and his simple duty was to obey. But the "mighty captain" knew little about the true spirit of obedience to the

king's command. His own purpose must be served — his own revenge must be taken; and this with a blood-thirstiness and cruelty in perfect keeping with his whole past career. All the people had heard the king's commandment ere the battle commenced; and at the close of the battle it would no doubt be well known how grossly that commandment had been violated. This being so, we can easily understand how on hearing of the king's sorrow for Absalom's death "the people gat them by stealth that day into the city." The violation of the king's order had cast a gloom over everything. The people felt this. Instead of returning as victors from a well-won fight, they got back "as people being ashamed, steal away when they flee in battle."

David was mourning for his son. The victory of the wood of Ephraim was swallowed up in the death of Absalom; and Israel were evidently mourning with their king. This was more than Joab could stand; and it was simply an aggravation of his misery to reflect that his own hand had driven the fatal dart that made Absalom's death a certainty. Joab could not but feel that *his* action would be directly associated with the dark cloud that hung over the king's head. Indeed, David's mourning for Absalom was in itself a powerful condemnation of Joab's conduct. All this would be gall and wormwood to the great schemer. His popularity might be seriously affected. Perhaps the tide had already set in against him. This must

be averted at all hazards. He will bring things to a crisis. He accordingly repairs to the king and thus addresses him: "Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines; in that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends: for thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well" (2 Sam. xix. 5, 6). This was no language for one in the place of subjection. It gives us a sad illustration of the extent of Joab's devotion to David. In the words which follow: "If thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night," we can almost perceive the threat that Joab was prepared to be another Absalom, and to head a new rebellion. All this must have been very galling to David. But he was in no mood for further battles. He did not seem inclined to defy his old captain—although afterwards show how carefully David treasured up the details of that trying scene in his memory. The result was that "the king arose, and sat in the gate," &c. Joab was pleased; the people were pacified—if they needed to be pacified; and the danger of a new rebellion was averted—if any such danger had existed.

David seemed to be utterly powerless to deal with Joab; it seemed to need a Solomon for that. What a strange,

irresistible influence the captain of the host exercised over the king!—a startling illustration of the influence which a man of a low cast of mind will sometimes exercise over one of an excellent spirit. David would have been rid of him if he could. He groaned at the thought that such a violent and self-willed man should have to be recognised as a leader in the hosts of Israel. Yet David evidently felt that he was not the man to deal with Joab. In being brought face-to-face with his crimes, he might have attempted to rend the kingdom. Then perhaps he was not yet *fully* manifest as the "bloody and deceitful man." Then, again, David may have felt his hands weakened by the fatal letter (See 2 Sam. xi. 14) which, for anything he knew, might be still in Joab's possession. But, whatever may have been the cause or causes of David's failure to bring down the sword of judgment upon his own captain, certain it is, that it was not from any want of being *convinced* that the sword should fall. The king was perfectly persuaded that the hoar head of Joab should not be permitted to go down to the grave without blood. When David was old and stricken in years (1 Kings i. 1) he remembered all the events associated with the wood of Ephraim, and had evidently taken care that they should be rehearsed in the ear of Solomon (See 1 Kings ii. 5). Judgment might be delayed; but it was none the less certain. Joab might escape under David's reign; but the reign of Solomon would manifest the traitor heart of the great

captain. Such was its precise effect. Judgment followed ; and thus the throne of king Solomon was established in righteousness.

SOME MORAL ASPECTS OF THE BATTLE IN THE WOOD OF EPHRAIM.

IF obedience is the test of faithfulness, we have a striking illustration of this in one of the incidents in the wood of Ephraim. When Absalom's mule left him hanging in the oak, we are told that a certain man saw it, and told Joab—a very proper thing to do, if haply his superior officer might think of saving Absalom alive. But no such thought was in Joab's heart. "And why didst thou not smite him there to the ground?" said he, "and I would have given thee ten shekels of silver, and a girdle." To this the man indignantly replied that a thousand shekels of silver in his hand would not induce him to transgress the command of the king, "Beware that none touch the young man Absalom" (2 Sam. xviii. 12). Here was a faithful heart—although only a "rank-and-file" man. Indeed, we are unable to give his name ; for he is referred to merely as "a certain man" (ver. 10). Yet how truly devoted he was to the person of David ! How he trembled at the word of the king ! Beautiful type of those who in this day are "only" obscure believers, yet faithful in their allegiance to the absent One, and obedient to His Word, even though "shekels of silver" are held

out to allure them from the path of righteousness. The church may not set a great value upon them ; they may be unknown in all the chief-seats of honour. Yet their faithfulness shall have its reward. The judgment-seat shall manifest these "hidden ones." The quiet but powerful testimony of steady obedience to that which is written, shall be acknowledged at last ; while men of the Joab spirit shall find that many who were first on earth shall be last in Heaven !

In the wood of Ephraim Joab stands forth as the type of those who, while occupying a high religious position, care but little for the express commandment of the absent Lord. They must needs carry out their private revenge, even although the word of the Lord should be sacrificed in the attempt. While professing to lead others—yea, to rule others—they afford but little evidence that they themselves are subject to the Father of spirits. Possessed of a hard, unbending nature, they evidently go upon the principle, "I must carry my point in spite of all opposition." Whatever subjection they may gain, is the subjection of fear and not of love. Whatever ascendancy they may acquire, owes its chief inspiration to their own iron will, that overawes all who are not bold enough to resist it. These may have a certain influence with ill-instructed minds and unexercised hearts. But the spiritual reject them utterly ; and, if they be not turned into other men, it will fare hard with them in the coming Day of manifestation. What a difference of

position between the great general and the "certain man" who saw Absalom in the wood of Ephraim! Yet—solemn truth!—there was as great a moral difference between them, but with the positions reversed! If these things are written for our learning upon whom the ends of the age are come, need we be surprised if as startling things are to be found in the church of God to-day?

When Joab confronted David with the threat that if the king would not appear before the people, not a single follower would be left to him by the morning light, we can easily understand how galling this must have been to a sensitive nature like David's. And it would be all the more irritating coming from a man who was unworthy even to unloose the king's shoe latchet. How humiliating it is for a man of God to be bearded in the hour of his deepest trial by some son of Belial! How David would inwardly groan to be dictated to by a man whom he detested with all his heart! While the king submitted, he had no doubt his eye on a future day when the sword of the wise and powerful Solomon would mete out to Joab the due reward of his deeds.

In the present day the child of faith may find himself in not dissimilar circumstances—vehemently urged by some carnal believer to pursue a certain path of expediency, or else run the risk of forfeiting the esteem of God's saints. Happy they who are not in the power of such men—who have not compromised themselves as, alas! the king of Israel

had done; and who can at once repel the suggestions of a carnal mind—as David did in an earlier and a purer day of his experience (1 Sam. xxvi. 9).


GRACE AND INTELLECT.

WE must not imagine that a high degree of intelligence is absolutely necessary in order to attain a high standard of devotion to the person of Christ. Grace and intellect are two very different things. You will find believers of such a humble grade of intellect that their mind cannot contain more than two steps of an argument at a time; and yet in grace they are giants—Israelites in whom is no guile. They do not know a great deal; but they practice what they know. In connection with the truth there are many mysteries which they cannot explain. But their every-day life proclaims the great truth—*Christ manifest in the mortal body.* They may be poor hands at expounding the types, and of very little account in opening up the coming events of prophecy. But they are great in love. They have the spirit of Christ—their citizenship is in Heaven—and they walk even as He walked. On the other hand, there are those who possess a towering intellect. These can handle a chain of argument with the ability of a barrister-at-law, and lay down lines of truth as if they had all the mysteries of revelation at their finger-ends. Yet you may find all this along with a lamentable lack of

grace. Their theology may be clear enough; but it lacks the all-important element of burning devotion to the person of Christ. It is devoid of a certain simplicity and artlessness ever found where Christ is acknowledged as Lord in the heart. Intellect is not grace, and cannot take the place of grace, though often mistaken the one for the other. On the contrary, where there is gigantic intellect apart from *grace to balance it*, intellect will exalt itself, and, seeking to bring the mysteries of revelation under the rules of human reason, will virtually assume to be wiser than God.

We are not of those who run down intellectual power, as if it must needs be a hindrance to spiritual progress. Other things being equal, intelligence is vastly to be preferred to dullness of apprehension. God's people in all times have been marvellously helped of God through those who have combined great spiritual power with a high standard of intelligence. The apostle Paul himself, not behind the very chiefest apostles (2 Cor. xi. 5), will furnish a striking example at this point. The centuries that have followed the apostle's day, are simply teeming with examples. Therefore let no one decry intellect. Like every good gift it may be abused; but that is no reason why it should be despised. No one will doubt for a moment that in assembly life intellectual power *has* been abused. It is only the coming Day that shall declare the havoc that has been wrought by men great in intellect and small in grace.

FALSE PROFESSORS.

E have received a Letter from one of the Lord's labourers on the other side of the Atlantic, requesting us to reprint (in the *Treasury*), an article headed, "False Professors," which appeared in an old number of the *Pathway* (March, 1883). It appears that a professed believer, who went from "the old country" in "full church standing," had seen this article in America, and through it discovered that he had *never been born again*. Since then, however, he has been brought to Jesus' feet, and is bringing forth the fruits of the new life. Although not just in accordance with our rule, we insert the article here; and this the more readily as it is only a small proportion of *Treasury* readers that can have had the opportunity of seeing it.

IN dealing with the sins and inconsistencies of the saints, we need to be sure that they *are* saints. We must be careful to keep both sides of the truth before us. That children of God may go wrong, is painfully evident. This is one side of the truth. But the other side is this, that there is a vast number of people professing to be converted, who give *no evidence whatever* that they have the life of God in the soul. In a day of so much profession, the name of this class is legion. The question therefore arises, "How are you to know who is born again, and who is not?" Scripture replies, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Profession will avail nothing. It is *fruit* which the Word of God requires; and it is fruit which an unbelieving world demands. It used to be popular to profess

"religion." These were the days when being born again was scarcely ever mentioned. But, during the past few years, the truth of the new birth and conversion unto God, has been heralded forth by hundreds of preachers in every corner of the country. One great result, no doubt, has been that many have believed and turned to the Lord. But another result has followed, and it is this: *profession of conversion has in many quarters become popular*; for the Devil can accommodate himself to the times. And what do we now see but crowds professing to be saved, and giving day and date for conversion, and chapter and verse for it too; while at the same time there is not the slightest evidence in the shape of "fruit" that they have been *born of the Spirit!* There is no difference between them and the world, except that they profess conversion and the world does not. The gross sins of drunkenness and the like may be thrown off; but this is all the change so far as outward evidence is concerned. They can use their tongues just as smartly as the unconverted, and give cut for cut as well as the world. They lose their temper just as they used to do, and can talk the world's gossip with as much relish as the worldling. They feed upon the world's news and find kindred joys with those whose minds are enmity against God. They can attend and enjoy the world's gatherings, and patronise the world's entertainments. They are as fond of dress as they used to be, and they sometimes actually surpass the world in outward adornment and display; and instead of reminding the world of Christ, they cause the world to envy their splendid turn-out. God says, "Be not conformed to the world." But they have a counter text which says, "If you live in Rome, you must do as the

Romans do." These professors are as fond of money as the world. In the "old days" they spent money freely on what they called the service of the Devil; and no expenses were spared to carry on "the cause," whatever it might be. But money for such purposes is not needed with them now. What then is being done with it? Where is the money that used to be spent on tobacco and drink? Is it not one of the strange things of Christendom that money for God's work and God's servants has to be literally dragged out of the reluctant pockets of those who profess to be laying up treasure in heaven, and counting all things loss for Christ? Many indeed seem to be seized with a love of money as soon as they profess conversion. You search in vain for evidence of the new creation. Others again are in debt when they profess; yet conscience is so little aroused that they never think of denying self in order to "owe no man anything." On the contrary, you find many going deeper into debt in order to keep up a well-to-do appearance before men. In short, you will find many professing born-again people saying things and doing things which many decent unconverted people would blush to be guilty of. We do not wish to justify the ungodly, for (whatever their amiability) they must be born again. Neither would we wittingly wound a single member of Christ. But what we ask is this: Is any one entitled to believe that such professors as we have been describing, are converted at all? Where there is no fruit of the new life, are we warranted to believe that the new life is there? Is it not a grave responsibility to encourage people in the belief that they are safe in Christ, while almost every scriptural evidence of conversion is wanting? The Word of

God says, that "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." The faith of our Lord Jesus Christ is a great reality transforming a man's life. We cannot see the Book of Life; but we can see a man's life. Conversion unto God takes possession of a man and all that he has. It lays hold of his purse and places it on the altar for God, saying, "There, Lord; that is Thine; what wouldst Thou have me to do with it?" Conversion lays hold of a man's tongue, and causes him to delight in speaking of the things that concern the King. Conversion lays hold of the feet, and causes them to walk in the ways of the Lord. In short, regeneration by the Holy Spirit brings with it a "new creation," which manifests itself in every action and transaction of our daily life. We believe in conversion unto God; and we believe in a free and eternal salvation; but we as strongly believe that when conversion is the work of the Spirit of God, there will be outward evidence of the mighty change within. There will be fruit unto holiness, if the end is to be everlasting life. If professing converts are living like the world as we have been describing, they have no evidence themselves that they are God's children; and they are giving no evidence to the world or the church that they are such. It is surely high time we were ceasing to be satisfied with mere professions. Where there is no outward transformation to correspond with the professed inward regeneration, let us be careful how we "lay the flattering unction to the soul" of such an one that he is a member of Christ. Let God's truth be faithfully proclaimed. Shun not to declare all the counsel of God. The standard of His Word has

been brought down, degree by degree, to suit the state of things among God's people, until now the worldling can profess and *pass* as one of the converts, while a vast number of the converts are actually inferior in moral tone to respectable men of the world who make no profession! What we need is to let the standard remain *up* where God has put it, and *get God's people up to it*; and, when the fire of God is filling our souls, the "strange children," begotten of fleshly energy, will sink to their own level, saying, "this is too warm for us;" or else, aroused to their own state as Christless professors, they will turn unto God and be saved, and show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

OPPOSING THE DOCTRINE OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY.

GOD'S sovereignty in calling whom He will, is a truth which the carnal mind kicks against with all its might. Witness the effect of our Lord's address in the synagogue of Nazareth (Lu. iv. 16-30). His words on that occasion contained a complete message of grace and truth; for "grace and truth" not only "came by Jesus Christ" but were ever manifesting themselves in Him. In the synagogue of Nazareth *grace* came first. The people listened attentively enough while our Lord told of liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison doors to them that were bound. Yea, they "wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth." But our Lord had

another message for them — or, rather, the other half of the same message. *Grace* had been unfolded: now *truth* was to be proclaimed. Our Lord then proceeded to make perhaps the most startling declaration of God's sovereignty which is to be found anywhere in Scripture; and this by two references to the sacred writings with which His hearers were doubtless familiar. "Many widows," He said, "were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow" (Luke iv. 25, 26). Then followed the case of Naaman, the *Syrian*, who was cleansed of his leprosy while the "many lepers" in *Israel* were all passed over. There were many widows in Israel. Yet the prophet of the Lord was sent unto a widow who did not belong to the favoured nation at all! Perhaps the Jews had fancied that by virtue of their covenant-relationship with Jehovah, the choicest blessings of Heaven must fall upon *them*. Perhaps they had been cherishing the delusion that they were the sole channels of heavenly blessing, and that if any crumb of grace reached the Gentile world it could only be that which might chance to fall from the Jewish table. But our Lord taught them, and taught them from their own Scriptures, that the God of Heaven will not be dictated to by the pride and self-complacency of man. He will do as He chooses. He will be

entirely unfettered in the exercise of His sovereign will. The Jews no doubt reasoned that if *any* widow was to be honoured by a prophet's visit, it ought to be one of the commonwealth of Israel; and that if any leper was to be cleansed, an Israelite should have clear precedence over a stranger such as Naaman. But there was one thing they did not reckon with, and that was *God's sovereignty*. What effect had the truth of God's sovereignty upon the people in the synagogue of Nazareth? It roused them to a madness of fury. They could not bear it. And they who, a few minutes before, had wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of the Master's mouth, were now intent upon casting Him over the brow of the hill on which the city was built. But our Lord's time had not come; and they were therefore prevented from carrying out their awful purpose.

All this will be found in the religious world to-day. People listen with joy to the doctrines of grace pure and simple. They say, "That is very nice: it is just the kind of preaching we like." But let the preacher bring in some of the thunderings of God's sovereignty, and lo! what a change! The people turn round at once and say, "We don't want *that*." In short, the carnal mind, which is not subject to the law of God (Rom. viii. 7), is as little subject to the sovereignty of God. Most determined efforts have been made to *reason* God's sovereignty out of the Bible. It seems that the carnal mind must be accommodated.

Congregations composed almost entirely of the unconverted, of course rebelled against God's sovereignty. Nothing else was to be looked for. What was to be done? Worldly wisdom at once resolved to "meet the views of the people," by toning down the doctrine of God's sovereignty, so as to commend itself to the carnal mind! Thus the truth has been sacrificed in order to please the people. But the doctrines of grace remain untouched. Yea, they are poured like oil upon the heads of the people. But what avails *grace* if you separate it from the salt of truth? This opposition to God's sovereignty is no new thing. It is as old as the synagogue of Nazareth. You there find it in its fullest development. And why did they cast Him out? Simply because they could not bear His word. Their opposition to the sovereignty of God was the proof and manifestation that they had *not* received the message of grace with which our Lord opened His discourse. If they had truly received the message of grace, they would not have cavilled at the message which reminded them of God's sovereignty. On the contrary, like the Psalmist, they would have been ready to exclaim, "I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right" (Ps. cxix. 128). In all modern opposition to the doctrine of God's sovereignty we make bold to say that you will find similar causes at work. The carnal mind is bound to oppose the truth; while it is only those who are subject to God that shall be found approving His actings.

JOY.

WHAT may be the joys of "over yonder" we know not. But there is no joy on earth to equal that of the soul at the moment when the darkness is dispelled — when the Holy Spirit enters, and the words fall on the ear, "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee." Years may come and go, but the memory of that moment cannot be effaced.

There is no real joy in anything of earth. We enter this world in pain and travail, and leave it with a struggle and a sob. The only bliss we have is from the moment we pass out of death into life. Circumstances at times get the better of us, and sorrow, it may be, takes the place of joy. But there are no circumstances in which we can be placed but will yield their joys and comforts, provided we are duly exercised in heart before God. The assaults of the Devil, the misjudgings of our brethren, the desires of the flesh, but drive us closer to the Mercy-seat, and make us cleave with purpose of heart to the Lord.


There is a joy in every new truth opened up in the Scriptures to our understandings. Call to mind those steps of the way, when drinking in the revelations of God, how the heart leaped for joy, as the great doctrines of God unfolded themselves to our heart. Thus we have felt the reality of the words: "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

But there is yet another—a chastened

joy, but perhaps the deepest and most lasting of all ; and that is when in life's journey we find ourselves in the exact circumstances anticipated by our Father ; and the word which, it may be, years before we had learned, believed, and rejoiced in, comes to our soul with a new and added power, in that the time has come, when our need is exactly met by the comforting word of God.

It is one thing to minister the Word, and seek to comfort those sorrowing at the loss of loved ones. It is another to have these words ministered to the soul when the bereavement has come to our own door. But it is in these very circumstances that we learn anew that it is God alone who comforteth. Heaven becomes more real. God as the Father is a sweeter thought ; and the tears of Jesus have a significance unknown before. Thus, out of our sorrows we can praise God, and say whilst His mercies are great, our trials are often our greatest mercies ; seeing that out of them spring our most hallowed joys. H.

HABAKKUK.

 HIS book begins with a burden, and ends with a song. It is not uncommon to find that God, in revealing Himself, by the apostles and prophets, in matters that covered all time, and looked forward into eternity, was at the same time giving His people needed lessons in their own experience. This is very marked in the book before us.

Chapter 1 shows us a godly man moved with indignation, as he looked on the circumstances around him. Iniquity and spoiling, with violence and contention, surrounded him on every side. His vexed spirit could find comfort nowhere ; and for a little moment it would appear as if he had come to the conclusion that God had forgotten and forsaken, and that he alone was concerned about the sin and desolation that abounded on every hand.

In chapter 2 the prophet evidently suspects that he is not altogether in a right spirit ; for we hear him saying : " I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved." The last words of this verse tell that he was ill-at-ease, and already awakened to the fact that he had misjudged God. The answer comes clear and unmistakable. God's ways are not as ours. He never slumbers nor sleeps. He will not hasten His work that we may see it. But this much is made plain. Iniquity will not go unpunished. After the besom of destruction will come the glory of the Lord ; and where sin abounded, grace and glory will yet the more abound.

Meantime patience is to be the watchword of the tried and suffering ones. Chapter 3 finds the prophet humbled in prayer for others ; and the book closes with a burst of praise amongst the brightest in Scripture, that, let circumstances be what they may, faith will ever joy and rejoice in the Lord. H.

THE WORDS, "HOLY GHOST."

IT is a great pity that the English revisers did not accept the recommendation of their American brethren regarding the expression "Holy Ghost." The American revisers object to the expression entirely, and rightly so. They do not believe it should appear in Holy Writ. If you turn to the end of a "Revised," under "List of readings and renderings preferred by the American Committee," you will find the words, "For '*Holy Ghost*' adopt uniformly the rendering '*Holy Spirit*.'" That is to say, in every case where the words "Holy Ghost" occur, the rendering should be "Holy Spirit." For what reason the English revisers rejected this recommendation we are utterly at a loss to conceive. Unfortunately they give no reasons. The reasons however, for the uniform rendering, "*Holy Spirit*," are perfectly obvious. A little calm reflection will show that the term "Ghost," as applied to the Holy Spirit of God, is simply meaningless and irreverent. He is a blessed personality. If you wish to be helped, upon this point you have simply to select a passage in which the word *Spirit* occurs *without any adjective before it*, and then read the passage with the word *Ghost* instead of *Spirit*. Take, for example, the passage which reads, "The *Spirit* searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. ii. 10). To render such a passage with the word "*Ghost*" would shock your ideas of scriptural propriety. But the adjective

before the word "Ghost" really does not get you over the difficulty: it simply *tones down* the expression a little, but affords no justification whatever for its being retained in the English Text. However devout and well-meaning many may be who use the words "Holy Ghost," it is perfectly clear that the *uniform* rendering should be *Holy Spirit*. We know that old-established habit is hard to die. Yet we have confidence that many brethren need only to have their attention called to this matter in order to show them how desirable it is to observe the form of sound words in dealing with scriptural subjects generally, and none the less so in speaking of the Holy Spirit of God.

Some brethren seem actually to *prefer* the expression, "*Holy Ghost*." The only reason for this preference seems to be the fact that that expression has a more *euphonious sound* than "Holy Spirit." In giving forth the phrase, "Who have preached the Gospel unto you with the *Holy Ghost* sent down from Heaven," some preachers lay special emphasis on the two italicised words—the "effect" of which they evidently fancy would be lost if they had to use the phrase, "Holy Spirit." But the mere effect of a long-vowel sound must be allowed no weight in determining "the form of sound words" in this case. Although the English revisers have done all they could to perpetuate the use of the unhappy phrase, let us be thankful that the American revisers have done all they could to eliminate it from the page of Scripture.

SOME ELEMENTARY TRUTHS.

(Second Paper).

AFTER the young converts find themselves separated *unto* Christ as Lord—and therefore separated *from* that which is not of Him—they discover that they are in a position of *church responsibility*. This sounds “big” in the ears of some of the converts. “A bold step, surely,” they say—“to call ourselves a church, and act as if we were one.” Well, you may call it bold. Yet we question if that word properly applies to a step in which we are simply obeying the call of God. In the religious world it is considered an extraordinary thing for a company of God's saints to acknowledge the one great gathering Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to seek to carry out scriptural church principles; while it is not considered at all extraordinary for children of God to remain in “the congregation of the dead,” under a man-made ministry, perhaps under a preacher who has never been born again! But we need not stay to point out these “mysterious” things. The rule for our guidance is not that which is popular in the religious world, but that which is recorded in the unchanging Scriptures of Truth. Turning, then, to *the Word*, the young converts find themselves called to the responsibilities of church government, church order, and church discipline. But how are they to proceed? Can they move without “a minister”? Certainly. There is no necessity whatever, to them at least, for one known in the

religious world as “*the minister*.” Some may be startled to be told that in the New Testament there is no vestige of a reference to such an individual. We may be referred to Luke iv. 20, where our Lord handed the roll to “the minister.” But “the minister” there simply refers to the synagogue attendant (See Revised Version)—a very much inferior personage to what is now known as “the minister.” *The minister* is unknown in the New-Testament writings. But *ministers* (plural number) are found constantly in its pages. Man, in his supposed wisdom, has selected *one man* whom he sets at the head of a congregation, and of whom he says: “This man is *the minister*, and there are no more ministers here”! At the same time there may be half-a-dozen men gifted of God in that congregation, at whose feet “the minister” might sit with profit. Yet they dare not open their mouths, and “the minister” does everything in “performing worship,” albeit he may not be a man gifted of God at all, however high in natural ability and acquired knowledge. Yes, the young converts can move, and *do* move, without “the minister.” It is God who gives ministers. His people therefore wait upon Him that it may be made manifest whom *He* has fitted to minister the Word—or to minister in some other way, such as in caring for the flock, and seeing to the carrying out of God's rule in the Church.

Although we may speak of a company of believers generally as young converts, yet in such cases there will be found

some with a more extended experience—sufficient to qualify them for taking a lead among their brethren. This implies *a circle within a circle*; and the prosperity of a church in great measure depends on a due recognition of the difference between these two circles. The larger circle is the circle of the church: the smaller circle consists of those in the church who seek to have a godly care of the saints, and to see the rule of God carried out. Newly-gathered companies of believers have (from want of light) attempted to carry out church order as if *all* were ministers, and *all* were overseers alike. But the very difficulties that soon blocked the way at once showed that something was wanting. On an appeal to the Word it was found that the order of God's House was to be maintained by those whom He had called to that work, and that He had set the various members in the body as it hath pleased Him (1 Cor. xiii. 18). No sooner was there a due recognition of those whom the Lord had fitted for oversight work than it was felt that a new and health-giving power had been introduced into the Assembly. The young converts of whom we have been speaking, either discovered in the Word, or were instructed from the Word, that every one is not alike in the church, and that to leave a *one-man* ministry for an *any-man* ministry was simply to exchange one error for another. If they were to carry out the scriptural order of a church of Christ, they were brought to see that this could only be done by giving heed to what

Scripture says concerning the Lord's gifts to the church, and the distinction He has marked between the saints in general and those (be they few or many) who, in the fear of God, stretch forward unto oversight work. When this diversity of gift is recognised, while in lowliness and meekness there is an endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, each believer quietly settles down into his own place, and the work of the Assembly goes on to the glory of God and the blessing of all.

EVER THE SAME.

HOW precious the thought that there is One who changes not with changing years! What unbounded consolation is found in the words, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever"! We are subject to many changes. External circumstances affect us. The "constant mind" is not the possession of all. Then our brethren are subject to change. Their attitude towards us varies—often without a cause, at least so far as we know. Therefore it is that we instinctively turn to Him who is ever the same—whose love never grows cold—whose ear is never weary; and with whom we can speak at all times of all the trials of the way.

* * * Owing to the illness of the Editor of this Paper, the present number is a little late in appearing. Our friends will therefore kindly bear with us in these circumstances.

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Vol. VI.

ONE CAUSE OF DECLENSION.

YOU may have observed that in the course of years certain companies of believers give evidence that they are clearly *coming down* in spiritual tone. There may be many causes at work producing this sad state of things. But there is *one* cause to which we wish to call special attention—a cause which is of itself sufficient to produce a very low condition of spiritual life. We refer to the forgetting, or neglecting, to *consider* the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus (Heb. iii. 1, R.V.). In Isaiah xlii. 1 we hear our God saying, "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold, Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth." What a wonderful subject for our study! for there never was a servant like *His* Servant. In Heb. iii. 1, "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," are exhorted to *consider Him*. In Heb. xii. 1, 2 we are told to run, *looking unto Jesus*; while in 2 Cor. iii. 18 we learn that our transformation into His likeness is just in proportion as we *behold* as in a glass His glory. If you devoutly study the character of Christ, there is one result sure to follow—you will become *like*

Him. This is simply the highest manifestation of a law well known among men, viz., that in character you become like those in whose company you delight to dwell. In studying Christ—in tracing the beauties of His character—there is, whether we are aware of it or not, a taking on of the image of the heavenly. In such a study we see—as we cannot fail to see—the purity of Christ, His love of righteousness, the evenness of His character, and the *straightness* of all His ways; with the absence of everything of the nature of policy, and the presence of all that is true, and lovely, and of good report (Phil. iv. 8). Beholding those beauties that in the Saviour shine, we cannot but come under their transforming power. Yea, such beholding and studying of the character of Christ is perhaps the highest means ordained of God for our being conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. viii. 29). If, then, there be a neglecting to consider the altogether lovely One, the work of transformation into His image must cease; there must of necessity be a loss of much that we have already gained; while there shall be a transformation into some image *other than* that of Christ. All this means loss of spiritual power, dimness of spiritual

vision, and a lowering of the spiritual standard, together with a hardening of conscience, which will virtually make us vastly different men from what we were in the day when God's candle shone upon our path.

When a company of believers are happy in their "first love," the one great desire of their heart is expressed in these words, "That I may *know Him*." They delight to consider Christ—to trace His glories and behold His beauties as these are revealed in the sacred page. But time—though there is no need-be for it—often brings a change. Spiritual declension sets in. Personal differences arise. Many to whom Christ was once the supreme object of study, are now found devoting their highest energies to studying the failures of their brethren, and seeking to satisfy the heart with other food than that which God's altar supplies. Spiritual vitality at once comes down, although fleshly energy may be found even to increase. The eye is off Christ. Therefore things are not viewed in *His* light; difficulties are not met in *His* spirit; rebuffs are not received with *His* patience. If divided judgment arises there follows a painful friction, instead of a calm waiting upon God. As there is a general lack of that *evenness of character* which can only be acquired in communion with Christ, so it comes that there is unevenness of judgment. Certain evils are magnified, while others are made very little of. In one case the gnat is strained out: in another the camel is swallowed. Partiality increases;

the result of all this being that chasms between brother and brother get wider. But how is it that things have come to this pass? It is because the character of Christ has ceased to be studied. There may have been no lack of contending for the truth. Yea, there may be great boldness in standing forth for "God's honour." Yet very little progress is made. And we do not wonder at it. If the energy spent in church controversy had been devoted to a consideration of the character of the Son of God, what a different tale would have been told! Then, with the mind of Christ and the patience of Christ prevailing, how easily would the church controversy have been settled! With how little friction would points of difference have been dealt with! With what courtesy and graciousness would opposing arguments have been met and considered! Perhaps not a few among us have to waken up to find that the shortest way to solve difficulties in the church is for each one to *retire to the desert place of priestly communion*, there to *consider Christ* until filled with His spirit. *Then*, our whole being saturated with His mind, and our heart enraptured with His beauties, we could sit down in the calm of an unbiassed mind to look into our difficulties. When hearts are right with God it is not a hard matter to get points made right with one another. An abundant supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ would solve not a few of our difficulties,—and might have prevented many a difficulty from ever having had an existence!

If we have not the mind of Christ—if we are not cultivating “the meekness and gentleness of Christ”—we have no call from the Lord to fight any of His battles. His *first* call is to *arm ourselves* with the *Christ-like mind* (1 Pet. iv. 1). How all-important, then, to see that we are habitually considering the Man of God’s right hand. Only thus shall we keep in touch with Him, and have His mind, and show forth His virtues. Whether in contending for His truth in the church, or bearing testimony for Him in the world, it is only *His gentleness* that can make us great (2 Sam. xxii. 36).

PATIENCE.

WE are told in Heb. x. 36 that we have need of patience; and again, in Jas. i. 4, we are exhorted to let patience have its perfect work. Yet how prone we are to imagine that we have a good supply of the very thing we most need! We may be ready to admire and imitate the courage of Christ, or the zeal of Christ. But we are not at all so ready to admire and imitate the *patience* of Christ. Our very impatience hinders us from discovering our need of patience. In this, as in many things, we require to *see ourselves*; and this cannot be done in the light of our own fire. Only in the light of the Master’s presence can we see ourselves, and discover that which is lacking in our character as children of God. *His* light makes manifest what would otherwise have been invisible.

JUDGMENT UPON SHIMEI.

HAVING considered David’s dying charge concerning Joab (see last *Treasury*), let us now glance at Shimei, who was likewise handed over for judgment (1 Kings ii. 8, 9). David, addressing Solomon, says: “And, behold, thou hast with thee Shimei . . . who cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim . . . Now therefore hold him not guiltless; for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him,” &c.

David seems already to have recognised “the wisdom of Solomon.” Both in the case of Joab and Shimei the aged king makes reference to that wisdom which would not fail to teach his son what to do. In the case of Joab, David says: “Do therefore according to thy *wisdom*.” In the case of Shimei he says: “For thou art a *wise man*, and knowest what thou oughtest to do.” David did not presume to dictate as to how the two men should be dealt with. He simply reminded Solomon of what they had done, and left him in his wisdom to see that the sword of judgment would surely overtake them. We have seen how that sword came down upon Joab’s guilty head. He made himself fully manifest; and therefore his case did not present much of a difficulty. But with Shimei it was different. *He* had never been in a position of influence, such as Joab’s; and there was therefore no likelihood that he would become the leader of a rebellion. He was evidently a man of a

narrow soul, and not capable of exercising a commanding influence even in the path of iniquity. He could curse the Lord's anointed when he saw he might do so with impunity. But that was about the extent of his power for evil. Yet Solomon's wisdom soon taught him what to do. He at once sent for Shimei and said unto him: "Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither. For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head" (1 Kings ii. 36, 37). Shimei professed himself well pleased with this arrangement. It was a case of Eden over again. No one, at least, can fail to see the resemblance. In the one case it was: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. ii. 17). In the other case the sentence runs: "In the day that thou passest over the brook . . . thou shalt surely die" (1 Kings ii. 37). As man failed in Eden so he failed here. For a long time (three years) Shimei kept within the boundary line. At the end of that period, however, two of his servants ran away to Achish. Shimei therefore arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to recover his servants. But in so doing he passed over the brook Kidron, and thus sealed his doom. In Solomon's well-appointed kingdom, this "crossing of the boundary" could not escape observation. Everything was duly reported to the king, who called Shimei into his

presence and thus addressed him: "Did I not make thee to swear by the Lord, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, The word that I have heard is good. Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the Lord, and the commandment that I have charged thee with?" (1 Kings ii. 42, 43). Shimei is then reminded of his wickedness toward David in the hour of weakness; and, by the sword of Benaiah, sentence of death passes upon the unhappy Benjamite.

The question suggests itself: What was Shimei's crime in the day when David went to Mahanaim? The answer is easily made. He cursed the Lord's anointed. He spoke evil of the ruler of God's people. He reproached, with grievous reproaches, one whom the Lord had afflicted. In the hour of David's trial Shimei did what he would not have dared to do had the king been firmly established on the throne. The spirit of Shimei still survives. It is to be seen in the case of those who take advantage of a weak state of rule in the Assembly, to do things which they would not dare to do if there were power to deal with them. Of all such it may be truly said that they fear man more than they fear God; for as soon as they think they can defy the rule of man they seem to care little as to how the rule of God affects their conduct. But no change is wrought upon them by rule being weak in the Assembly. They simply throw off the

mask, as Shimei did, and come out in their true character. He who walks carelessly and does questionable things, because an oversight may not have power to deal with him, thereby declares that he walks before men and not before God. The man who is "under law to Christ," and who seeks to walk "as pleasing God," will not "change his step" even although rule in the church should be at the lowest ebb. A weak state of rule presents no temptation to him to tamper with the rule of God as revealed in the Word. On the contrary, a weak state of rule in the Assembly will be the signal to all of a true heart to cleave the closer to the Lord.

The Shimei spirit is also to be seen in those who seem to have a great insight into the dealings of God *with other people*. Shimei professed to know, with perfect accuracy, the cause of David's calamity and the reason why he was compelled to flee through the wilderness. "The Lord hath returned upon thee," he said, "all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned . . . and behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man" (2 Sam. xvi. 8). Calamity had overtaken David; and at once Shimei declares it to be a judgment; yea, and not only so, but a judgment for a particular thing—the blood of the house of Saul. In this Shimei was grievously mistaken. He could not have been further off the mark. Remarkable grace had characterised David's actings toward the house of Saul. David in some things had failed lamentably; but

in the case of the house of Saul his record is honourable in the extreme. Any careful reader of the sacred history knows that the Absalom rebellion was an undoubted judgment upon David for certain sins—not connected with the house of Saul. Yet Shimei professes to be in such close touch with the counsels of Heaven that he can tell all the reasons annexed to David's calamity. This has ever been characteristic of men of the Shimei spirit. If some calamity overtakes a brother they mark it down at once as a judgment, and do not hesitate to say what the judgment is for! But, like Shimei of old, they make grievous mistakes. The Lord may be indeed dealing with the brother in question; but for some other cause entirely than that which short-sighted man professes to see. Men of the Shimei spirit, like the false prophets of Jeremiah's day, are constantly finding false causes of banishment (Lam. ii. 14); while brethren of discernment in the things of God are heard to say but little, though they may perceive much. Doubtless there are cases in which God speaks, and His people are compelled to listen—cases in which the anointed eye perceives the hand of the Lord in judgment. Yet even in such cases it becomes us to tread softly, seeing we know only in part. This much is certain, that if we be not delivered from the Shimei spirit, we shall be found smiting the Lord's anointed, and ascribing false causes of judgment—only, however, to our own confusion in a coming day.

OLD-TESTAMENT FORESHADOWINGS.

THE Old Testament abounds in foreshadowings of events recorded in the New. In the course of one's ordinary reading of the Word, these foreshadowings are often thrusting themselves upon our notice. To some of them we have referred in former numbers of this Paper. Just in passing we lately observed that Peter's taking up the sword to smite the high priest's servant, has its foreshadowing in the Old-Testament history. Our Lord's rejection was nearing its highest point. A hostile band were hunting for that precious life; when Peter, in mistaken zeal for His Master's honour, drew his sword and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. But Peter, however well-meant his action, was far from fellowship with the Master in thus having resort to a carnal weapon. Hence the rebuke, "Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (Jno. xviii. 11). A remarkable foreshadowing of this whole scene is found in 2 Sam. xvi. 5-12. David (type here of Jesus in rejection) is being pursued by Absalom and his servants, when Shimei comes out to curse the dethroned king. At this point Abishai (a clear type of the faithful but impetuous Peter) proposes to bring Shimei's cursing to a tragic close. "Why," said he, "should this dead dog curse my Lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head" (ver. 9). Here we see the same spirit as was

manifested in a later day by Peter, and an action proposed in many respects akin to the smiting of the high priest's servant. But as in Gethsemane, so in Bahurim, there is no permission to appeal to the sword. David felt that he was under the rod of Jehovah. It was the hour of his bruising—the hour of his weakness. Therefore he would accept all as coming from the hand of a righteous God. The day might come (see verse 12) when the wilderness would be exchanged for the throne. But meanwhile he was called to suffer. Hence the rebuke to Abishai recorded in verse 10: "So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?" The day *did* come when David exchanged the wilderness for the throne. And the day *shall* come when the rejected Jesus shall exchange this time of His rejection for the throne of His Glory. Let us not forget, however, that He *is still* the despised and rejected of men. Like Abishai and like Peter we may be tempted to have recourse to some carnal weapon to advance the Master's cause or vindicate the glory of His name. But, however well-intentioned, the use of any such weapon shall produce no such result, however effectual it may seem to be. Happy for us if by faith we now hear the Master saying: "*Put up thy sword into the sheath.*"

—♦—♦—♦—

THE man in whom the Word dwells becomes like God, and is fair without striving to seem so. This is real beauty.

DISCRETION.

THE aged women are commanded to teach the young women to be *discreet*, and the young men (Tit. ii. 3-6) are exhorted to be sober-minded (margin, "discreet").

The word "discreet" is a very comprehensive word, including wisdom, discernment, and prudence. When it can be justly applied to any, it may be safely said: "Their ways please the Lord."

One whole book in the Bible has been written for the express purpose of giving this greatly-to-be-desired possession. The man to whom wisdom was given as the sand of the sea shore, was the chosen vessel to write the book of Proverbs, concerning which he says (chap. i. 4) that it was to give discretion; and of discretion he speaks in chap. iii. 22 that it is "life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck."

It has been remarked that this wonderful book consists of 31 chapters, and so can be read over in a month at the rate of a chapter per day. We question if this book receives the attention it demands, not only as being the Word of God, but that part of it specially given to fit and furnish young men and maidens with so precious an adornment.

Of two men spoken of by God it is recorded that they were "discreet." A brief consideration of the circumstances under which they earned the distinction will help to a better understanding of its meaning and value. Joseph had been

cruelly used by his brethren; and, as if this were not enough, he was committed to the Egyptian prison on an infamously unjust charge. The time came when his services were required; and he stood before the king to interpret his dreams. Instead of seizing the opportunity to ventilate his own grievances, he sunk himself out of sight, that he might exalt the power and majesty of Jehovah. He that honoureth God will by Him be exalted. Thus we find Pharaoh saying (Gen. xli. 39, 40), "Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled."

Again, in Mark xii. 28-34, we read how a scribe repeated, almost verbatim, what the Lord had just said; and drew from the Master the commendation that in so saying he had answered "discreetly." Joseph manifested his discretion in seizing the opportunity of magnifying the Lord; and the scribe manifested his discretion, in sticking close to the Word of the Lord in his answer. These two things will ever characterise discretion. A want of carefulness as to our own interests, and a preferring of *the Word* to our own opinions, will prove that we have learned to be *discreet*. H.

MISERABLE are those who measure the authority of a doctrine by the numbers receiving it. Truth always overcomes, though for a time it be found among the few.

"A MAN THAT NEVER FORGIVES."

YOU may have heard the remark, "He's a man that never forgives."

If he is a man of the world we are not surprised. But if he professes to be a child of God we are sorry for him. We altogether fail to see how a man that "never forgives" can know anything whatever of divine forgiveness. "To err is human: to forgive, divine." And the man who has been made a partaker of the divine nature will manifest that part of it which not only forgives but delights to forgive; as it is written, "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. iv. 32). We must say we tremble for the man who can boast of his "eternal forgiveness in Christ," while he is earning the unenviable reputation of "a man that never forgives." If such be a man's character he needs to be told very plainly that a man who never forgives is a man who *has never been forgiven*. In other words, he is still a child of wrath—still in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.


There can be no doubt that there are professed children of God who seem very little concerned about the grace of Christian forgiveness. If you cross them—if you thwart their purposes—you are a marked man. As they are not accustomed to act upon eternal principles, they cannot understand others who act upon these principles. They affect to see only the *personal* element. Therefore they

mark you down as an enemy. They are evidently in close affinity with a class of men whom a certain writer once described as "good haters." *Revenge* exercises their heart more than forgiveness. But alas! they have yet to learn that revenge forms no part whatever of the Christian character.

TRIALS OF PROSPERITY.

NOTHING can justify us in neglecting the condition of our own soul. And it is well for us to remember that we are exposed to that danger in prosperity as well as in adversity; yea, we may be *more* exposed to it in prosperity than in adversity. Fulness of bread was one of the things that led up to the corruptions of Sodom. There is a tendency to forget God when all is going well. In times of earthly prosperity, if we seek not special grace for that special "trial," we shall be overpowered by the current of worldliness, and perhaps become like them that go down to the pit! Then—strange as it may seem—times of prosperity in the church may be so *misimproved* by us as to lead to leanness of soul. When special meetings are going on, when souls are being saved, and the church roll is increasing, there is a tendency to imagine that there is not so much need for secret prayer and reading of the Word. But we cannot live upon the enthusiasm of great meetings. We cannot do without our own "portion of meat in due season."

DEFYING MAGISTRATES.

 seems that a certain Gospel "army" has been defying the magistrates of a town in England, by having processions on Lord's-day to the music of a brass band. The "army" has aroused the hostility of the mob; and unseemly strife and scenes of disorder are frequent. Yet the "army" seems determined to have its own way. We refer to this matter merely to point out a few scriptural principles applying to the servant of Christ in relation to "the powers that be."

Scripture plainly says that God's people are "to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work" (Tit. iii. 1). Then, in Rom. xiii. 1, 2, we read: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves judgment." Such is the testimony of Scripture regarding our subjection to earthly government. In the light of that testimony it is difficult to see how God's servants can be justified in resisting the secular power when that power simply seeks to regulate the carrying on of open-air Gospel work. We know that Acts. v. 26 is produced as the warrant for resisting the secular power—"We ought to obey God rather than men." But there are several weak points in that argument. The cases are by no

means similar. The chief priests were attempting to *quench all testimony to the name of Jesus*. "Did not we straitly command you," they said, "that ye should not teach in this name?" (ver. 28). We therefore do not wonder that the apostles answered: "We ought to obey God rather than men." God had already commanded them to preach in that Name. Therefore *His* command took precedence of all other commands. Moreover, the chief priests were clearly actuated by their well-known enmity to everything connected with the name of Jesus, and were *not* contending for obedience to any constitutional law. Bearing all this in mind, it will be seen that the example of the apostles before the chief priests affords no warrant whatever for God's servants to resist duly constituted earthly authority. But in this country there is no law against speaking in the Name of Jesus. There is the utmost liberty of conscience and liberty of speech in matters religious. Let us therefore be duly thankful to God for this. These are blessings often too lightly valued, because they may cost us little. But let us see that we do not cause *the Name* to be blasphemed by our resisting, contrary to Scripture, "the powers that be."

Magistrates may find (in the larger towns especially) that certain regulations are needed to keep streets and crossings free of crowds—no matter for what purpose the crowd may be collected. To resist the police in the performance of their duty on such occasions is both

foolish and unscriptural. A street-preacher may have gathered a large crowd; and it may seem a hardship to have to close the meeting. But what saith the Scripture? "Be subject to the powers that be." There is no attempt to compel us to cease preaching Jesus. There is simply the courteous intimation that the thoroughfare is blocked, and that we will require to go to some other corner. To attempt to resist the police in such circumstances, and poise as a martyr by causing yourself to be apprehended, tends only to bring the Gospel into disrepute. He is no martyr *for the truth* who is acting *contrary to the truth*. Some find it easier to go to the jail for Christ (heroes for the time) than to take the yoke of Christ and be subject to the word of Christ. To move to another corner is no hardship. But even if that other corner were a poor spot for a meeting, let us not fail to obey, and to obey with alacrity. We have never seen anything gained by opposing the police. On the other hand, where they have been duly and heartily acknowledged as the representatives of law and order, we have seen them in all such cases among the best friends of an open-air meeting. While the Gospel was being proclaimed at the corner, we have observed some would-be disturber elbowing his way in to make a scene, and thus close the meeting; when lo! the advent of a solitary policeman caused the disturber to be as quiet as a lamb. Did we thank God for the appearance of that representative of the law? We did. And as

long as he stood there we felt that we could go on in peace. Yet some infatuated people seem to think they are serving God by resisting or ignoring the authorised executors of the law!

Thus far we have been dealing with the scriptural principles affecting all who seek, in however humble a way, to serve the Lord Christ. It is almost needless for us to say anything as to a so-called Gospel "army" parading the streets on Lord's-day, headed by a brass band playing with all their might, and claiming to be "persecuted" if they are not permitted thus to disturb the quiet of a Lord's-day afternoon. We think there is cause for gratitude if "the powers that be," act in such a way as to preserve the solemnity and retirement of the first day of the week. The *fairness* of prohibiting brass bands on Lord's-day cannot be questioned; for if gospel army brass bands are permitted to disturb the quiet of the Lord's-day, there could be *no objection urged* against the bands of *other* organisations on that day. The door being thus opened to all and sundry, we would soon reach a state of things which it is simply painful to contemplate.

From every point of view, therefore,—from the earthly standpoint— from the scriptural standpoint— and judged by the *spirit* that is to characterise the saints of God—those who profess to serve God, and yet defy magistrates and strive with mobs, are undoubtedly in the wrong. They have yet to learn the first principles of that Kingdom in which "*by might shall no man prevail.*"

STRIFE FORBIDDEN.

IN carrying on the Lord's work, whether it be in the Gospel or among the saints, there is a scriptural principle which, if it had been duly pondered, would have prevented a vast amount of trouble. We refer to the clearly-revealed principle that *strife*, by divine example and precept, is strictly *forbidden* among the saints of God. Two passages of Scripture will be sufficient to establish the principle. The one passage gives the example of Christ; and the other the precept of Scripture. The one passage refers to the Master Himself: the other to His servants. It was said of the promised Deliverer: "He shall not strive, nor cry aloud; neither shall any one hear His voice in the streets"* (Matt. xii. 19, R.V.; Isa. xlii. 2). Now, even if there were no other passage of a kindred nature in the Scriptures, this single passage would be sufficient to show what *manner of spirit* should characterise those who profess to be *learning* of Christ. He has left us an example that we should follow His steps; and not the least part of that example consists in His constant avoidance of everything of the nature of strife. We see this, time after time, in the Gospel narrative. If there was any appearance of a disturbance, we never find Him "keeping


His ground," and opposing force with force. He was ushering in a new dispensation; and in that dispensation the weapons of carnal warfare were to have no place. "My kingdom is not of this world," He said: "if My kingdom were of this world, then would My Servants fight" (Jno. xviii. 36). The Master's example, we say, should be sufficient for all who truly seek to follow Him. Both in His example and in the spirit which it breathes we find not the slightest encouragement for that which is common in some quarters to-day—viz., opposing carnal force to carnal force in seeking to exalt the Saviour of sinners;—as if the Gospel of peace could be commended by the strife of tongues!

But besides the example of the perfect Servant, Scripture plainly says that the "servant of the Lord *must not strive*" (2 Tim. ii. 24). It may at times seem as if we must indulge in a certain amount of strife else the truth will suffer and "our cause" be damaged. Yet against all the clamouring of carnal reasoning the word of the Lord rings out clear and decisive, "Let nothing be done through strife" (Phil. ii. 3). In all cases of party tumults, whether between believers and the world or among believers themselves, it will save us a great deal of unrest if we simply *let the other side do the striving*. It may be trying to our faith to see fleshly power having "the best of it." Yet the Lord is sure to honour them who honour His word, although He may seem to delay His doing so. It need be no trial to our faith that fleshly power

* These words must not be held to forbid open-air preaching. The passage simply means that our Lord's voice would never be heard in any *street tumult or uproar*. It has no reference to street-preaching, as is clear from the words, "*Thou hast taught in our streets*" (Lu. xiii. 26).

for a time seems to carry all before it. That arises from the very simple circumstance that in the things of God carnal-minded men use weapons which spiritually-minded men would scorn to touch.

WITH A PURPOSE.

PEAKING of preaching "wherever I get an open door," I once came across a rather interesting case, in which an esteemed brother showed, in actual experience, how an "open door" may be utilised to the glory of God. He was asked to deliver addresses to a company of believers in a neighbouring town where there was already a recognised assembly gathered into the Name of the Lord. Our brother resolved to go. No restrictions were laid down as to the subjects he was to treat or to avoid. He was left entirely unfettered as to the message he might feel led to deliver. In these circumstances he believed the door to be one opened of God; and he entered in; at the same time acquainting the brethren in that place with whom he was already in fellowship. But he entered in *with a purpose*; the purpose being *to deliver souls*. In speaking of the matter afterwards, he remarked that he was persuaded that only one of two results could follow his ministry—either souls would be delivered, or his ministry would be rejected and come to an end. He gave several addresses—with this object steadily in view, the delivering of souls. The result (helped on no doubt

by other causes) was that many souls were delivered. Indeed it was not long until our brother, in addressing these same believers, found himself addressing an assembly recognised as in the happy fellowship of saints gathered unto the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, all this is both instructive and important. It sets forth very clearly the principles upon which a true minister of Christ may enter what he believes to be "an open door." It is to be feared that not a few professed servants of Christ enter "open doors" without any stedfast purpose to *deliver souls*. While saying a few "plain things" about Separation, they yet contrive to make their ministry tolerably acceptable on the whole. They do not aim at delivering souls from sectarian associations. Therefore souls are not delivered, and (it may be added) *therefore* their ministry is not rejected. Under their expounding of the Word you do not hear of a company of believers rising up and saying: "Farewell to sectarian associations now: by the help of God we are clear out unto the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ!" *Results* like that would very soon mark these ministering brethren as *dangerous* men for a Conference platform. Where various shades of sectarianism are represented on a platform, no speaker can be popular whose ministry tends to deliver souls from sectarian bondage. Sectarianism will rise up to defend itself; and the "disturber" of its peace will find that his delivering of souls is the all-powerful reason why *he must be rejected*.

SOME ELEMENTARY TRUTHS.

(Third Paper.)

HE gathered believers now proceed to observe the order of a church of God as revealed in the Scriptures. They find that a certain ordinance is to be observed, in accordance with our Lord's command, "This do in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor. xi. 24): and again, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (ver. 26). This is the Memorial Feast instituted by our Lord on the night of His betrayal. But how often was it to be observed? Clearly every first day of the week. We glean this from Acts xx. 7, where we read that upon the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread. Here then is a weekly Memorial Feast to be observed. This brings the whole Church (1 Cor. xiv. 23) together on every first day of the week. It is a meeting to which we come by the invitation and command of the Lord Himself. Other meetings may be arranged by man. For example, a servant of the Lord may intimate that he will address believers at four o'clock on Lord's-day afternoon. Or another may intimate that he will preach the Gospel at a certain hour in the evening. In both of these cases the person calling the meeting together undertakes the responsibility of seeing it carried out. You may go, or you may not go. You may be seeking to serve the Lord in some work to which you believe He has called you; and you may

therefore be absent from one or both of the two meetings referred to. But the Memorial Feast is *not* a meeting to which *man* has called us. It is a meeting which *the Lord* calls. We gather together at *His* bidding. We do not come to *that* meeting at man's invitation. Therefore we do not *wait upon* man; that is, we do not come into the breaking-of-bread meeting and fix our eye on a particular brother, and say to ourselves, "Now, we are expecting you to go on, brother, and see the meeting duly carried out." No. We wait upon Him who has called us together—even the Lord Himself. Where two or three are, having been gathered together into the name of Lord, He has said, "There am I in the midst" (Matt. xviii. 20). The brethren thus gathered, being *priests unto God* (1 Pet. ii. 5, 9), are therefore at liberty and entitled to offer up the sacrifice of praise, giving thanks unto the name of the Lord (Heb. xiii. 15). That is to say, this brother here, or yon brother yonder, may, if led of the Spirit, pour out his heart in praise to God. Six different brethren (or, for that part of it, a score and six) may take part in the meeting. This is quite in keeping with Scripture (See 1 Cor. xiv.). The inspired writer of the epistles to the Corinthians does not attempt to suppress the practice of many brethren taking part in a meeting. He simply says, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. xiv. 40). "If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace" (ver. 30). That is to say, only one

person was to speak at a time. The epistles to the Corinthians thus establish what is known as "the open meeting"—the meeting at which the brethren, as they are led of God, may have a word of praise, or exhortation, or opening up of a passage, to the edifying of the body. It is surely remarkable that when Paul is dealing with the question of many taking part in the Corinthian church, he never once refers to the clergyman! How easy it would have been for him to have said: "You must have a clergyman; and he will do all the speaking, and you will do nothing but listen; and then everything will be in order"! But Paul had no such message; for the simple reason that the constitution of a church of God is *not* upon the principle of clergyman and congregation, but on the divine principle of a company of believers (priests unto God) offering up spiritual sacrifices, and taking part in the meeting as led of the Spirit so to do. Thus there is room for the Lord to speak through *whomsoever He will*.

At the weekly Feast of Remembrance it is well to bear in mind *the special purpose* for which we have been gathered. It is to break bread in remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus show forth, or proclaim, His death. Every adoring heart being taken up with Him who is in the midst, ministry and praise will point to Him—at least until the bread and the cup have passed round, and the special object of our coming together has been attained. In the Memorial Feast we do not come as

receivers. We come to *give* to the Lord. No doubt we may receive much—yea, we shall have our portion, as the priests of old, who went in to offer unto Jehovah. But we do not go for the purpose of receiving; neither do we go as suppliants, spreading out a great roll of our needs. Until we have broken the bread and taken the cup, our attitude is that of adoring praise. The wise men from the east said, "We are come to *worship Him*" (Matt. ii. 2). How did they do it? By opening their treasures and presenting unto Him "gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" (ver. 11). This may help us to understand that "worship" is a *giving unto the Lord*. And if He has the adoration of our hearts, there will be no difficulty whatever as to the "gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

Sometimes at the "Weekly Feast" brethren will "open the meeting" with prayer for blessing on their own souls, and blessing on Gospel work to the ends of the earth. This no doubt arises from not understanding the true object of the meeting; and is perhaps the effect of early training; for a long-established habit is not always easily thrown off. Let it therefore be clearly set forth that at the Memorial Feast the Lord would have us to forget our service as well as our sorrows, and be taken up for a little season with *Himself alone*. It is when we understand this that we can enter into the spirit of Ps. ciii. 1—"Bless the Lord, O my soul"; and of Isa. xxvi. 8—"The desire of our soul is to Thy name, and to *the remembrance of Thee*."

NO MESSAGE.

A BROTHER once stood up to address a meeting, concerning which he was understood to have a certain responsibility. From some cause or other, however, the brother had *no message*. What was he to do? Was he to go on with the meeting, and preach as if he *had* a message? Many would have adopted that course. But our brother simply stood up and told the people that he had no message. This may seem a humiliating position for a professed preacher to be in. But the question is simply this: Which was the God-honouring course?—to candidly say he had no message, or to *pretend* to have a message, and spin out the meeting with that which was no message, until everybody was wearied out? It takes very little understanding of heavenly things to perceive that this latter course was not the God-honouring course. No doubt it was much to be regretted that the brother had no message. If he knew he was expected to address the meeting, it should have been his care to be so in touch with the Lord that he would have had a message of some kind to deliver. But seeing he actually had *no message* for that meeting, we are clearly of opinion that his candour is to be admired. The flesh does not care to say, "I am empty; I have nothing to give you." In the case of those who are anxious to stand well with their fellows, it is their last shift to say, "I have no message from the Lord." They reason

thus: "What will people think? This will lower me in the eyes of my brethren. It will never do. I must pull through it somehow." But it takes men of more singleness of eye to stand up and say: "I have no message from the Lord; and I will not go through the sham of pretending to have what I have not."

TO OUR READERS.

AT the close of our sixth Volume we can only give thanks to God, by whose grace and help another year of this ministry has been completed. Results are with Him; and the Day shall declare what these have been. At the same time we may say that we have been greatly cheered and encouraged in the work. We have to acknowledge help given in the shape of matter for these columns, as well as in extending the circulation of the Paper. We rejoice to know that we are remembered at *the Throne* by a number of our Subscribers. Unto all who bid us "God-speed" we have still to say, "Brethren, pray for us," that the Lord's message may have free course through these pages; and unto His Name be glory for evermore.

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