

THE
BELIEVER'S TREASURY.

VOL. X.

W. SHAW, MAYBOLE, SCOTLAND.

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Vol. X.

"A TESTIMONY."

IT is written of Christ that when He came He was to "give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Lu. ii. 79). And it is written of Him, after He had come, that "in Him was life; and *the life* was the light of men" (Jno. i. 4).

As it was with Christ, so must it be in measure with those who are His. Our great mission upon earth is to give light to them that sit in darkness. As it was with the Master so shall it be with all who are truly learning of Him—the *life* shall be the *light*.

It is written of Christ that He was "the brightness" of the Father's glory, and "the express image of His person" (Heb. i. 3). He came to reveal the Father—

to let men see who God was. For this He was "sent." But as the Father sent *Him*, so hath He sent *us*; and for a like purpose. As Christ was sent to manifest the Father, so have we been sent to manifest the Son. We hear Him say unto His Father, "I have manifested Thy Name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me" (Jno. xvii. 6). And again we hear Him say, "As Thou hast sent *Me* into the world, even so have I also sent *them* into the world" (Jno. xvii. 18). And for what purpose? To show forth the virtues of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. Such, then, is our calling—truly a high and a holy calling: light-bearers—yea, *Christ*-bearers!

The moment this great truth becomes dim in our experience,

that moment the light of our testimony becomes dim. And in proportion as that light becomes dim so shall we be found fighting all the more desperately for some external form of things—contending for anything that may hide, even from ourselves, the barrenness within.

We hear of believers claiming to be "a testimony to the truth." But what is really involved in being *a testimony to the truth*? It embraces a much larger area than many seem to have any idea of. Testimony to the truth is not the selecting of one or two of the truths of revelation, and contending for *them* as if they set forth all that is contained in the will of God. One truth must not be exalted at the expense of another. *Testimony to the truth* involves, in its very first aspect, a *conformity to the mind of Him who is "The Truth."* We have been predestinated to this (Rom. viii. 30). It is one of the great purposes of God. We have been called to shine with the light *that comes* from "the throne."

Solemn and searching as the thought may be, we must not shrink from it—men are to *see Christ* in us. "The life"—His life—the Christ life—is to be reproduced in us! Such is the highest testimony we can bear among men. It then comes to pass that "the life is the light." When "the life also of Jesus" is manifest in these mortal bodies, what a testimony to the truth is there! Those who thus manifest Him—who breathe His spirit—who shine with His light—who walk in His ways—need to do very little in the way of *claiming* to be a testimony. They *are* a testimony. They are seen—they are taken knowledge of. Their manner of spirit and their separated path proclaim them to be a people whose citizenship is in Heaven. They have not found their rest in theological points, nor in Church forms—however precious even New-Testament forms may be. They have been taught, in the Holy of Holies, that it is vain to make a rallying-cry of "The ark of Truth—the

ark of Truth." They have learned, as Israel of old found by bitter experience, that God's ark must be borne by a people *in subjection to Himself*. In other words, if we are to "bear a testimony" to the truth as revealed in the written word, it can only be as we ourselves are borne by the incarnate Word and adorned with the beauties of holiness.

ONE OF THE FINEST.

THE subject of this little sketch (whom we may call John, for the sake of convenience) was one of the finest spirits that ever breathed. At least such was the estimate of those who knew him best. He was perhaps the most unobtrusive man in the assembly; yet he seemed to be head-and-shoulders above all the rest in everything that goes to make up a spiritually-minded believer. While his countenance was of an intelligent cast, yet mere intellect was not the predominant

feature. The expression of placidity, almost heavenly, that rested there, told of one who had learned, in the wilderness with God, to bring his lower nature into subjection, and to keep it there. His conversation was laden with the odour of heavenly fields. To come into contact with him was to feel you were brought near to the great hush of eternity. To hear him minister the word was to be conscious that you were being ushered into the presence of God. Even to see him—to look but for a moment into that pensive eye that seemed to gaze into unknown space—was an inspiration. The Master's presence was so manifest in that calm life that one felt irresistibly carried away in spirit to the regions of the everlasting calm.

John knew something—he was compelled to know something—of the storms of assembly life. But he was not a fighting man. He knew not how to handle the weapons of ecclesiastical warfare. He was a stranger to the arts of policy. His soul revolted

from the strife of tongues. He would rather be misunderstood than labour to establish his own righteousness. And no doubt he *was* misunderstood. It was not an easy matter to "draw him out." He was wary of satisfying mere curiosity, and as wary of entering into a discussion over vexed questions, especially with those who were not manifestly walking in the light of God. I believe he was often misjudged for his very hesitation to speak out in his own defence. His silence was set down to pride or to eccentricity — to anything but the natural reluctance of a highly sensitive nature, in touch with Heaven, to unbosom itself to any one who chose to drag it into the whirlpool of debate.

I believe it was very few that really *knew* John—very few that perceived the hidden beauties of his character; though, to some at least, those beauties were as patent as the sun in the heavens. I have since thought that perhaps the spiritual condition of things was so low at that time

that the Church failed to recognise the very man who came with an unction from the Holy One. We know that when David appeared in the valley of Elah for the deliverance of Israel, there were few, besides Jonathan, who seemed to perceive anything extraordinary about the man whom God had anointed (See 1 Sam. xvii. 18). How few, there were who had eyes for the "hidden glories" of the shepherd king! And thus, I fear, it was with the subject of this sketch. Yet the fragrance of that Christ-like disposition, the purity and simplicity of that life, the gentleness that made him great (2 Sam. xxii. 36), all linger in the corridors of memory. We believe he was "a prince and a great man in Israel," although such was not the verdict of the multitude. Perhaps when the Church has eyes to see the choicest gifts of her ascended Lord, she shall find that some of these—of whom the world was not worthy—have come and gone, and she knew it not!

SEPARATION FROM THE RELIGIOUS WORLD.

MANY a believer who has sat for years, with a measure of contentment, in a sectarian system of religion, has had his heart exercised as to "separation truth" by seeing the unconverted going boldly forward to "take the sacrament" as it is called. Yonder are men who can sing and dance with the world—yes, and drink with the world—on Monday. Yet here they come with their Bible below the arm on Sunday, to "take the communion"—to "pay their vows"—to take Heaven and earth to witness that they are the Lord's! If you were to go up to them and say, "How long is it now since you were converted to God?" they would stare at you. When you press them as to whether they are *saved* for eternity, they turn round and ask if that is "any of your business." If you propose to have some prayer, or a little talk about the rejected Jesus, they manifest a

determined hostility to everything of that kind. Yet on the communion-day they crowd the sacred feast! The believer, seeking for heavenly light, who finds himself thus mixed up with the ungodly, is amazed. "Something seriously wrong here," he says to himself. "This is a feast for the *friends* of Christ. But here I find that *His enemies* have taken possession of the place, and are passing themselves off as on the best of terms with Heaven! They are strangers to the new birth—some do not even believe in such a thing! They are quite at home in the world's assemblies, while altogether out of their element at a prayer-meeting. They make it manifest, by their manner of life, that if by any chance they get to Heaven they will want out of it at once; for if they do not enjoy a little holy converse on earth, how would they endure an eternity of it in Heaven?" "No," the enquiring believer says to himself, "there is something desperately wrong somewhere in this business."

Then arises in his mind the question, "*Does God mean me to be here?*" Ah! that is it. "Has God associated me with the ungodly in worshipping Him and in keeping the Memorial Feast?"

A certain spiritual instinct tells him that such a thing is sadly out of keeping with "the eternal fitness of things." But surely he will find God's mind upon it somewhere. Ah! he knows what he will do. He will see what God says about it in His Word. The Scriptures are searched, and lo! the believer finds it written, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers . . . wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Cor. vi. 14, 17). "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. v. 11). The believer's path is at once clear. He has found no Scripture that warrants him to be associated with the unconverted in Church fellowship; and he has discovered that Scripture positively *forbids him* to be in

such an association. Yea, he is straitly commanded to *come out* and be separate. God has spoken; and that is enough for all who seek to walk as pleasing *Him*. They feel they cannot continue in a thing which the Lord has strictly forbidden. They accordingly arise and come out from the yoke of worship with the enemies of Christ. No doubt there are many truths connected with Separation to God besides this elementary truth as to separation from the ungodly. Yet the simple fact that the unconverted are allowed to crowd the communion roll, has set many a child of God "a thinking" as to his ecclesiastical position, and has been the means of leading him right out to the rejected Lord Jesus Christ. It is not at all wonderful that "the unconverted at the communion" should have such an effect upon the believer who finds himself there. The wonder rather is that any child of God should be found in such an association for a single hour!

CONFERENCE JOTTINGS.

(KILMARNOCK, 1st JAN., 1895.)

BROTHER ——— told of a great revival work which the Lord was doing in a certain village.

The first tokens of the coming shower were observed in the prayer-meeting. The spirit of prayer and supplication seemed to be poured out upon the saints. They felt that God was going to move among the unsaved. But the work commenced within the circle of His own people. Then the salvation of souls began. When the fire of His love is kindled anew on the altar of our hearts, it is then an easy matter to testify for Him in the energy and power of the Holy Spirit. These believers were burdened with "souls." It is well that we have a burden; and it is well when we know where to go with the burden. They went straight to God about it; and now they are saying, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

Daniel was not of those who only flee to the Lord when they are in trouble. When that man of God was passing through the deep waters, he went to God three times a day and prayed, "as he did aforetime" (Dan. vi. 10). It was no new thing for Daniel. The day of trouble found him as the day of peace had found him—a man of prayer.

Being *swift to hear* is simply to give God the opened ear. Never be worried as to the fulfilling of God's promises. That is *His* work. Ours is to see that we are observing the precepts upon which these promises depend.

In Jno. xv. 7 we have what I may call the *prayer of obedience*: "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." We read of those who wondered what came of their prayers. Was the Lord's ear heavy, or His arm shortened? Then comes the answer: "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God" (Isa. lix. 1, 2). "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (Ps. lxxvi. 18). It is only as we abide in Him, and His words abide in us, that we can count upon God in prayer. "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 Jno. iii. 22).

Then we have what I may call the *prayer of peace*, in Phil. iv. 6, 7—"Be careful for nothing . . . and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." In prayer we must see that we lift up "holy hands" (1 Tim. ii. 8). This peace of God must rule in our lives (Col. iii. 15).

"For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile" (1 Pet. iii. 10). Remember that word in 1 Peter iii.—"That your prayers be not hindered." If prayer is hindered in our homes it will be hindered in the Church.

In the incident of the unjust judge we have the *prayer of importunity*. "And shall not God avenge His own elect, who cry day and night unto Him?" (Lu. xviii. 7). How much do we know about crying unto God day and night? When prayer is ascending unto Him in the silent watches, you may well expect to hear "the sound of abundance of rain."

The parable of the "Sower" has its primary application to the children of God. We have the whole four classes of hearers among the Lord's people to-day. There are many who sit and hear at Conferences, and never carry anything outside the door of the place where they are sitting! We are not only to take heed what we hear, but *how* we hear. And not only are we to give heed, but we are to give the *more* heed—yea, the *more earnest* heed, to the things which we have heard.

"Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. iii. 12). The danger is not a departing from ordinances, nor a departing from external forms, but a departing from

the living God. We hear of Church trials and misunderstandings; but if I had life to live over again I would let some things alone which I have tried to put right.

When believers part company with one another it is because some of them, if not all of them, have first parted company with God.

We need truth that will reach the conscience. A believer once said to me after some *searching* truth, "If you speak in that way you will frighten Christians." "Oh," I replied, "Christians are not so easily frightened now-a-days."

We hear a great deal about the distinction between faith and feelings, and that the one is quite distinct from the other. But what I fear is the danger of having a "Christianity" *without* feeling.

God calls us "holy brethren" (Heb. iii. 1). Righteousness refers to conduct—holiness refers to character. Let us see, then, that we do not act *out of character*.

A believer is in darkness simply because there is something about his life that is not fit for the Father's presence.

When the woman with the issue of blood came to Christ, it was her last shift. And this is often true of God's children. After they have tried every expedient and failed, they make God their last shift.

MORE CONFERENCE JOTTINGS

(KILMARNOCK, 1st JAN., 1895.)

IS it not a blessed thing that our own ways *do* bring us into trouble? By this means we are often driven back to "the God of all grace." If our God was another kind of God than the God of all grace, how utterly we might despair! When grace begins a work, grace completes it; for it was deep laid in the counsels of eternity that "in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

Whatever be our need, whatever be our circumstances, let us ever remember that it is "the God of all grace" we have to deal with. Yet let us not imagine He is a God who will wink at things. He is a God of patient grace, who will *bring us into subjection to Himself*, whatever the cost may be.

The past year has been one of trial, and difficulty, and temptation. Yet, in the midst of it all, have we not found our God to be the God of all grace?

We may have to be brought down, that we may know God as "the God

of all grace." When David stood by the smoking embers of Ziklag, and the people spake of stoning him, it seemed as if nothing was left to him. Yet *God* was left. Do you think it is loss to find everything gone but God? When we have God we have everything. "All things are yours."

The best circumstances a believer can be in are circumstances that will *test his faith*.

In Rom. xv. 6 we have the expression, "The God of all patience and consolation." Have you ever observed the connection in which that expression occurs? It is in connection with *differences of judgment and light among saints*. How is oneness of mind to be brought about? Not by debating the subject, and wrangling over it; but by seeking upon our faces to know God as "the God of all patience and consolation." If there is anything more than another that lacks consolation it is some hard-headed argument about a certain truth, set forth with all the persuasiveness of carnal wisdom. If there is any class of trouble more than another in which we are not brought down, it is Church trouble. Yet in no class of trouble

do we more need help of God as the God of "all patience and consolation."

The God of "all grace" does not only mean a gracious God, but a God who can make His grace manifest *in me*.

The God of "all patience" does not simply mean a patient God, but One who is able to bestow that patience upon *me*, and make *me* patient. And we know that *tribulation* worketh patience, and patience experience. This is how "Christian experience" is reached. *Who* is an experienced Christian? The thirty-years' man? No. The mere lapse of years cannot give Christian experience. When patience "has borne, and borne," it experiences what a God we have to do with. God's thoughts are entered into, and His character is patiently learned in the furnace of trial; and *that* is Christian experience. If we are to be helpers of others we must learn patience. The man who has a temper like gunpowder, unmortified, is not fit to be a leader among the saints.

Although God is the God of peace, it is not "peace at any price." Sin is a discord in the universe of God. His aim is peace. The peace that

cometh from above will never be at the expense of righteousness.

And God is also called "the God of love." It is only in the fulness of His love that we can enjoy God's peace. Is it not wonderful that it is in the epistle to a divided Church we find the expression, "The God of love and peace"! Our God wants us to dwell in the perpetual summer of His love.

It is one thing to see our failures, and it is quite another thing to find a remedy—to find our way back to God. He has His divine and eternal principles on which He bestows His blessings. It is the *longing* soul that He satisfies; it is the *hungry* He fills with good things; it is upon the *thirsty* He pours water; and it is to them that have *no might* that He increaseth strength. When we are prepared to own up, notwithstanding our light, that we have failed and become cold, and that the first love has well-nigh departed—if we are ready to cry, "Revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee"—we shall find that "the Lord God is a sun and shield." We shall have revival in the midst of the years.

ALL—ALWAYS—EVERY.

WHAT an intensity there is in that eighth verse! (2 Cor. ix.). God reveals Himself to us here as the God who is "able to make *all* grace abound toward you." And not only so, but it is for the purpose "that ye, *always* having *all* sufficiency in *all* things, may abound to *every* good work." "All grace abounding" tells us there is no stinted supply. "Always" does not mean once in the week, but all the days. "All sufficiency" tells of every kind of sufficiency. Whatever God wills that we should do or suffer, the all-sufficiency for the same is in God for us. The one thing we need is to be kept in the place of dependence on "the God of all grace." Grace and faith are correlatives. Unbelief keeps grace back. Faith lets grace in, that it may flood the soul. Thus, ever drawing by faith out of God's storehouse, we are enabled to "abound unto every good work."—(*Conference Jotting*).

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Vol. X.

DEPARTURE FROM GOD.

THE child of God who is in a backsliding state and *knows it*, is no doubt in a sad enough condition. But he who is away in heart from God and *does not know it*, is in a condition that is simply deplorable in the extreme. The conscious backslider has reached a certain depth of departure from God. But the unconscious backslider has long since passed that stage, and has reached such a depth of spiritual declension that he is actually not aware that anything very serious is wrong! Like Ephraim of old, there are "grey hairs, here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not" (Hos. vii. 9). In the case of the confessed backslider you can at least *reach* him; you can bring the Word to

bear upon him; you can exhort him; you can plead with him. But you have a far harder case to deal with when you come to the man "in good standing in the Church," who is outwardly clean, and contrives to keep up a tolerably regular attendance at meetings and ordinances. What! you say, do we mean to insinuate that a man can be all *that* and yet be a backslider in heart from the Lord? Yes, we reply—it is possible for a man to keep up all these outward conformities and yet be so far away from God that he fancies he is living in the third heaven! These are the men whom it would take the wisdom of a Solomon to reach. If you ask one of them how his soul is prospering, he looks at you as if to say, "How dare you ask *me* such a question?"

He assures you that he is getting along remarkably well. He can talk about Christian work and Christian workers, and how the meetings are progressing. But somehow you are not satisfied. Even his very glibness of speech has something unreal about it. You perceive *gaps* in his character. There are certain elements that appear to be wanting. You fail to perceive the subdued tone, the mellowness, the gentleness, that mark the true follower of Christ. There is a self-sufficiency that contrasts strangely with the meekness of the Lowly One. There is a hardness of spirit that causes you to recoil. In addition to all this you perhaps *know the man*—his habits, his characteristics. Ah, you say to yourself, this poor fellow is simply playing a part! Flattered by unreal friends on every side, he has been cursed by the want of one faithful man to go up to him and say, "Brother, you are living an unreal life. The disease of "departure from God" has fastened on your soul; and, if


you do not awake right speedily, you will be aroused by a trumpet-call from the throne of God."

You may tell us that such testimony would run a strong chance of being rejected. True, it might. At the same time it might be the means of recovering a soul out of the snare of the Devil. But, rejected or received, it matters not to thee, O thou man of God. While it is true that there are lonely hearts to cherish, it is no less true that there are men and women away in heart from God, maintaining an outward form of godliness, passing themselves off as dwelling in the suburbs of Heaven; yet sadly needing to hear the voice of some messenger of the Lord saying unto them, "What meanest thou, O sleeper?"

But such messages, it is to be feared, are few. And why? Because of a low standard of spiritual life among the people of God. Let us have the standard raised. Let us seek unto our God for a mighty revival of His power in the midst of the

years. And, when the revival sun is shining and glowing, that which is unreal shall wither, and iniquity be compelled to hide its head. Then shall the righteous flourish. Then shall there be "abundance of peace." Then it shall come to pass that the mushroom-like growths of secret sins that have been brought forth in the cold moonlight of departure from God, shall be manifested or shrivelled up in the light of a great Revival Day! For such a time let all the godly pray.

QUALITY SACRIFICED.

N seeking the prosperity of an assembly of believers we need to watch against the snare of striving to secure a mere increase in numbers. Whenever this desire is at work, we may get what we desire; but we may make up our minds that the new "members" will be of a decidedly inferior quality. You cannot have converts by forced

work, and yet expect them to have the ring of the true coin of Heaven. When Israel were determined to have a king, they got what they desired—and leanness to their soul! We, too, may be determined to have large numbers and an imposing appearance; and we may get all this. But what shall it profit if the "lean-ness" be added? In the eager rush for numbers in the Lord's work, *quality* is sure to be sacrificed. Where numbers are the great consideration you will find people passing as converts, and even "pillars" who would never have been heard of in a circle where a scriptural standard of spirituality prevails. Let us cease to be concerned as to a swelling roll of numbers. Let our aim be a standard of vital godliness in keeping with the Book; and we need not doubt that the Lord shall "add." And we may be assured that He shall add the right persons; yea, and deliver us from that grievous burden—the burden of "strange children."

LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

DOWN through the whole page of revelation, God's principle has been to "divide the light from the darkness." Even as far back as Gen. i. 4 we find that God divided the light from the darkness. What was true in the old creation is no less true in the new creation. God still divides the light from the darkness. "Ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord : walk as children of light" (Eph. v. 8, R.V.).

Now, you will find that the things which God has separated are the things that Satan and the world will try to join together. Scripture plainly declares that there is no communion whatever between light and darkness; and this is stated in connection with the child of God being yoked with the child of the world. Yet no one can fail to see how light and darkness are joined together in this evil day—how the dead and living, the saved and unsaved, are often bound up

in the one bundle. *Who* has bound them thus together? Not the Lord; for we know that *His* way, as it has ever been, is to divide the light from the darkness. There would seem to be a conspiracy of evil, questioning and denying what God has said. As it was in Eden so is it now. Has God divided the light from the darkness? Then, says the conspiracy of evil, we will move heaven and earth to bring the light and the darkness together. Has God said that His people are to come out from the ungodly? Then, says the conspiracy of evil, we must use all the arts of sophistry to allure the heaven-born seed into association with the unconverted, and keep them there! Thus the great battle between light and darkness goes on; and so successfully is it being waged by the powers of evil that those who even claim to be born of God are found contending that it is quite right that *the light and the darkness should be mixed up together!* Alas for the professed light that

can thus consent to be mingled with the darkness!

It is one of the most solemn principles revealed in the Scriptures, that rejected light becomes darkness. And if the light that once shone so bright has now become darkness, it may be truly said how great is that darkness!

FELLOWSHIP AMONG SAINTS.

AMONG saints professedly gathered to the Name it is evident that not a few are being exercised as to what is generally known as "fellowship among saints." We do not refer to any desire to form *a new thing*. We speak of a growing desire to find our way back to the *old* paths which many of us were privileged to tread some fifteen or twenty years ago.

When we "came out at first" our path was simplicity itself. Our eyes had just been opened to the beauty of the great gathering Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the truth that we

were *one* with every saint that loves His Name. We at once disowned the sectarian names by which we had permitted ourselves to be called, and took the scriptural names by which the Lord has been pleased to call us, viz., "Christians," "brethren," &c. We also found that the Lord, as soon as He saved us, had made us members of "the General Assembly and Church of the first-born who are enrolled in Heaven" (Heb. xii. 23, R.V.).

A great tide of joy rose in the hearts of the saints as they beheld that "goodly land" into which the Lord had brought them, and their union, not only with Christ the Head in Heaven, but with every member of His Body on earth! We had no call to "found a Church." We were *in the Church*—we realised that we were bound up, with every believer, in the bundle of life with the Lord our God; and we found it was blessed to be *in the bundle*. Neither had we any call to invent a form of Church-government. The Lord Himself,

who has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness, had already furnished us with the New-Testament pattern. All, therefore, that we had to do was to sit down with the open Bible before us, and seek to carry out, in the fear of God, what we found written there. That is just what we did. The result was, that a number of us found ourselves together, owning no gathering Name but that of the Lord Jesus Christ, seeking to acknowledge the leading of the Holy Spirit, and to keep the ordinances as these have been delivered.

Recognising our *oneness* with all the people of God, we saw, and rejoiced to see, that the place we occupied was the birth-right place of every believer. We perceived that *the Lord's Table* was for *the Lord's people*, and that the qualification for sitting there was simply this — that you are a believer in Jesus, and that you are walking godly.

Many believers did not see that their true place was there; but that was *their* responsibility,

not ours. What we were careful to see was simply that the principles on which we gathered would include every child of God on the face of the earth, who was sound in faith and practice. That is, that the constitution of the Assembly would include all whom the Lord included, and exclude only those whom He excluded. We therefore acted on the Scriptural precept, "Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God" (Rom. xv. 7). We found believers who had very little light upon "Separation Truth." But that was no reason why they should be rejected. We felt that the measure of a brother's light could not be made "a test of fellowship," provided he was sound on the great fundamentals of the Faith. Indeed, in those days, many a believer, in the earliest twilight of his learning the "ways which be in Christ," was wonderfully helped and "established" by being welcomed as a member of the great family of God, and accorded his birth-

right place at the Table of the Lord.

Such was the divine simplicity of the principles on which we "gathered at the first." The question, then, that arises here is simply this—"Are these the principles on which we are gathered to-day?" In many cases we fear the answer must be a decided "No." While professing to be as "open" as ever, we cannot disguise the fact that in the course of the last twenty years a steady *tightening* process has been at work. It may not be easy to explain how it has come to pass. But we have to do with *the fact*. It stares us in the face. The leaven of Exclusivism has been at work among the Assemblies—yea, among those who "abjure Exclusivism and all its works." Unconsciously, and no doubt with the best intentions in the world, we may be to all intents and purposes as exclusive as those who are called by that name. Once upon a time the question was only this—"Are you a believer in Jesus and in fellow-

ship with God?" That was all you wanted to know; and you *rejoiced* to receive on these terms. But is it not the case that *now* it is *not* sufficient that one is a believer in Jesus and in fellowship with God? He must be *something else* in addition to that? In short, he must come from a certain "recognised" meeting. If he does not come from such a recognised meeting he is "*not in the fellowship*"! He may be the most godly man on earth; but if he does not come to us commended by a recognised meeting, we set him in the back seat! That is to say, we put him on the same level as an unbeliever and the man who is under the discipline of the Assembly. At the heels of this godly brother there comes a man from some "recognised Assembly"—one in whom it would take the angel Gabriel to perceive the grace of God. He is perhaps understood to be a "cantankerous believer," and you may have a sinking at the heart about receiving such a person. But he is armed with a letter of

commendation ; and he at once gets the right-hand of fellowship! No one can fail to see that something is seriously wrong here. But such a state of things is simply the result of a departure from the principles on which we "came out" at the first, and the embracing of certain principles of Exclusivism, unconscious as we may be that a change has taken place. All this must be clear to those whose experience goes so far back that they can remember "the temple in its former glory."

The time has now come when we must face the question, "Do we receive a man because of *what he is*, or do we receive him because of *where he comes from*?" Exclusivism plainly says: "It does not matter what the man *is*: he may be a child of God—a Nathanael in whom is no guile, and adorned with the beauties of holiness; but we *cannot* receive him, because he is not in one of that circle of assemblies which *we* recognise as *in the fellowship*." Now, brethren, do we hold such

a doctrine? If we *do not*, let us repudiate it, root and branch. If, however, we *do* hold the doctrine, let us call things by their right names, and be assured that we are entrenching ourselves in one of the greatest strongholds of Exclusivism.

It will be admitted on all hands that the question, "*Where does a brother come from?*" must call for consideration in determining the amount of care to be exercised in seeing that he is sound in doctrine and morals. But, granting that he is believed to be sound, on what Scriptural ground can he be rejected? A question of that kind never troubled us in the early days of the great Separation Revival. And, strange to say, our "church difficulties" were fewer and far less serious then than now. When the simplicity and power of God were resting upon us—when the love of Christ was dominating the hearts of the saints—we had very little difficulty with the great "Receiving Question."


REJOICING, IN ITS RELATION TO CHRIST.

BLESSED are they that rejoice with Christ. Blessed are they that mourn with Christ. Whether mourning or rejoicing, it is well to consider if we are *in fellowship with Him*. In trying to discover what kind of spirit we are of, we must examine ourselves *in relation to Christ*. Brother So-and-so says he was "greatly grieved" at a certain thing that happened. But perhaps that very thing caused another brother to rejoice. You say that is a remarkable thing. But perhaps it is not so remarkable after all. The question is simply this—"Which of these two brethren was in touch with the mind of Christ?" I may rejoice in something that is quite opposed to His mind. Samuel mourned for Saul until the Lord had to ask, "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul?" Samuel's mourning was not in fellowship with God. You thus see how possible it is to mourn,

and be grieved, and cast down, while God is not in the whole thing. We may mourn through mortified pride—because our cherished ideas are being shaken—because *our* way is not being adopted—because the streams of divine grace are not running within the channels that *we* would have chosen. Such mourning is not in fellowship with God. Happy for us if, like Samuel, we are aroused by the startling question from the Throne, "How long wilt thou mourn?"

Then we may rejoice, though not rejoicing with Christ. Israel rejoiced, and shouted with a great shout, just before they went into that wonderful battle in which they lost the Ark of God. But their rejoicing was not in fellowship with God. The joy of the Lord should have been their strength; but to rejoice out of fellowship with God was their weakness—a weakness so pronounced that they lost the very thing which they expected to save them. "The Ark of God was taken"!

TO KNOW MYSELF.

N a recent number of this Paper (Vol. IX., page 142) we briefly referred to the subject of *Self-knowledge*. To what we then stated we may now add a few further remarks.

To view ourselves aright we must come into the light. If I would know who *I* am, I must first of all find out who *Christ* is. It is only through comparing myself *with Him*, that I shall discover of what elements I am made up. If I look at myself outlined against the clear background of the character of the altogether-lovely One, I shall see blemishes "by my former eyes unseen." In the light of His countenance secret sins shall be revealed. Within the holy calm of His presence I shall discover the unrest of my spirit. In the sunshine of His love I shall perceive how the workings of self are laying waste the domain of my Christian testimony. In beholding the perfection of the Master's character and the

beauty of His person, I must be reminded of the crookedness and the unloveliness that belong to myself. As I behold His guilelessness and purity, I am compelled to abhor whatever of deceit and double-dealing I may find lurking within me. Yes, it is in that great and holy Presence we find out, in some measure at least, what kind of persons we really are. We may "compare ourselves among ourselves," and come to the conclusion that we are possessed of great virtues. We may flatter ourselves that we are of an excellent temperament and well-balanced parts. But this is simply because we have come to our conclusions *in the dark*. This is why many are self-deceived. They will not come into the light. They will not test themselves with the "altar fire," and by the light that shines before the Throne!

—♦—

IN the day of trouble none are more ready to shrink than those who at a distance seem most daring.

“REJOICE WITH ME.”

WHILE Christ received sinners, the Scribes and Pharisees murmured. They were not prepared to *rejoice with Him*. But while they were murmuring, there was joy in the courts of Heaven! That which gave them occasion to murmur caused Heaven to rejoice. This lets us see how far they were away from Him whom they professed to love and obey.

When the infant Saviour lay in Bethlehem's manger, all Jerusalem was troubled. Yet there was joy in Heaven. While the professing people of God were troubled at the announcement that the long-promised Deliverer at last had come, an angel host was celebrating His advent! How far must Jerusalem have departed from the Lord when she, no less than Herod, was troubled at His coming for whom she had prayed so long!

Let us get into touch with God, beloved. Thus we shall weigh things in an even balance,

in the light of the sanctuary, and catch the Master's word when He says, *“Rejoice with Me.”*

DOWN TO EGYPT.

WHEN the believer begins to drift into worldliness he finds the current ever becoming stronger. At first he is “doubtful” as to certain things. But, as he proceeds on his downward course, his doubts gradually disappear. Once on a time he was *afraid to meet any of the Lord's people*. But as he becomes more enamoured of the world, he acquires a certain boldness, and is not so afraid to be faced up about his departure from God. At first he resented the interference of others: now he is prepared to defend his conduct, and boast of what “fine people” are to be found among the rejectors of God's Son! From all such “going down to Egypt” may the Lord deliver us!

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Vol. X.

THREE REQUISITES.

N times of difficulty there are three things specially needed—(1) discernment to perceive ; (2) grace to bear ; and (3) wisdom to act—or to refrain from acting, as the case may be. Our first impulse very likely is to consider what *others* need, rather than what *we* need. When we reach some specially trying point in our experience, either as an individual or as an assembly, we are prone to reach out the hand, almost unconsciously, for the sword, and set about “doing something” without delay. But before we begin to deal with the supposed difficulty, and put others right, it will be profitable to consider our own whereabouts. Whatever others may need, *our* first care

is to seek the discernment, the grace, and the wisdom, which alone can fit us to act worthy of God in trying times.

In 1 Chron. xii. 32, we read of those who “had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.” Mark you, it was not understanding of the times, to know what Israel *wanted to do*. It never takes a Solomon to perceive *that*. Religious leaders, afraid of their own popularity, are careful to watch what Israel wants to do ; and that is the very thing they say should be done ! But the men with “understanding of the times” have been cast in a different mould. The Lord does not bestow spiritual discernment on time-servers. Those who have “understanding of the times” have received that discernment for a purpose—to know

what Israel *ought to do*. This "understanding of the times" is not by any means confined to those who are reputedly "great in the Church." Indeed, one may be understood to be great in the Church, and yet *not* understand what "Israel ought to do." Yea, he may strongly contend for something that is not according to the mind of the Lord at all. Let it be our care to preserve a sky of unclouded communion, so that we may "catch" the mind of the Lord when perilous times are upon us. Let us be delivered from the thought that certain men in the Church have a lease of spiritual discernment, and can always be depended upon for possessing the mind of God on any given point. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him"; and "them that fear Him" may include the "humblest" as well as the "greatest" brother in the Church.

Let us now look at "grace to bear." Of the early Church we read that "great grace was

upon them all." This gives us the secret of the great unity and the great love that prevailed. We need not doubt that there was a vast amount of bearing and forbearing one with another in those early days. Where there was great grace there would of necessity be great forbearance. Grace as well as truth came by Jesus Christ. We are told that "they wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth" (Lu. iv. 22). We want His grace, if we would bear the many things that must needs be borne in times of difficulty. A gracious spirit is a far greater help in trouble than the most brilliant logic. The man who is strong in intellectual power, and deficient in the Christ-like spirit, will be of very little account in the day of trial. Graceless gift (if there be such a thing) is only gilded poverty in the Church of God.


We now come to "wisdom to act"—or to stand still. We need wisdom to teach us what *not* to do, as well as wisdom to pursue

a particular aggressive course. In certain cases our strength is to sit still. There is a time to be silent (Ecc. iii. 7). In other cases our silence would be a guilty silence. There is a time to speak (Ecc. iii. 7)—yea, to act. We need heavenly wisdom for this. Nicodemus might remain silent for a season. But the time came when silence would have compromised his fealty to the Truth; and he *spoke out* for Christ. At a later date we know that he *stood out* for Christ. Heavenly wisdom will enable us to act for God, and to have the consciousness that we are acting *with Him*. In the things of God wisdom imparts a certain delicacy of touch that cannot be learned in the schools of men, nor found in the paths of carnal policy. It is "the meek" who shall thus be guided in judgment (Ps. xxv. 9). "With the lowly is wisdom" (Prov. xi. 2).

In all cases of difficulty let us see that we are "thoroughly furnished," even although we have to *take time* to wait upon

God about the matter. If we are honestly seeking discernment to perceive, and grace to bear, and wisdom to act, we may be tolerably certain we are following the things that "make for peace."

JUDAS AND THE SUPPER.

T is one of the things most surely believed by the religious world that Judas Iscariot partook of the Lord's Supper. If it could be proved that he did so, the denominations might have a kind of justification for the presence of the unconverted at the sacred feast. Indeed, they assume that Judas "received the elements"; and then they point to him as their excuse for the dead and the living being mingled together at the "Communion." "We need not attempt," they say, "to have a purer communion than the one at which our Lord presided. If *He* could tolerate Judas there, we need not draw a very hard-and-fast line."

But all this is simply assuming the thing that has never been proved. We hold that Judas was *not* at the Memorial Feast. It is of course admitted that he was at the *Passover* Supper. He was quite entitled to be there, provided he fulfilled the required conditions, namely, that he was a descendant of Abraham and ceremonially clean. We know that on the night of the betrayal, the *Passover* Supper was first observed, and that it was followed by the institution of the *Weekly Feast*. But Scripture tells us of something that *came between* these two events. Towards the close of the *Passover* Supper, in answer to the question as to who should betray Him, our Lord answered, "He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it." "And when He had dipped the sop He gave it to Judas Iscariot . . . He then, having received the sop, *went immediately out*; and it was night" (Jno. xiii. 26-30). The dipping of the sop had to do with the *Passover* Supper: there

can be no doubt upon that point. It is thus evident that Judas was not, and could not be, at the institution of the "Lord's Supper." While the eleven were keeping that Feast, presided over by our Lord in person, Judas was away attending to the work that lay nearer to his heart—covenanting with the chief priests to betray the Master into their hands for thirty pieces of silver! All this harmonises perfectly with the express exhortations of Scripture that the saved of the Lord are to have "no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" saith the Scriptures; "and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. vi. 14). They who contend that Judas was at the Lord's Supper must first explain away the plain declaration of the sacred narrative that when he received the sop he *went immediately out*. And then they must needs put our Lord into the position of one who gives an object lesson showing

that light *can* have fellowship with darkness at the Table of the Lord! On the other hand, everything is clear and simple when you accept the plain statement of Scripture that when Judas received the sop he went "immediately out."

A VEXED QUESTION.

THE "Receiving Question," as it is called, has been the occasion of great trouble and division among saints professing to gather to the one great Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. By the "Receiving Question" we mean a believer's reception by an assembly of believers. The difference of judgment among saints on that one point is lamentable. We are convinced, however, that defective teaching has had a great deal to do with that diversity. Once upon a time, as we were pointing out last month, very little difficulty was experienced in connection with the Receiving Question.

We were not strong in numbers then; but there is reason to believe that we had "a little strength" in the way of love and simplicity. We recognised that the true place of every believer was at the Table of the Lord; and we welcomed them accordingly. But, as numbers increased, it would seem that a sense of our own importance began to dawn upon us. Flattered with the idea that we had been specially chosen of Heaven as a testimony to the truth of God on earth, we began to question if *all* believers (sound in faith and practice) should be admitted to the Table; or, which was virtually the same thing, we questioned if any believer *could* be sound in the faith if he did not see eye-to-eye with us. Then the Receiving Question rose into prominence. A certain measure of light was demanded, and it was understood—sometimes even made a condition of fellowship—that the applicant would not go back to any "old associations." All this was no doubt designed as a needful safeguard

against lawlessness, and as a guarantee of unity. Yet we know how disastrous have been the results. Teachers were busy expounding these principles of fellowship. Brethren, with leisure and influence, and possessing a certain ability in argument, laid down the whole "system" as clear as a sunbeam. But we are convinced that it was not the Scriptural idea of "Reception" that was made "as clear as a sunbeam." Yet these theories of Reception spread; and we have reason to fear that they are held by not a few to-day. No doubt there has been a recoil from the exclusiveness that has been developing of late years. We are having a "Reformation," if we may use the word. But just as Protestantism carried with it a good many of the grave-clothes of Rome when it emerged from Popery, so we may be clinging fast to certain theories of Exclusivism, while professing to be separate from the whole system. The "Receiving Question," according to certain expositors, is

a very bewildering business to a simple believer. But, if we are prepared to sink sectarianism of every kind, and to recognise believers because they *belong to Christ*, the Receiving Question, instead of being a bone of perpetual contention, will become a positive delight. There is reason to fear that it has often been discussed not so much with a view to *receiving* as to *rejecting*. The point has been, "What Scripture can we find to *reject*?" rather than "What Scripture can we find to *receive*?" In the affairs of a country it is a sign of good government when citizens find it easy to do what is right. And in the affairs of the Church it will be as sure a token of "government according to God" if His people find it *easy to do that which is right*. When such is the effect produced by our treatment of the "Receiving Question," we may look for an increasing fulfilment of the great petition of the seventeenth of John—"I pray that they all may be one."

PAUL'S RECEPTION.

THE Reception of Paul, as recorded in Acts ix., possesses points of interest which it may be profitable to consider. In ver. 26 we read that "when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple." The difficulty was simply this—they did not know that Saul was converted to God. They had long known him as Saul the persecutor; and they were afraid of him because they believed him to be a persecutor still. At this point "Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus." The very next verse gives us the result—"And he was *with them* coming in and going out at Jerusalem."

It seemed at first as if no one

knew about Saul's conversion. This being so, it is not surprising that the believers at Jerusalem were afraid of him. But there was one man that knew him; and the fact that Saul was known to *one* brother, soon altered the whole aspect of affairs. Barnabas perceived the difficulty; and as he knew of the "great change" that had taken place in the great persecutor, he at once brought Saul to *the apostles*, and declared *unto them* who he really was.

You will observe that Barnabas did not take Saul to *the Church*, but to *the apostles*. Without at all seeking to favour apostolic succession, we can see here a principle of recognising "those who are the guides."

We also see that Saul was received on *the testimony of one trustworthy brother*. It is important to note this, as showing the simplicity of the lines upon which they went in the days of the early Church.

This simplicity also shines out when we consider what it was that Barnabas testified concern-

ing Saul. He testified that Saul had seen the Lord and had preached in His name. This was all that the brethren at Jerusalem wanted to know. The door was opened at once; and he was with them, coming in and going out.

We do not read that Saul was told he must sit in the back seat until "*all were satisfied*" that he was saved, and sound in the faith, and that he was going to "continue stedfastly," and nevermore look back towards the weak and beggarly elements of Judaism. All their information about him amounted to this, that he was saved and that he had been preaching Christ. Upon that testimony they received Saul. There was no difficulty in the matter. Are we willing to receive upon similar testimony? A brother may be as unknown to us as Saul was to the saints at Jerusalem; but if some Barnabas can bear testimony to his conversion, and that he is a godly brother, sound in the fundamentals of the Faith, why should

he not at once receive the right-hand of fellowship? "But," you say, "all must be satisfied." Very well. *Why* should not all be satisfied? We have no doubt that all the brethren at Jerusalem were perfectly satisfied as to the reception of Saul. They had confidence in those who were the guides; and they in turn were convinced that they could place implicit confidence in the testimony of Barnabas. We do not read of a week or a fortnight being set down as absolutely necessary in order that Saul might be open for a cross-examination by all and sundry. We admit that cases may arise requiring delay for even a longer period. But, if the case be one fairly represented by Saul's Reception, there would be every reason to be satisfied—yea, there would be cause for joy that another believer was exercised as to the "ways which be in Christ." If we pile up obstacles in the way of a brother's reception—if we virtually demand vows as to his future "good

conduct"—if we insist on his acquiring at a single bound what we ourselves had to learn by many gradual steps—we shall simply repel, instead of attracting, exercised souls. We need to beware lest we find ourselves in bondage to laws of our own making. From such bondage we shall be delivered if we keep by the simple lines of Scripture, and avoid fine-spun and far-fetched *inferences*, some of which would take an ecclesiastical expert to understand and explain. The most of God's people are *simple* people; and we may be assured that His truth concerning the gathering together of His people is of a nature that the simple can understand.

SARDIS AND THYATIRA.

THE epistle to the Church in Sardis gives us truly a dark picture of that Church's condition. "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. iii. 1). Then comes

the call to repentance. But in the midst of abounding desolation there were *some* upon whom the eye of the great Searcher of hearts could rest with joy. Our God is ever careful to distinguish between "the precious and the vile," and to acknowledge faithful hearts, even in the darkest surroundings. It was as if He had said, "I speak not of you all—I know each one who is seeking to please Me in Sardis." A "remnant" was found there; and, in His charge to the Church at that place, the Lord singles out the remnant for special commendation. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy" (ver. 4). What a withering commentary on the so-called theory of "defilement," of which we hear so much to-day! The advocates of that theory contend that if you come from what they term a defiled association, *you* must of necessity be defiled also. The Lord does not say so. Of Sardis He said,

"Thou hast a few names which have *not* defiled their garments." You thus see that in the midst of that which would tend to defile there may be those concerning whom the Lord says, "They have *not* defiled their garments."

The case is made even stronger if you turn to the epistle to Thyatira, at which place a deeper depth of departure from God had been reached. "Because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication," &c. (Rev. ii. 20). Yet the God of all grace is careful to single out those who were *not* defiled by the teaching of Jezebel. This is clear from ver. 24—"But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as *have not this doctrine*, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden."

Scripture, you observe, gives no countenance to the idea that if defilement get into an assembly *every person* in that assembly

must be treated as defiled. A solemn responsibility indeed would be ours if we thus "condemned the righteous with the wicked." Such is not one of the ways of our God, as Abraham knew, even in his day, when he said to the Lord: "That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be *as the wicked*, that be far from Thee" (Gen. xviii. 25). It may suit the purposes of a religious confederacy to treat everything outside of the confederacy as in a condition of defilement. But let no one fancy for a moment that such an idea is found in the Scriptures. There is not a vestige of it there. Even in Thyatira there were those who had *not* received "the doctrine." Even in Sardis there were those of whom the Lord said, "They have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with Me in white." Yet there are believers to-day who make no such distinction! They say, "If we are to recognise that assembly, we

must receive *them all*; and if we are not to recognise that assembly, we must receive *none of them!*" We wonder what they would have done in the cases of Sardis and Thyatira. If they had *received all*, they would have received those who were undoubtedly defiled; and if they had *rejected all*, they would have rejected those of whom the Lord says, "They have *not* defiled their garments, and they shall walk with Me in white."

Let all this teach us that it is not systems or assemblies we are called to receive, but *individual believers*. The mere *place* where a man sits cannot sanctify and fit him for the Table of the Lord. One might come from a Sardis or a Thyatira "duly commended," and yet we might feel bound to reject him, while another from the same place, and with no official commendation, might have such testimony in his favour that we would give him the right-hand of fellowship; recognising him as one of whom the Lord says, "He has not

defiled his garments, and he shall walk with Me."

If we would be found acting in fellowship with God we must *discriminate*. We must distinguish, not only between *things* that differ, but between *persons* that differ. Receiving in the mass and rejecting in the mass is no part of God's plan, and will never work out His purposes. It will only gender to bondage and sectarianism—on the one hand puffing up with ecclesiastical conceit those who are in the "favoured mass," while on the other hand rejecting those, singled out by the Lord for *His* approval, who have not received the doctrine of Thyatira, and who have not been defiled with the defilement of Sardis. "If thou *take forth the precious from the vile*," saith the Lord, "thou shalt be as My mouth" (Jer. xv. 19). That which fits a brother for *fellowship with God* may well fit him for *fellowship with us!*

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Vol. X.

"IT IS GOOD TO BE HERE."

FIND from experience that a great deal may be learned from a new-born soul. There is a freshness, a simplicity, and a purity associated with the early days of a joyous young convert, that have an eloquence all their own. In conversing with such an one we feel we are in an atmosphere of peace, where the storms of party strife have never raged and the sound of party shibboleths is unknown. We feel we are speaking with one who dwells in "the golden sunlight"; and for the moment we too are transported to that genial clime! The din of ecclesiastical conflict dies away in the distance, and we find ourselves unconsciously saying, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." The

conversation is about "the things that touch the King"; and it flows on so smoothly and so naturally! That young heart is occupied with Christ — enraptured with Christ; and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. We had come to minister; but we are being ministered unto. We had come to teach; but we find we are being taught. Out of the mouth of "babes and sucklings" our God is still perfecting praise. We have an object-lesson before us, telling how Jesus can satisfy — carrying us back to a bygone day when *we* were the young convert, rejoicing in the light of God, and blind to all the allurements of the world by reason of "the glory of that light." Ah! that young convert unwittingly touches chords that have been

long silent. Yet that touch was needed—yea, it was the veritable message of God to our heart. We had been losing the *ideal* of Christianity—we had been forgetting our heavenly calling: But the young convert, although he knew it not, has brought us back our lost ideal, and proved himself a restorer of the lost harmonies. Ah! we say to ourselves, this is the need of our souls. We want back to the simplicity and purity of the time when that one great thought dominated our whole being—"I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." Thus, line upon line, and precept upon precept, we were taught of God. Thus the roll of experience was unwound, so to speak, until we found ourselves, like Abraham, where we had been at the beginning (Gen. xiii. 3); and there, we can truly say, we "called on the name of the Lord." Yea, and in our converse with that child of the Kingdom, we could not restrain the thought—"Lord, we would fain *abide here*, and never-

more go down to that dwarfed and stunted Christianity which has been ours so long."

It is only as we are brought into the presence of the true that we perceive we have been rejoicing in the shadow of the false. It is only as we are brought face-to-face with the simplicity of heavenly power that we discover how artificial and unreal our own life has been. As we come to see ourselves in the light of the Master's presence we find that the *fitful*, *striving*, *scheming* thing which so often goes by the name of "Christianity" is not worthy of the name. If such has been the effect of years of experience, ours has not been *Christian* experience. We have been going backwards; and the young convert of yesterday, rejoicing in the Saviour's love, is further advanced than we! He has a secret that we would do well to know. Let us get into a little chat with him about the Blessed One enthroned in his heart's affections, and we shall very soon find if we are dwelling at the same Hebron of

communion. Let us find—as we *shall* find—that the Scriptures are being searched and delighted in by that young pilgrim to the Heavenly Canaan, and we shall soon discover whether *we* have a similar appetite for the heavenly manna. Let us note the separated walk and the holy companionships of that one who is “all for Jesus,” and we shall very soon determine if such is the path we tread. Verily, great purposes may be served, and great discoveries made, through a little talk on the affairs of the inner court, with a “soul in its earliest love”!



WHEN converts are of the Thessalonian character—when they receive the Word “in the Holy Spirit and much assurance”—they come clear out from the ungodly. In obedience to a kind of heavenly instinct they also manifest an unmistakable appetite for the Word. When these marks are wanting, we may well question if there has been real conversion to God.

DOWN TO THE WORLD.

ON the question of Christians going down to the world, we commend to the consideration of all whom it may concern, the following extract from Trench’s “Shipwrecks of Faith” :—

“None are made more of, none are more fawned on and flattered, at least for a little while, than spiritual men when they stoop to serve the purposes of the world ; lending, as they seem to do, a consecration of heaven to the schemes of earth, wielding the powers of the world to come in the interests of the children of this world. None, I say, are more flattered and fawned on for a season ; although, when once they have profaned and made common themselves, their gifts, and their office, none are cast off with intenser scorn and loathing and contempt ; the world rejecting them as the sea presently rejects and vomits back the corpses which itself has swallowed up.”

ADVANCING LIGHT.

WHEN one of the old Reformers had been compelled to flee from England in the days of the persecution, he left a very significant message with the people of God. "Do not regard my teaching as final," he said; "but ever remain on the outlook for further light. I am confident that the Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of His Holy Word." This was a needed warning then; and it is no less needed to-day. The most serious drawback in every revival of truth that has taken place, is the tendency on the part of its advocates to reckon their teaching final and conclusive—that nothing can be added to, or taken from, their body of truth. Through thus assuming a species of infallibility in matters of doctrine, the bearers of the ark of truth in the great religious movements of the past, would seem to have been set aside one after another. They were not willing to *go on* with God. They

had got what they termed "the true light"; and they virtually acted as if there were *no more light to come from Heaven!* We need not wonder, therefore, that one great revival movement after another died away, and that the Lord, time after time, found *new* instruments to do His work. These seem to have been used and honoured in proportion as they were willing to be taught of God.

When we look around us in the world to-day we see religious systems with hard-and-fast laws, like those of the Medes and Persians that altered not—creeds of that cast-iron character which plainly declare, whether in words or not, "*We* have the mind of God, and there is nothing further left for Him to teach us." A number of years ago it was seen by many of the Lord's people that this creed-making simply shut out God from shedding any further light upon His word, besides giving "official" sanction to teachings that might not be in keeping with the Word of

Truth. In the great revival movement that then took place, when so many children of God were taught the "gathering to the Name," all man-made creeds were cast aside, and only one (the God-given Creed—the Holy Scriptures) was declared to be the Lamp to our feet and the Light to our path. The leading lights of the denominations had said, "We have given them our creed." But those who were awakening up from the slumber of tradition found it written, where the Lord Jesus says, "*I have given them Thy Word*" (Jno. xvii. 14). This was enough for those who were content with the provision which *God* had made for His people. They needed not man's declaration of the mind of God in the shape of a creed. They had Scripture itself; and who was so well fitted to open up that Word as He by whose inspiration it was given?—even the Holy Spirit, whose work it is to guide the children of God "into all truth" and show them things to come.

But while we have no creed, other than the written Word itself, it is quite possible and easy to fall into the same error as the pioneers of the great revival movements of the past. The tendency, even without a man-made creed, is still to settle down into the idea that we have received *final* light on the doctrines of Scripture, and that what we believe to-day we are bound to believe ten or twenty years hence! Scripture itself gives no warrant for such a thought. No doubt there are great fundamental doctrines as to which God has spoken, and there can be no mistaking the burden of His message. "The Divinity of Christ"—"Justification by Faith"—"Death and Resurrection with Christ"—"The Priesthood of Believers"—"Separation from the ungodly,"—these, and many others that will readily occur, are so plain that he who reads may run. But there is a great body of truth, not only as to the mysteries of the Kingdom but as to the external form of things,

concerning which it would be in the highest degree dangerous to say, "We have received final light, and there is nothing further for the Lord to teach us." Yet it is to be feared that such a thought is in the "Confession of Faith" of certain believers at the present day. They make their boast that in the matter of Church-government and in their relation to believers outside of their particular circle, *they* have not changed their minds in the least, and that they stand exactly where they stood ten or fifteen years ago. But the question arises, "Have they left room for *God* to come in?" Have they been prepared to receive further light from Heaven? Scripture says, "Then shall we know, if we *follow on* to know the Lord." But if I have *finally* attained to the mind of God, where is the need to follow on? I *may*, on the points mentioned, be exactly where I was years ago. I may have had the mind of God both then and now. But the mere fact that I have been holding

the same views for ten years is *no proof* that I have light from God on these points. You may turn round and charge a brother with inconsistency because in certain matters of detail he is not exactly where he was ten years ago. But you forget one important point, namely, that the brother has left himself open to receive *light from God*. And they who are open to be taught of Him shall assuredly be taught; for "unto him that hath shall be given." One brother may stereotype his opinions, and discover a certain merit in the fact that *he* never changes his mind on anything. But there is really no merit in being in such a condition. He who is truly going on with God will be willing to be taught of Him. He will not be found taking up the position that he has received all the light that it is possible for him to get.

Let us see that we do not repeat the error of the old Reformers, and find ourselves bound hand-and-foot by laws of our own making. Our safety lies not in

attainment, but in attaining. He who leaves no room for light from above, will find soon or late that the light shall become darkness ; and he who changes his mind when he finds sufficient cause to change it, is simply showing that he is wiser to-day than he was yesterday.

OUR WHEREABOUTS.

WE have received several letters from esteemed fellow-believers as to "Fellowship of Saints," "Sardis and Thyatira," and "Paul's Reception," which appeared in recent numbers of the *Treasury*. These letters express the most hearty approval of the articles referred to. There are a few correspondents, however, who think we have gone out of our way to apologise for "Open Brethrenism." We therefore think it right to still further explain our whereabouts as to the points we have dealt with.

Our attitude towards sectarian

systems of religion is exactly what it has been for many years. Regarding our attitude, however, towards children of God who do not see eye-to-eye with us, we have found certain theories to be no longer tenable ; while, as to a *Confederacy of Assemblies*, we have ceased to believe in such a thing. Once on a time we did not see how we could receive a believer who was not "in the fellowship"—that is, not in one of the circle of assemblies which we recognised as being upon the "true ground." When a believer arrived from a distance our first question was—"Are you in the fellowship?" If he could produce evidence that he was "in the fellowship" he was received. But, if the dear simple brother could only tell of being in *fellowship with God*, it was felt that it would be a "lawless" proceeding to receive him, and he was conducted to a back seat. For years we have had serious doubts as to our action in such circumstances. But, then, we consoled ourselves with the reflection that

we had no power to act otherwise, seeing that brethren from *neighbouring assemblies* would have brought us "to book" if we had received believers from anything but "recognised" meetings. We thus felt we were in a confederacy; but we persuaded ourselves it was a confederacy *according to God*. Thus time rolled on, and the tightness seemed to be on the increase. But, being in a confederacy in which it was understood we must stand by each other's actions as assemblies, we perceived the danger that would beset us if in one assembly a difficulty arose upon which surrounding assemblies differed in opinion. A difficulty of this very kind soon came up in a certain assembly. The chief actors, not content with division in that place, called upon the surrounding assemblies, and assemblies even at a great distance, to "judge the question," and "make up their minds" whom they were going to recognise. Thus the sword of division was carried far and wide, and a *new confederacy*

was formed, while the old confederacy was condemned root and branch as "Open Brethrenism" and "Lawlessness."

This new development caused great searchings of heart; and we found ourselves asking the question, *Can* this confederacy principle be of God?—a principle which lends itself so readily to the sword of division, and enables a few determined men to "divide the assemblies" over the length and breadth of the land? "Separation from the ungodly" is clear enough from Scripture. So is the "Gathering to the Name," the "Priesthood of Believers," and the "Weekly Feast." But where is this theory of a Confederacy of Assemblies—a theory which renders a company of believers, going on happily with God, liable to find themselves any day in the throes of division, over some difficulty a hundred miles away? We searched, and could not find it in the Scriptures. On the contrary, we found that each assembly was responsible to God for its own conduct, and that

assemblies were not bound to stand by each other's actions. This is abundantly clear from the epistles to the seven churches of Asia. Not one of all these churches was held responsible for evils in another church. Each was responsible to the great Head in Heaven. "O how simple—how beautiful!" we said; each gathered company seeking to go on in responsibility to God alone. If the assemblies had been established on this simple and divine principle, then it is clear that division in any one assembly would have been confined to that assembly. It would have been utterly beyond the power of a few leaders to have carried the sword of division over the country. They would have been simply *powerless* for such work, had it not been that the confederacy principle virtually placed the assemblies at their mercy!

Each assembly being responsible to God and not to man, may be called "Independency" by some. We see in it the most

beautiful *dependency* on the Lord Himself. If it tends to independency, it is to make an assembly independent of leaders whose aim is to dominate the churches by establishing a confederated system of assemblies—sure precursor of further strife, and further confederacies! Has past experience not taught us? This much we can say, that past experience has brought *us* to test the confederacy principle, and we have found that it is not in the Scriptures!

No sooner had the Lord opened our eyes to the unscripturalness of confederacy, then we saw that the *receiving of believers* was bound up in the same theory. We soon found that we had been receiving brethren simply because they were *in* the confederacy, and rejecting brethren simply because they were *not* in the confederacy. We have learned that this is not according to Scripture.

We need not repeat ourselves, and go over ground already covered in the *Treasury* for

February and March. It will be clear, from what we there stated, that if a brother is sound in fundamental doctrine, and walking godly, we have no right to reject him, whether or not he may happen to be in a circle of confederated assemblies. It is useless to take up the ground that he *cannot* be a godly man unless he is walking according to what *we* hold to be truth. Do you mean to say that no godly believers are to be found outside a particular circle of assemblies? Away with such a thought. Then, if we acknowledge that there *are* godly believers outside our own circle, it surely becomes us to treat them as such, and to make true in practice what we hold in theory—that we receive all who are the Lord's and who are walking godly.

We readily admit the value of letters of commendation, bearing testimony by brethren we know, concerning one we don't know, and certifying that he is worthy of being received. But if one with no letter of commendation

is known to us as godly, or if some Barnabas bears testimony that he is saved and adorning the doctrine, what additional evidence do we require?

Although we may have incidentally alluded to the Receiving Question in our writings, we do not think that we ever heretofore penned an article on that subject. We felt it was an awkward one, at least if we were to advocate "Reception" in its "tight" aspect. It would almost seem as if we had the same difficulty in writing upon the Receiving Question that we had in an earlier day in advocating Infant-sprinkling—a significant lack of Scripture to support the theory! But no sooner did we apprehend what we hold to be the scriptural principle of reception than the subject became as clear as light itself, and as simple as simplicity itself. We have not hesitated to declare what the Lord has taught us from His word. The cheering testimony that reaches us from many quarters tells us that not a few of the saints are being exer-

cised as to their attitude towards children of God who are manifestly devoted Christians and following the Lord according to their light. Yea, there are companies of His people arising from among the dead, here and there throughout the country, seeking to be separate from the world and to keep the ordinances of the Lord. But, because they will not "join a confederacy," or have not attained to a certain measure of light, they are "refused fellowship"—even by those who say they stand clear of both Old and New Exclusivism! We need not wonder that there is a revolt against such sectarian actings. Our wonder is that we should have been found helping in any measure to build up a system in which such things are held to be "of the Lord."

TAUGHT OF GOD.

IT seems clear to us that a "Revival of Truth" has already set in—a Revival in

which many of the people of God are being delivered from the bondage of confederacy theories and learning anew "thesimplicity that is in Christ." One brother writes us that although "the teachers" in his region have been expounding the "tight" line of things, yet in the assembly where he is located, numbering considerably over a hundred, there are not above three or four who are tinged with the "hard and fast" theology of the teachers. This tells us plainly that *the Lord* is teaching His people in spite of professed teachers! Our God is manifestly at work among His redeemed; and, when *He* works, who can stay His hand? That Scripture is being fulfilled which says, "Thy children shall be taught of the Lord"; and, when this is the case, we may confidently look for that which follows—"Great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isa. liv. 13).

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Vol. X.

"ONE THING IS NEEDFUL."

THERE is one point upon which brethren of the most diverse "schools of thought" are doubtless agreed—namely, that the great need of the time is a *Revival of Spiritual Power*. We think there can hardly be any disagreement on this point. It is not a question of parties; it is not a question of ecclesiastical procedure; it is not a question of leaders.

The question is simply this—How shall it come to pass that upon ourselves as individuals and as assemblies there may descend such a revival of power as shall bring the reign of formalism to a close, and take possession of each heart for Christ, and cause the wilderness of our testimony to blossom as the rose? This is

what we want; this is what we need; this is what our God is waiting to bestow.

Is there going to be a revival of power at this time? or is there not? We know that "salvation is of the Lord." The power is His, and the glory is His. We cannot *make* revival times; neither can they be "promoted" according to the will of man. We know all that. Nevertheless, the great heart-searching truth remains, that we—sinners saved by grace—are most important factors in the question, "Is there to be a revival of power?" We have to do with the human side of that question; and a grave responsibility rests upon us.

It is quite possible to be *hinderers* of revival. The Lord did not many mighty works in a certain place, because of

their unbelief (Matt. xiii. 58). At another place they constrained Him to tarry, and the result was that many believed (Jno. iv. 40, 41); and we doubt not that the seed was then sown of a revival in a later day (Acts viii. 5-8).

"Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power." You see how a *willing people* are associated with a *day of power*. Are *we* willing that a day of His power should now dawn upon us?—a day such as we have never seen. Are we willing that we should be visited with a Revival from the presence of the Lord—withering to the flesh—withering to the pride of our own hearts—withering to all about us that is unlovely and un-Christ-like? Then, in the name of the Lord, brethren, let us get down before Him as to this thing.

Other questions can wait: this one cannot wait. Yea, there are questions—important questions, too—that cannot be profitably considered except in the light of a Revival Sun! Therefore, let these questions be thrust

aside for the moment. "One thing is needful." We must have that one thing. It will make for peace. It will clear the vision. It will surround us with the softening beams of the Master's presence—it will permeate us with the gentle power of that love which seeketh not its own, and is ready to lay down its life for the brethren.


A revival of power will solve many a problem that seems now to be beyond our skill; and, like the women on the resurrection morning, while we are saying, "Who shall roll us away the stone?" we shall look, and lo! we shall find that the stone is rolled away!

If we are content to be "at ease in Zion," we cannot count upon our God to guide us by His wisdom and keep us by His power. Yea, by our very troubles and difficulties He will teach us that our deepest need is *revival from His own presence*.

Therefore, let the cry go up that we may see a day of His power. This "one thing" let us

desire of the Lord. Let us lay hold, as it were, on the skirts of His garments, saying, "We will not let Thee go, except Thou bless us." And we need not doubt that there shall be a mighty "Revival in the midst of the years;" for "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth; in His days shall the righteous flourish; and *abundance of peace*" (blessed prospect!) "till there be no moon" (Ps. lxxii. 6, 7, margin).

WITNESSES FOR GOD.

T was recently said of one of the continental nations that it had now reached a point when not one of its leading men dared to tell it the truth as to its real condition. If one of them were bold enough to tell that country what it truly needed, he would be no longer a leading man in the nation! The result is, that the professed leaders of that country are not its leaders

but its slaves! They "prophesy smooth things." They tell the country what it loves to hear, and they advocate the line of policy it is determined to follow.

The same danger besets all who would be witnesses for God. The question seems often to be, "What will *take* with the people?" rather than, "What will *please* God, and meet *His* approval at the Judgment-seat?"

In seeking to serve the Lord Christ among His people, we must ever remember that our true calling is to lead into the presence of God. Carnal policy may sit down and say, "Well, I'll watch the drift of things, and see what is going to be popular, and then I'll make up my mind as to what line of things I shall go in for." But it will not be so with him who realises that, according to his measure, he is "sent of God" and has a message for His people. He simply asks, "What is the true need of the children of God? I care not what they *want*—I must discover their *need*, and find out in the

presence of God what message *He* would have me deliver in this evil day."

It genders to a most serious bondage when you feel that you have a message fitted to meet the present need of the people of God, and yet dare not deliver it. The man of God has not been called to float with the current. His mission is to mould the destinies of others, according to the heavenly pattern—not to be moulded by the popular elements either in the world or the church. And an evil day shall it be for the people of God when they shall define the message which they want to hear, and threaten with the fires of ecclesiastical extermination all who will not prophesy in like manner.

It is only men of a narrow soul that feel their self-importance increased when another falls. Those who are lacking in the elements of true greatness, must needs seek to rise through the discomfiture of another, seeing they have no other means of promotion.

"STIRRING UP THE NEST."

WE find in Deut. xxxii. 11, a striking illustration of the Lord's dealings with His people. "As an eagle stirreth up her nest," &c. The stirring up of the nest was not pleasant for the young eagles. It was designed to drive them out, that they might test their pinions and acquire that great power of flight for which the eagle is remarkable. If they needed help, the old bird was at hand to "bear them up on its wings."

Thus our God may find it needful to "stir up our nest"—to bring us into sharp and trying circumstances, that faith may be tried and purified, and that we may prove the blessedness of being cast entirely upon God. We may view the stirring up of our nest as nothing less than a calamity. Yet, if we accept it as part of our discipline here below, we shall find it one of the "all things" that work for our present and eternal blessing.

THE MANUFACTURE OF COMMUNICANTS.

THOSE who go with the Gospel to the world—to do business for God in the great waters of sin—will often find that their efforts in certain cases are seriously hindered by that practice so universal in the religious world—the “manufacture of communicants” out of dead, unconverted sinners. “Yes, he was a fine young fellow,” you say, “and he had just been brought under the power of the Gospel, when suddenly he disappeared.” When you search him out you find that his anxiety has vanished. He is evidently fast asleep in some stronghold of carnal security. On pushing your enquiries further you perhaps discover that he has been advised to “join the church.” The clergyman has been telling him that he is now “*of age* to make a public profession” of religion, and “take vows upon him.” Everything is made easy and comfortable for the intending communicant,

Does the clergyman ask that young man if he is *born again*? Does he say to him, “Now, my young friend, the first and great qualification for the Lord’s Supper is that you have been *saved by the Blood*: are you saved?—have you been converted to God?—tell us about your conversion—how the great change took place”? Do you think for a moment that the clergyman asked the intending communicant these right and proper questions? Not a bit of it—unless, indeed, he belongs to a religious body that demands of intending communicants that they be *saved* and walking godly. That unconverted young man found that it was one of the simplest things in the world to “join the church,” as it is called, although condemned already, and under the wrath of God! At one time he seemed to be under conviction of sin; but he was most effectually sent over asleep again by the operation of that wonderful institution—the manufacture of communicants

out of sinners who have never been born again, and upon whom Scripture declares that the wrath of God abides! (Jno. iii. 36). The young man had received an opiate—a deadly sleeping-draught. He had discovered a far easier way of getting rid of his convictions than through the pangs of the new birth. He had simply to attend the communicants' class a few times; or, if specially favoured, a private meeting with his spiritual adviser was sufficient, and the thing was done!

He "joined the church," took his communion, put on a certain air of solemnity for the occasion, and flattered himself he was as far forward as "these people who say they are *saved*." Conviction of sin seems never to trouble him now. With an external coating of popular religion he is going right into eternity with a lie in his right hand! Did his taking the sacrament change his condition before God? Not in the slightest. At least, if it did, it was to put him in a false posi-

tion—to blind him—to delude him, and make him believe he was in the position of an accepted worshipper, while God's Word plainly declares—"The wrath of God abideth on him"!

Thus thousands are being deluded to-day, and the progress of the Gospel hindered by those who virtually say—"Never mind although you are not born again—we can run you through and make you worshippers of God, although you are enemies of the Cross of Christ, and strangers to the cleansing Blood!"

Yet the light is breaking. Many of the saved of the Lord, sitting in religious systems where such things prevail, are finding out that they dare no longer be identified with this manufacture of communicants—this wholesale blinding of perishing men to their true condition. They are discovering that their place is not with the dead, but with the living—that it is "living stones" that are being builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (1 Pet.

ii. 5 ; Eph. ii. 22). Yea, in the matter of "the Communion," even unconverted men are now perceiving that the Lord's Table is only for those who have been saved by the Blood. A certain clergyman called on a young man and suggested that he should "join the Church," remarking that he was now "of an age to make a public profession of Christianity." "But," said the young man, "I am not converted—I have never been saved yet ; and I don't believe that people should go to the Lord's Supper until they have been *saved*." The clergyman was speechless. That unconverted young man had actually more light than his professed spiritual adviser !

Let us praise our God for the manifest tokens that He is sending His light forth and *His truth*. Let us pray that the *delivering of His people from man-invented systems of religion* may still increase, and that unconverted communicants may no longer be able to say, "We cannot be far wrong in what we

are doing ; for there are Mr. So-and-so and Mr. So-and-so, real converted people, with us at the Table !" Every believer who is in his wrong place is alluring to a wrong position, and away from the true centre of gathering, which is Christ alone.

To identify yourself with the "manufacture of communicants" is virtually to set the seal of your approval upon that instrument of sending perishing sinners asleep. Let us trust that to all whom it may concern it may be given to hear the voice of God saying unto them, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from among the dead." If you ask, "What next ?" the reply will be found in the succeeding words of that passage—"Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. v. 14).



"God looks not at the oratory of your prayers, how elegant they be ; nor at the geometry of your prayers, how long they be ; nor at the logic of your prayers, how methodical they be. It is the *sincerity* of your prayers that He takes note of.

FAILING TO PERCEIVE.

F^O those who possess a discernment of men and things, nothing is more trying on the spirit than to hear one extolled as a heaven-sent messenger, who is lamentably deficient in the marks and characteristics of one who is "sent of God." If he preaches he is set down, by many at least, as a most wonderful exponent of Scripture. If he gives counsel, it is received as a voice from the inner sanctuary. When he makes a "striking point," the smile of admiration goes round, as much as to say, "Did you ever hear anything like that?" Yet the man who can see a little beneath the surface sits unmoved. Or, if he *is* moved, it is not in the same direction as those who are sitting around him. He is moved to wonder how saints can be so easily impressed with what, to him, is only so much sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. He feels it is a delicate matter to give expression to his convictions ;

for it is only a fool that uttereth all his mind (Pro. xxix. 11). Yet, when he falls in with a kindred "seer"—one of those choice spirits to whom he may speak freely of all that is in his heart—he finds that he is not alone in what he has "perceived." But to sound a trumpet, and tell the saints they have been simply extolling a display of fleshly power, may *not* be the true means of their deliverance. The need of the saints, in such circumstances, is evidently a *clearing of the vision*. The stand-point of their life must be lifted into a higher and purer experience, where they shall see with undimmed eye, and hear with unhindered ear. Let us seek thus to allure each other into the wilderness with Christ, and we shall do three things, unconsciously it may be, but none the less effectively:—(1) We shall bring down a blessing on our own souls ; (2) we shall be made a blessing to our brethren ; and (3) we shall take the shortest way of helping them to "see light" in *God's light*.

A THREEFOLD CORD.

WE *have seen* Jesus—we see Jesus—we *shall see* Jesus. We have here a threefold statement which applies to all saved by the Blood. Let us briefly glance at this wonderful "threefold cord."

In a certain happy day in the past we saw Jesus—we beheld Him with the eye of faith. We heard the heavenly call, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved." We looked, and lived. We beheld the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. We "saw the Lord." With that look the burden of years rolled away, and the pulse of a new life began to throb in our ransomed soul. Before our enraptured gaze there arose the vision of the crucified, and risen, and glorified Jesus. His peerless person filled the eye and captivated the heart. Truly that look marked the beginning of days in our experience. The darkness was past; the true light was shining; we had seen Jesus!

But to *have seen Jesus* involves

something more than a mere look which was ours at some point in the distant past. To the vision of a bygone day our God adds a *present* vision of the glorified Jesus; for it is written, "We see not yet all things put under Him. But *we see Jesus*" (Heb. ii. 8, 9). The look is life-long. The vision is not one of a day, but of many days. Yea, like the altar-fire that goeth not out, this vision of Jesus is not designed to fade away, but to remain the unbroken *present* of conscious communion. "We see not yet all things put under Him";—we see not yet a world converted to God—we see not yet entire subjection to His rule, even within the circle of His own. Nevertheless, *we see Jesus*. Let the undimmed vision of the all-glorious One ever rise before our sight, and *we* shall rise above all the withering influences of an evil day, and the trying circumstances of a difficult time. Many can tell of what they *have seen*, but not of what they *see*. Yet alas! for us if we can only point back

to a day that is gone, in which we saw Jesus. Alas! for us if we have not a *present* experience of beholding Him who is fairer than the children of men. If we let the vision of the glorified Jesus become dim we shall find some day, to our eternal loss, that we have been sapping the very springs of our spiritual life. Satan will allow us to strive, and fight, and work ourselves into a state of "righteous indignation," as we term it, over something that does not meet with our approval. But he will do everything in his power to make that word a dead letter in our experience—*"We see Jesus."*

But, blessed as it is to have seen Jesus, and to behold Him now with the eye of faith, there is yet something grander and more transcendent in store for all who have been redeemed by His blood. "We shall see Him as He is"—not with the eye of faith, but with the eye of sight. We shall see the "same Jesus" who sat by the well of Sychar, as He flashed the joy of life

eternal into a lone and desolate heart; the same Jesus who stood by the gate of the city of Nain, commanding death to deliver up its prey; the same Jesus who died for you—who died for me. We shall see Him "face to face," in the fair noon-tide of everlasting day, in the sinless home of the redeemed, in the deathless land—sinless and deathless because the glorified Lord Jesus shall reign, and His likeness be impressed on every brow. We "shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." O what a sight for weary eyes! O what a morning of eternal joy when we shall see the King in His beauty! Ere He left this wilderness world He said, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice." And as the disciples were "glad when they saw the Lord," so shall we rejoice, even with the joy of the heavenly sanctuary, when we shall see Jesus—"glorious in His apparel"—resplendent with the beauties of holiness, and the dew of immortal youth!

EXHORTING ONE ANOTHER.

HE who would go to a brother and testify to him as to his evil ways, must himself be walking with God. The consciousness that this "walk" is in large measure wanting is one great reason why there is so little exhortation, one of another, to practical godliness. You may perceive worldliness developing itself in a brother. You may be groaning over it, and even speaking to your brethren about it. But you hesitate to face up the brother himself on the subject. In fact, you feel yourself to be altogether unequal to such a task, although, from your position in the Church, you may be one who is expected to take the matter in hand. But the matter is not taken in hand; and the brother still continues his downward course. What is it that has weakened your arm? May it not be the secret consciousness that you yourself are not walking in the light of God? May it not be the fear lest the

erring brother should turn round and point out inconsistencies in your own testimony, saying, "Physician, heal thyself"? Many an arm of testimony has been thus weakened; and many an Agag has so been permitted to walk at large, flattering himself that the bitterness of death was past. And, even with your walk *outwardly* correct, if you are not one who deals with God in secret, you will feel a paralysis stealing over you as you go to bear witness against a brother that his deeds are evil. It is truly a delicate matter to handle the edged tools of the Sanctuary. But he who is walking in the fear of God, and hearing the Master's voice in the secret place, will be found bearing witness for God in the calm consciousness of His approving presence. Many a wandering brother is thus turned from the error of his way, and brought back to the path of communion.

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Vol. X.

PROGRESS OF THE TRUTH.

THERE can be no doubt that the truths closely associated with the great Gathering Name of our Lord Jesus Christ are making steady headway among many of the people of God. Baptism, for example, is coming to the front in a way that must bring joy to the hearts of all who have learned something of the great Separation truths connected with that ordinance. The "ancient solitary reign" of Infant-sprinkling is being seriously disturbed, even in circles where "separation truth" is but dimly apprehended. It is no rare thing now to hear of a score of young converts being baptized. Even leaders in evangelistic work are finding out that there is not a vestige of

Scripture for Infant-sprinkling, and are coming boldly forward to be baptized. Yea, by a time, brethren of the "reverend" order are coming clear out on the question of Baptism, and are being publicly "*dipped*." All this is a powerful testimony against the popular custom of sprinkling infants, and must tell in the right direction upon all God's people who have any qualms of conscience as to their obedience to this ordinance.

But this is not all. The eyes of believers are being opened to something more than Baptism. They are finding out, almost at the same time, that God has called them to be separate from the unconverted, and to gather in the name of Jesus only. They are also discovering that as purged worshippers they have

“boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood”—that they do not need a clergyman to stand between them and God to give out the songs of praise, to do all the ministry and prayer, and generally to “perform the worship,” while they look on. They are finding out that there is no such person as “the clergyman” in the Scriptures!—that the distinction “clergy and laity” is *unknown in God's Book!* They are learning that all who are *saved by the blood* are not only warranted but invited by the Lord to gather together in His Name, to wait upon Him to lead out the gathered worshippers. One brother is thus led to give out a song of praise, another to minister the word, as of the ability that God giveth—“that all may learn and that all may be comforted” (1 Cor. xiv. 31). Such, we say, is the manner in which the Lord is leading numbers of His people in this day. The result is that companies of believers are arising here and there—owning the one great Name, seeking

to give effect to what they find written in the Word, and practically carrying out the distinctive truths for which some of us have been contending these many years. Without a doubt the Lord is at work. And the question that arises here is simply this:—*Are we in fellowship with God in this work?* Are we rejoicing to see these assemblies arising? What is our attitude towards them? We are convinced that these simple questions will test the reality of our profession that we are in fellowship with “the Great Shepherd of the sheep.” These questions will help us to discover if we have responded to His call—“Rejoice *with Me.*”

It is usual to pray that the Lord may open the eyes of His people who are in the bondage of tradition, and deliver them from the unequal yoke, and teach them the gathering power of *the Name of Jesus*. Very well, here is an answer to these prayers, brethren. Let us rejoice. How can we do otherwise? The believers of

whom we speak are just doing *what we ourselves did* many years ago. They are sitting down with the open Bible before them, and seeking to carry out what they find written there. We have here the undoubted work of the Spirit of God — we see the very things for which we have long been praying. Are we rejoicing? or are we troubled?

We can easily understand that brethren are to be found who will not rejoice in this movement among God's people, and will oppose their being "recognised," and even *refuse fellowship* to individual believers who may chance to come from one of these assemblies! It may be well asked, "On what ground are such believers rejected?" We prayed for God to deliver them, and lead them to meet in the name of the Lord Jesus only. Our prayer has been answered. Can it be possible that we are morose and dissatisfied with God's actings? These simple believers may not yet have learned *all* that we have learned: but they may have

learned quite as much as *we* learned in the same time; and even now their "dew of youth" and fragrance of heavenly power may put some of us to the blush. Yet they are rejected! And to receive them would, in some quarters, be called *lawlessness!* We praise God that we are counted worthy to suffer reproach for such "lawlessness."

We ask, what evil has that young sister done who goes for a Lord's-Day to a neighbouring assembly and is rejected? Her supposed crime is that she is in an assembly which refuses to join an unwritten confederacy—an assembly that is simply seeking to go on with God, with a good conscience, and with an open Bible. There is no Scriptural warrant to reject that young sister if she is known to be a worthy person. The unwritten laws of exclusive theology will give her the back seat; but there is nothing in the Scriptures of Truth to warrant such a proceeding. When Pilate asked the Jews what fault they had to find

with Christ, they replied, "*We have a law*" (Jno. xiv. 7). Alas for us if we have come to the same pass—that when we are asked why a believer is rejected we have virtually to say, "*We have a law!*" Has *God* a law which says that this believer is to be rejected? If we profess to go by the Scriptures, let us act in accordance with that profession. It is not enough to answer that "*We have a law,*" or, "*We have a custom,*" or "*We have a fear,* lest another assembly might come down upon us for this thing." "*To the law and to the testimony.*" Let us act out what we are convinced is in keeping with *the Word*. In the case of a believer such as we have described, and bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit, let us remember that "*against such there is no law.*"

To "*boycott*" these rising assemblies by rejecting all who come from them, is a policy that will recoil with withering effect on those who treat them thus. We may be assured that He who

has gathered these "*outcasts of Israel,*" imperfect though their light may be, can be depended upon to lead them "*from strength to strength,*" and feed them with "*food convenient.*" "*Boycott*" may effect its purpose, but it will not be *God's* purpose. We are satisfied that, in spite of every hindering influence, He will work out the purposes of His eternal glory by Christ Jesus. Blessed are they that are in fellowship with Him in this work! In the progress of the truth, which we see going on around us—in the rising companies seeking to own the Great Gathering Name—who can tell but our God is testing us to see how far we are prepared to *rejoice with Him!* It is in circumstances such as we have been describing, that the thoughts of many hearts are revealed!



HE who studies to maintain a conscience void of offence may confidently look to God for comfort in time of trial. A conscience good in point of integrity, will be found good also in point of tranquility.

PRINCIPLE OF RECEIVING.

THOSE who contend that an assembly should reject all believers who are not in "a recognised meeting," are generally careful to support their contention by supposing a very bad case to turn up. "Why," they say, "supposing a believer from one of the sects—a self-willed man, determined to have his own way, and do as he likes—supposing such a person to come to us, wanting fellowship for a day, we could not receive him," &c. Now, we are not aware that we ever advocated the reception of an individual answering to that description. What we contend for is, that one to whom testimony can be borne that he, or she, is *the Lord's*, and *walking godly*, is entitled to be received. We are not aware that *this principle* has ever been controverted; and let it be noted that it is with *principles* we, who seek to open up the Word, have got to deal. It is not for us to "chalk-mark" all who are to be

rejected. It is for us to lay down what we believe to be eternal principles; and it is for each individual and each assembly, accepting those principles, to apply them to their own local circumstances. Very well, then. We have been laying down the principle that it is our privilege to receive those who are on the foundation and who are walking godly. You may *suppose* a very flagrant case to turn up at the door some Lord's-day morning. Our reply to your supposition is simply this, that *each case* must be dealt with *on its own merits*. The supposed case is usually an extreme one—so extreme, if correctly described, that it would not come under the general principle—"one who is a believer and walking godly." *That* is a matter of detail in which each assembly must act as in the presence of the Lord.

But before proceeding to consider the bearing of an extreme case, in which a self-willed believer is manifestly determined to "do as he likes," it may be

well to see where we are as to the *general principle* upon which children of God are received. In the case of a godly sister coming from an assembly such as we have described in the preceding article, is there any one with the temerity to say that she should be rejected? This question is answered in two different ways. There are those who say, "By all means let the sister be *received*, though she is not in a recognised assembly"; and there are those who say, "By all means let her be *rejected*, BECAUSE she is not in a recognised assembly." You thus see that there are two widely diverging principles being acted upon by saints professedly meeting in the Name. There are those who hold and practise that all within the recognised circle of assemblies are to be "allowed fellowship," while all outside that circle are to be "refused fellowship." If you take up this ground you must of necessity *define your fellowship*. You must be prepared to say

what assemblies are *in the fellowship* and what assemblies are *outside*. *Are you prepared for this?* The theory is a very convenient one. It will relieve the assembly of a great amount of "exercise of soul" in dealing with believers from a distance. When one arrives, your question will be simply, "Are you in the fellowship?" "What fellowship?" "*Our* fellowship—the circle of assemblies which *we* recognise." If he is *not* in that circle, he is rejected. He may be practically seeking to carry out what *you* are seeking to carry out. But, because he is not in the "charmed circle," he is set aside! We must say we are amazed that children of God, professing to be guided by His Word, should be bound hand-and-foot by such a system of reception—or, to speak more correctly, such a system of *rejection*. There is no such system of exclusion revealed in the Scriptures. And we rejoice that many of the people of God are awaking to see this. Long usage has accustomed us to

speak of being *in the fellowship*, as if *we* had a fellowship apart from that fellowship into which the Lord has brought all His redeemed (1 Cor. i. 9). We grant that all have not apprehended that fellowship as they ought; but although some may have apprehended only certain aspects of it, while seemingly neglecting other aspects, the same thing may be equally true of us. Who among us has not been refreshed and delighted by an accidental meeting with some heir of the Kingdom, manifestly walking with his God, and enjoying experimental fellowship within the veil? And would we not be ashamed to say of such an one, in a tone of easy indifference, "Of course he is not *in the fellowship*"? We may resent the charge that we are sectarian; but if we say to a believer, "We cannot receive you *because* you are not *of us*" (not in the fellowship which we recognise), we are become sectarian.

If you do not "receive" upon the rigid principle of a recognised

fellowship, then you are shut up to the simple principle of receiving God's children *because they are His children and walking godly*. There is no sectarianism in such a principle. It does not bind you to receive every man who complies with certain external acts of obedience, and it does not compel you to reject those, honestly seeking to carry out the will of God, who acknowledge only that fellowship which *He* has formed. By all means let the utmost care be exercised to see that we receive only those who are the Lord's and walking godly. Let letters of commendation have their due weight, in proportion to the confidence we may have in those who send us these letters. But let us be clear as to *the principle* upon which we receive—that it is *not* because a believer is in a certain recognised circle of assemblies, but because the believer is in the fellowship of God's Son, and seeking with singleness of eye to adorn His doctrine.


Alas for the sectarian spirit

that is now at work, when even "obscure believers" are such ready scholars in picking up a certain line of teaching, that they are to be heard saying boastfully to their brethren in a "non-recognised" meeting, "If *you* were to come to our assembly, you would not get in"! We are here forcibly reminded of the words of a brother on hearing the well-worn phrase, "But that is not a recognised meeting." "Recognised *by whom?*" he said. "If it is recognised by the Lord Himself, will it matter whether you or I recognise it or not? You see that garden there, on the other side of my wall. Will it suffer although *I* do not recognise it as a garden? Does *Heaven* recognise it? Does the sun shine on it, and the dews of Heaven fall there? Apply that rule to your theory of assembly-recognition, and where are you? You may draw yourself up and say, '*We* don't recognise that assembly.' But if the dews of Heaven are descending upon it, and the sweet odours of a goodly

savour going forth from that 'garden,' why then, dear brother, you truly cut a sorry figure in shutting your eyes and refusing to 'recognise.'"

It may be well to point out that if a believer from another assembly breaks bread with you, that does not mean that you approve of everything that is done in the assembly from which he comes. There may be not a few things which you feel compelled to *disapprove* of. Indeed, as an esteemed brother very well put it recently, while speaking upon this subject, "your breaking bread with a brother who is even in the same assembly with yourself, does not mean that you approve of everything he does. Yet you go on breaking bread with him — thus showing that your doing so is *not expressing approval* of his conduct." To keep this simple principle before us — a principle which we are practically carrying out every day — will clear away many a cloud of difficulties in dealing with the question of "receiving."

MANNER OF SPIRIT.

UR influence for good or for evil depends very largely on our "manner of spirit." If you leave this element out, in reckoning up the component parts of a believer's character, you leave out one of the most important elements that have got to do with Christian testimony. Some professed disciples of Christ manifest such a hard and unlovely spirit that if it was not for *their profession* no one would think they had any connection whatever with the Kingdom of God! It was of professors of this kind that a great preacher once said, "It is a pity they ever professed!" Perhaps the *reason why* they professed is due to the very secondary position which has been given to teaching that bears on *the manner of spirit* which a child of God ought to manifest—which he *shall* manifest if the root of the matter is in him. Under this head Scripture expressly says, "If any man have

not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." It is therefore utterly useless for us to seek to explain away the plain teaching of the Word on this subject.

We seem to live in a day when one's profession is accepted without a doubt, provided his life bears the marks of external righteousness. He may be a cold, sneering kind of a man, entrenched in his own self-conceit, and sadly lacking in the essential beauties of the Christian character. But if he is clear on external truth, and especially if he is prepared to "fight for the party," he is reckoned a splendid fellow! He passes current for a Christian, and more—in some cases he is recognised as a pillar! But you see no trace of the oil of gladness—you perceive no fragrance of the precious ointment. Yet you *do* perceive—you cannot fail to perceive—a spirit that is not the spirit of Christ, and a savour that has not been borne from heavenly fields.

It is not difficult to discover one chief cause of such a state of

things. *An important line of teaching* has not had its due place. The teaching that bears upon "Christ manifest in the life of the believer" is the line of truth to which we refer. The tendency has been to take a man on his profession, without ascertaining very minutely what manner of spirit he is of. But it seems to us that his manner of spirit must be fully taken into account; for *that* will either confirm his profession or lay it open to the gravest suspicion. And not only has this aspect of the truth received scant attention, but the *doctrinal* aspect of the truth has been insisted upon with sledgehammer vehemence. What has been the result of all this? The result has been that an uneven and misleading standard of Christian life has arisen. Men have been made to tremble at the thought of transgressing a certain ecclesiastical boundary, while they have *not* been made to tremble at the thought of manifesting a hard and un-Christ-like disposition! We need not

wonder, therefore, that in such circumstances a "Christianity" has arisen that can be valiant for certain truths of "the outer court," while a stranger to the great experimental truths of the inner court of heavenly communion. Men with a certain power of will and intellectual grasp of things can easily adapt themselves to such a standard of Christianity. But there is one thing they cannot do—they cannot manifest a disposition they do not cultivate, and to which they are verily strangers.

By all means let doctrine be propounded—let the order of the Lord's house be set forth. But let us not fail to dwell upon the doctrine that "turns the light" upon our *manner of spirit*—the doctrine that tells us if Christ be in us He will be *seen*—that the savour of the heavenly ointment will be perceived; and that, if such fruits do not accompany our profession, we had better lay down the trumpet of testimony, and find out before God where we really are.

AFFECTED BY OUR SURROUNDINGS.

SCRIPTURE clearly recognises the principle that a person may be very materially affected by the people with whom he mingles. Two passages may be quoted to set forth our point—one in the positive, and one in the negative direction. In Prov. xiii. 20 we find it written, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise"; while in Prov. xxii. 24 we have companionship of a certain kind distinctly forbidden—"Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul." Other passages might be adduced; but these will suffice to reveal the principle that a believer is affected, and cannot but be affected, for better or for worse, by those with whom he is thrown in contact.

This principle may be seen in operation every day in the great school of human experience.

Many a believer has developed a striking beauty and humility of character by coming under the influence of those who were themselves sitting at the Master's feet and breathing His spirit. On the other hand, many alas! have become partakers of a very different spirit, and have lost the simplicity and unction of a bygone day, through having come under the influence of men of a hard and ungenial temperament. Sometimes you cannot fail to be struck by the change in a brother's spirit. He is not what he used to be. There is a tone of superiority, and a tendency to "fire up" if you cross him. You make some enquiry, and discover that he has come under *new influences*, and that these influences are moulding and fashioning him—but not in the direction of "the meekness and gentleness of Christ."

Let this teach us that we must be careful to watch the influences that are at work in the formation of character, for "character is eternal."

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Vol. X.

SOUL-WINNING.

IT has been remarked that “the science of preaching” is one thing, and “the science of winning souls” is another thing. Indeed, these two “sciences” (if we may use the word) may be as far asunder as the poles. Preaching has become comparatively an easy accomplishment. Once upon a time the preacher was “a man sent from God.” But, in these last days, preaching has largely degenerated into “a profession,” and is referred to as one of the “learned occupations.” In short, preachers can now be *manufactured*. Any young man with ordinary ability, though utterly destitute of the grace of God, can be “educated for the ministry,” as it is called; and,

after a certain number of years’ “grinding” in a seat of learning, he is turned out a full-fledged “preacher.” But *is* he really a preacher? No doubt he is—after a fashion. That is to say, he can stand up in public, and speak for half-an-hour-and-ten-minutes. But he is no preacher in the New-Testament sense of the term. He has received no heavenly call—no heavenly equipment is his. He is still in “the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity”—a witness to the startling truth that a man may be an eloquent and clever preacher in the popular sense, while he is still dead in trespasses and sins. To speak of soul-winning in connection with such a preacher would be out of the question. No “burden of souls” has ever come over his spirit; for

no burden of his own sins has ever weighed him down, and caused him to flee as a hell-deserving sinner to the Cross of Jesus.

But even although the preacher be a converted man, and although he has never passed through a college, he may be an utter stranger to what is known as "travailing in birth for souls." It is well to remember that there may be — and we fear there generally is — a great gulf between *preaching* and *soul-winning*, although the two things are usually supposed to have a very close connection. As a matter of fact any one can see that they are quite distinct the one from the other. As for preachers, their name is legion, while the soul-winner is a rarity. There is any amount of preaching: soul-winning, on the other hand, is a scarce and precious commodity. An impression seems to prevail that anybody may be a preacher, if he can only go on speaking for a certain length of time without a

break-down. But soul-winning is quite a different art, and demands certain conditions which the mere platform man can do without. For example, a man who has departed in soul from the Lord may quite easily go on preaching. It is not needful that he should breathe the air of heavenly communion in order to deliver a passable discourse. But with the soul-winner it is absolutely essential that his heart be kept in touch with the "Great Shepherd" of the sheep. Spiritual condition is well-nigh everything to him who would win souls. He must have a sense of the "abiding Presence"; he must be melted by the tenderness of the Man of Sychar; he must be enjoying communion with the Lover of souls. If such be not his condition of heart, his right hand will lose its cunning in the art of winning souls for Christ. The soul-winner who has departed from God not only ceases to be a soul-winner, but he ceases to travail in birth for souls. Love for souls is a

passion—one of the loftiest and purest that can animate the human breast, and yet a passion that dies out with wonderful rapidity on the altar of a cold and backsliding heart.

Love for the perishing, and the desire to win souls for Christ, is one of the most powerful tests of our spiritual condition. The ability to take a Gospel Meeting may be no test at all of spiritual condition. One who is a stranger to vital godliness may be able to carry out the whole external form of conducting a meeting. But love for souls is not a form. There can be no counterfeit there. "Bowels and mercies" for lost souls cannot be reached with the same ease as a man ascends a platform. Let me apply the test, and find out where I am. My general zeal may be undoubted. I may feel myself roused to contend with all my might for what I hold to be "the Faith." I may be expending energy, and losing sleep, and "moving Heaven and earth" for what I claim to be "the

Truth." But stay, my soul, and tell me *where art thou* in love for the perishing? Is there within me the Heaven-begotten desire to win souls for Christ?—to help with all my might in this great and blessed work? Do I know anything of the passion for souls? Let me now pause, to permit the test to have its due effect. What a searching question I have asked! How it reveals my true condition! Perhaps I have discovered that in the matter of love for souls I am as cold as ice! Yet to others I have seemed to be on fire for "the Truth"! If so, it must have been "strange fire." Where are we, brethren, in this matter of love for souls? Let us honestly take this question into the presence of God, and we shall find ourselves searched as with lighted candles. If love for souls is burning low upon the altar of the heart, we may rest assured—whatever our zeal may be—that we are not in fellowship with Him who came "to seek and to save that which was lost."

INDIRECTLY.

THERE is no flattery so agreeable to our flesh as that which comes to us *indirectly*—that is, through an intermediate person. If a man pays you some flattering compliment direct to yourself, you feel inclined to reject it, and to tell him you want none of these honied speeches. But if he tells you of some compliment which *brother So-and-so* was paying you behind your back, the case is somewhat different. Coming through a second party, the compliment has all the appearance of sincerity. But this is what makes it all the more insidious and deadly. The proper course, in such circumstances, is to “meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.” If one tells you of a pleasing remark which some brother has made concerning yourself, be doubly on your guard; for no form of flattery is so liable to puff up fleshly pride as that flattery which reaches you at

second-hand. The accomplished flatterer is well aware of this; and knows where to drop his honied words so that they will certainly be “carried” to the proper person. Alas! that one should be found to run with such a message! Even if the compliment be true of the man, it is dangerous for him to be told it: if it is not true, it may minister to the pride of the natural heart, and work his ruin!

Now, just as no compliment is so sweet as that which comes through a second party, in like manner there is no “cut” so lacerating as that which reaches us through a second party. If a man traduces you to your face, you can meet his charges. You can show where he is in error. You have an opportunity to defend yourself. You hear his words, and you perceive the spirit in which he speaks. You know exactly where he is, and you proceed, if at all possible, to “gain thy brother.” But this is not the case when you are dealing with “a stab in the dark.”

The evil-speaker keeps out of your reach. He discharges his shafts at a safe distance. Yet, like the flatterer, he knows (when it suits his purpose) where to drop a word so that it will be carried to the person he seeks to wound! Here, again, the "carrier" seems to be the prime mover in sowing discord; for "where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth." Many "chief friends" have been separated for years through some officious newsmonger repeating a matter that should never have been taken notice of. Beware how you make yourself the channel for conveying either the flatterer's flattery or the backbiter's backbiting. Let them do their own work. In such circumstances silence is golden. To err on *that* side leaves you with opportunity to put matters right, if righteousness demands that you should speak. But if you repeat a matter without any necessity for doing so, you may find that you have kindled a fire which it is impossible to put out.

HOW I WAS RECEIVED.

ABOUT twenty-six years ago I was converted to God, the "means" being an earnest Christian in one of the denominations. About eight months after my conversion I was, in the will of God, removed to the place where I have since lived. When I came here, one thought and desire was in my mind—that I might meet with warm Christians. These were difficult to find, as there was neither a prayer-meeting nor a Gospel-meeting in the place—nothing but the "stated services" in the three Presbyterian Kirks. In these I found nothing to attract me: they were cold and lifeless, so far as I could see. Prosecuting my search, I fell in with about half-a-dozen simple believers who, on the first night I entered the room where they met, were engaged in reading together and talking over the Scriptures. This was an entirely new experience for me, as I had never before heard of a meeting

for Bible reading. Their manner towards me was kind and loving ; and I realised the manifest presence and power of the Lord among them. I felt I had found what I was seeking. They invited me to a prayer-meeting in the same place a few nights afterwards. At that meeting my heart was melted with the simplicity, earnestness, and reality of their prayers. In going home from that meeting with a brother who was present, he told me they met again on Lord's-day morning, and on every Lord's-day morning, to "remember the Lord in the Breaking of Bread." As this was a commandment of the Lord for every Christian, they welcomed all those who were the Lord's ; and, acknowledging me as a brother in Christ, he said they would be glad to welcome me as one who had a right to be there. On Lord's-day morning I went, and sat down for the first time in this divine way ; and now, after nearly twenty-six years, I can give thanks for the grace that has enabled me to

continue stedfastly with the little company still going on in the Name of the Lord. I make no comment on the foregoing, but simply state facts as they occurred ; and which, after the lapse of years, I am more convinced than ever is the only scriptural way of "receiving."

P. H.

THE foregoing account of a "reception" twenty-five years ago is instructive as showing the simplicity which then prevailed on this point. The striking thing is that no bargain was made as to the future. Yet for a quarter of a century our brother has "continued stedfastly" in the same path. At the time referred to the question was not, "Are you going to make up your mind to *join us?*" The question was, "Are you *Christ's*, and sound in the fundamentals of the Faith?" If so, then it at once followed, "*You are one of us!*"

THE furnace of trial purifies only those who see God in the furnace.

"I'LL MEET YOU IN THE MORNING."

Lines suggested by the last words of DAVID STEEL,
a brother beloved.

I'LL meet you in the morning
Of that bright, eternal day—
In the morning of His coming
Who has been so long away,
When our eyes at last shall see Him
Whom our hearts have loved so long—
When, amidst the great assembly,
He shall sing the promised song—
When the myriads of the ransom'd
Shall join the glad refrain,
As they cast their crowns before Him
Who was once for sinners slain—
When the faithful and the loving
Shall the loved and faithful meet
In the Home of God the Father—
In the morning we shall meet.

The night is cold and dreary,
And its shadows dark and deep,
My heart and flesh are weary,
And I long to go to sleep;
Then say "*good night*" and leave me
With Him who loves me best,
And do not weep to grieve me
As He hushes me to rest.

In the morning of His glory,
When the first bright beams are shed,
He shall call, and I shall answer
From my angel-guarded bed.
With His promise for my pillow
My sleeping shall be sweet,
He shall call me in the morning—
In the morning we shall meet.

* * * *

Then he closed his eyes for ever
On this world of sin and woe;
He feared no chilly river
With its dark and dismal flow;
He knew the Lord who loved him
Would His word of promise keep,
To awake him in the morning,
And he sweetly "fell on sleep."

W. B.

GOLD FIELDS,
SOUTH AFRICA, May 5th, 1895.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON A CLERGYMAN'S LETTER.

A FOUR-PAGE leaflet, has reached us from the north of Ireland. It is from the pen of a clergyman, and warns a young friend against those he calls the "Plymouth Brethren." We do not know any section of believers who take that title, though we happen to know a few for whom the title is doubtless intended. There is nothing specially new in the leaflet referred to. It consists chiefly of a repetition of old charges which have been refuted over and over again. The young friend is warned against the "brethren's" doctrine of sinless

perfection! We are not aware that such a heresy has any hold whatever upon those whom the religious world chooses to term "Plymouth Brethren." We have not seen it in their writings: we have never caught the sound of it from their Conference platforms. Yet the sinless perfection theory is brought out and held up before the eyes of some young seeker after truth, as if it were one of the things most surely believed among us! The "rev." gentleman says:—

"Some Plymouth Brethren get over this manifest difficulty by professing a sinless condition, and go so far as to declare that actions notoriously vile, when perpetrated by them, are not sin."

Where are the brethren who hold such a heresy? We never heard of them or read of them, except in assaults by clergymen against the scriptural principles upon which the Lord gathers His people. These principles must be impregnable indeed when their opponents must have recourse to such weapons in attacking the citadel of truth.

The leaflet goes on—

"The teaching of the Brethren, as to the nature of sin, of sanctification, &c., strikes at the very root of personal responsibility and morality."

This is another unfounded assertion. Why does he not quote the words of some acknowledged teacher to prove his statement? It is as void of foundation as his charge of sinless perfection.

The writer of the leaflet is manifestly in the grossest darkness as to church fellowship. He condemns "brethren" for objecting to the unconverted at the Table of the Lord! No doubt he finds 2 Cor. vi. 17 a rather awkward passage—"Come out from among them, and be ye separate." But he gets over it in the most unceremonious fashion. He holds that Paul was simply "exhorting the Christians at Corinth not to mingle in idol worship"! But Scripture gives the passage no such limitation. God asks the question, "What communion hath light with darkness?" Seemingly this clergyman has found an answer to the

question! He is clearly in favour of having both the living and the dead—the friends and the enemies of God—at the Communion Table. And in support of his theory he brings up “the tares and the wheat” (Matt. xiii. 45). But there is one thing he is careful *not* to tell his young friend, namely, that “*the field is the world,*” and not the Church! Opponents of the truth are careful to conceal that important piece of information. Whenever the Church became a manifested thing, we find that the enemies of Christ (the unsaved) had neither part nor lot in it. It was *believers* that were “added” (Acts v. 14). “Of the rest durst no man join himself” (ver. 13). But the clergyman is bound to fight for his church, which he describes as one with a “liturgy” and a “glorious history.” He cannot well object to the unconverted being there, for if that church of “glorious history” were suddenly to be bereft of its unconverted members and their gold, it would well-nigh cease to

exist! The clergyman would doubtless write over her portals that “The glory is departed.” Think of it for a moment. If you were to subtract from that church those whom God never added to it, you would almost blot it out of the ecclesiastical firmament, and raise a howl of lamentation commensurate only with an awful calamity! Yet this is the church of “glorious history”—the church to which the clergyman’s young friend is exhorted to cleave with all his might!


The clergyman speaks almost in a sneering way of the word “converted.” “Believers,” he says, “or what I suppose is generally called ‘converted.’” We do not wonder that he is chary of that revival word, “converted.” And still less do we wonder when we read his closing exhortation. He says, “Stay in your church. . . . You enjoy a great privilege in being born into her.” He evidently believes in being *born* into his church, and he rejoices that his young friend at birth

had the good fortune to be born into that particular church! All this is simply lamentable. David says, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Natural birth may give you an entrance into men's churches; but that counts for absolutely nothing before God. To become a member of *God's Church* (the general Assembly and Church of the first-born ones) you must be *born again*—born from above, through receiving the Son of God as your almighty and all-sufficient Saviour. This is the only being "born into the Church" of which Scripture speaks. If you have been born of God, my friend, you are already in the Church—you are a member of it—you are joined to it—God Himself has joined you. The Church of which you are now a member is the true "historic Church." It dates as far back as Pentecost; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. What you have now to do is to seek to carry out what you

find written in God's Book. If you are in a religious system which God has not builded together, it is time you were asking the question, "What am I doing here?" When you "arise from among the dead," it shall then come to pass which is written—"Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. v. 14).

Space does not permit of us taking up any other points in the clergyman's letter; but we think our "observations" will make it clear that the great truths connected with Separation to the Name of the Lord are in no danger from this new opponent. It is still true, as of old, that "the lamp of Truth, the more you shake it, the more it shines."

"THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND."

T has been remarked by many a sorely-grieved saint that "it was not what So-and-so *said* that wounded me, but *the way in which he said it*." It may therefore be well that we

carefully consider Eph. iv. 21-24, and find out, in the presence of the Lord, if we are giving heed to the plain commandment of Scripture, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Someone has said that those who gather simply in the Name of the Lord Jesus, are "very careful about breaking bread, but very careless about breaking hearts." It will no doubt be admitted that this assertion is too sweeping by far, and shows that the person who made it was not an entire stranger to the spirit he was condemning. Yet, have we not given at least some cause for such a remark by our disregard of the exhortation, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind"? Let us see to it that our dealings with one another, and with the world around, are not only scriptural as to the letter but Christ-like as to the spirit.

In nature a very beautiful flower may have a very offensive smell, and a fine-looking apple may have a very bad taste. It is in being brought into close

contact with the senses that the fragrance of the flower and the flavour of the fruit are discovered. Thus it is with Christian profession. It may have a splendid external appearance; but, when you bring it into contact with the spiritual senses, you find, in many cases, that it becomes repulsive instead of attractive. The fragrance of the Spirit of Christ is not only wanting, but too often there are undoubted manifestations of the workings of the flesh.

May it be ours to see that the Master fills the throne of our hearts, having His way and sway in all the actions of our life, and especially in the *manner or spirit* in which they are performed. When we are thus inwardly right, there is sure to emanate from us a moral tone or force, repelling that which is evil and attracting that which is holy and true.

A. B. G.

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Vol. X.

THE DIVINE PRESENCE.

THE Philistines had a very trying time of it while God's Ark was among them (1 Sam. v.). No doubt they were elated with their "trophy." Yet the Ark was the cause of such trouble that after seven months' trial they were glad to send it out of their coasts. That Ark could only be held by those in communion with Jehovah. To *them* it was the token of blessing: to others it was the symbol of judgment.

All this is true to-day of the "Ark of Truth." We hear much about "obedience to the Truth," and the claim of some that they alone "have the Truth." Yet now, as of old, the great eternal principle holds, that God's Truth, like God's Ark, can only be held

by those who are in communion with Him. We believe that this great truth is being largely lost sight of to-day. And the trials and rendings that have come upon the people of God are primarily due to this—the vain attempt *to carry out divine principles apart from divine power*. Battles have been fought over points of detail—the things of the outer court of the temple; while the affairs of the inner court—the showbread of priestly communion, and the oil of holy unction, and the lamp of heavenly light—have been neglected.

What enthusiasm has been displayed—what zeal has been manifested—over the affairs of the outer court of the temple! If only the half of that enthusiasm, and the half of that zeal, had been devoted to the inner court—to

the seeking of the Christ-like life and a revival of power—what a different tale it would have told among the Churches to-day! The confusion that has arisen need not cause any surprise to those who have even a very little “understanding of the times.” If we have taken our stand for the Lord—to be subject to the leading of His Spirit, and to build according to the New-Testament pattern—let us know that *we cannot get on without God*. No people on earth shall be so weak as we are, if we have not the consciousness of His presence. If we were strangers to the Ark of His Truth we would not perceive the absence of His power. It is the fact that we are seeking to carry out the divine pattern, that makes us so dependent on the divine presence. This is how we are constrained to say, like Moses of old, “If *Thy presence* go not with me, carry us not up hence” (Ex. xxxiii. 15). We want to be taught again the Truth of the *Great Presence*. In our closets, and in our assemblies,

we want to feel the “hush” that says, “*Jehovah-Shammah—The Lord is there!*” (Ezek. xlvi. 35). And the longing heart shall not be satisfied with anything less. In vain, by human devices and by adamant laws, shall we attempt to make up what has been lost through the lack of the power of God. The lost power can only be found where we left it—within the veil. Energised by the power of God (2 Cor. vi. 7), and strong with the joy of God (Neh. viii. 10), and filled with the fulness of God (Eph. iii. 19), we shall be found bearing the Ark of His Truth to the glory of His Name, walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, and endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Thus there may yet come true of us the words spoken of Asa of old, that “they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the Lord his God was with him”! (2 Chron. xv. 9).

IN HIS POWER.

DAVID felt certain, the moment his eye fell on Doeg, that he was in the power of an unscrupulous man—one who would “repeat the matter,” and so bring evil on the house of Ahimelech (1 Sam. xxi. 7; xxii. 9). It turned out as David had feared. Doeg, in due time, gave a highly-coloured account of the transaction with the priests of Nob; and we know what Saul's vengeance accomplished (1 Sam. xxii. 18).

No doubt you have fallen in with professed believers of the Doeg character. If, in some unguarded moment, you chance to commit yourself in their presence, you have a feeling, amounting to a conviction, that they will take the first opportunity to blazon the matter abroad. The Doeg character has so stamped itself upon them that you confidently expect them to act out their true character. And you are not disappointed. They cannot even wait for a favourable

opportunity. They must *make* an opportunity. Their feet are swift to run with the tidings of evil. They may be naturally of a sluggish temperament; but the news of a brother's fall arouses their dormant energies, and gives to their tardy foot the swiftness of the roe! Yet these Doegs may keep up all the outward forms of religion, and have “Holiness to the Lord” emblazoned on the forefront of their profession. But they have yet to learn that such “Christianity” is not the Christianity of the Gospels, nor of the Epistles, nor of Christ Himself.

There cannot be fellowship with Christ if we discover in ourselves a secret joy at the discomfiture of one of His members. Even in the case of *an enemy* this joy must find no place; for it is written, “Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth” (Prov. xxiv. 17). Love delights to conceal a matter if righteousness does not require its publicity.

NOT IN THE LIGHT OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

IN dealing with Church Truth there is a danger of our looking at it *in the light of local circumstances*, instead of *in the light of God*. When we view it in the light of our own local surroundings there is a strong temptation to favour Church principles that will suit these surroundings. If you take up a hostile attitude towards another company of believers in your immediate vicinity, you are not likely to favour Church truth which will interfere with that hostile attitude. That is to say, in seeking light from the Word, there is a tendency to ask, "But how would this do with our local difficulties?" Whereas, the first thing we should ask is the simple question, "Is this the Truth of God, as revealed to us in the Scriptures?" It is no part of our business to shape the truth so that it will meet our local difficulties. The truth cannot be bent to suit our circumstances :

circumstances must be made to bend to the truth.

When you get hold of an eternal principle out of the Word, hold it fast, it matters not what the local circumstances may be. There is such a thing as *having a theory* as to Church Truth, and rejecting everything that *will not square with the theory*. But if I find truth that will not square with my theory, it is my theory that must yield, and not the truth.

In carrying out God's principles as to Church order we shall find local circumstances in one place to be very different from what they are in another place. This does not mean that we must alter the principles to suit the circumstances. It simply means that in certain cases *special care* must be taken in *applying* God's principles. It is at this point that great mistakes are made. Divine principles are in some cases rejected, simply because they do not seem to meet the local difficulties. But we need have no fear on that score. In

due time the local difficulties shall melt away, *provided* that the divine principles are held in "all lowliness and meekness," and the power of conscious communion.

TWO THINGS.

IN the matter of "Reception" we have no sympathy with the theory that every one who comes up and says, "I am a child of God," should at once be received. We have never advocated such a course. In dealing with that subject we are always careful to join *two* things together, namely, profession and manifestation—in other words, *life* and *walk*. If one professes to be a child of God, and if there are those in whom we have confidence who can testify that the brother is godly, then we say we should rejoice to receive him. "We ought therefore to receive such." We are not aware of any Scriptural argument against this position.

NOTHING FOR ME.

THE world can get along without God—at least it seems not to perceive His absence. But it is different with thee, my soul. Thou hast tasted the lovingkindness of the Lord; thou hast eaten of the hidden manna; thou hast drunk of that river which maketh glad the city of God. Thou knowest something of the riches of the Father's house, and the abundance of the Father's table. The world cannot satisfy thee. If, in an evil hour, it has allured thee into the far country of departure from God, thou dost find nothing there to assuage the longings of thine immortal spirit. Thou art haunted, startled, made miserable, by the consciousness of what thou art, and the memory of where thou hast been. "Ah!" you say, "there is nothing here for me: I will arise and go to *my Father!*"

—•—
 "WHEN God means to make a creature happy, He makes him obedient."

“JESUS WEPT.”

(Jno. xi. 35).

“JESUS wept”—O think of this, my soul,
When over thee the waves of trouble roll ;
The One who has all power to still thy fears
Was by His people's sorrow moved to tears !—

That mighty One who calmed the angry wave,
And called the buried Lazarus from the grave,
And healed the poor, blind beggar on the road,
And reconciled the dying thief to God,—

Who set the palsied sick one free from pain,
And brought the Widow's son to life again,
And bless'd the maniacs of Gadara's shore
With gladd'ning light, and many hundreds more.

O tender, loving heart, once pierced for me,
O'erwhelmed with deepest anguish on the Tree,
Let me but rest in Thee while here below,
And trust that love which never change can know !

Help me, O Lord, to imitate Thee here,
By speaking words of comfort, love, and cheer,
To those who droop in sorrow's lonely hour ;
Help me to tell them of Thy love and power,—

To seek the feeble ones who, wand'ring, stray,
Scattered and lone in this dark, cloudy day,
When words of rising strife and deeds of shame
So often bring dishonour on Thy name.

Help me to weep with lonely ones who weep,
And serve Thee thus while at Thy side I keep ;
For if afar from Thee my heart should stray,
I have no power to work, or watch, or pray.

Then, O my soul, keep cleaving close to Him ;
And, if at times thine eye with tears be dim,
Cast all thy care on Him who cares for thee,
Until with Him and like Him thou shalt be

E. M.

WELL WITH MY SOUL.

EVERYTHING is well
if it is well with my
soul. Everything is wrong
if I am not right with God.
I can do all things through
Christ strengthening me.
Apart from Him I am weak
as other men—yea, weaker.
If I am not sanctifying
Christ as Lord in the heart,
I am without the aids of
heavenly power, besides
being paralysed by the
voice of an accusing con-
science. Nothing can make
up for the great want—a
present Lord Jesus Christ
consciously *with me* ! I
must therefore count the
cost. If I would not
suffer loss at yonder Judg-
ment-seat, I must “count
all things but loss” for the
excellency of the knowledge
of Christ Jesus my Lord.

To know the right thing and do
the wrong thing is the first step in
the process of being “hardened
through the deceitfulness of sin.”

HOW I ALSO WAS RECEIVED.

IT is now thirty-two years since I was led to gather in the simple way of God's Word. At that time I was deeply impressed with the thought that things around me were not in conformity with Scripture; and while, unlike your correspondent, P. H., I had fellowship with many hearty Christians, I was not satisfied. A Mr. F—— came to the chapel I attended, and so opened up the Word of God as to make it a new book to me. He did not touch Church order, but simply nourished us in the Word. The result of his ministry was, that Bible-readings were held in a beloved brother's house.

One night when 1 Cor. xiv. came up, I gave my views very fully. A brother thereupon said to me, "If these are your views, why are you where you are?" I gave no answer; but at the close of the meeting I enquired where this brother went on Lord's-Day; and I ascertained

that he and several others came together to "break bread" in a Hall. Previous to this I had gone the round of Scotch Independents and Methodists, &c. The former would not allow me fellowship unless I was baptized; so I turned away, as at that time I firmly believed in infant sprinkling. At last I went to the Hall referred to. The brethren, knowing me, invited me forward, giving me a hymn-book and a *hearty welcome*. Being early, I opened the hymn-book, and silently read the first hymn that caught my eye:—

"There is a place where spirits blend,
And friend holds fellowship with friend."

I was so taken up with it, that I said to myself, "If this were not my first appearance, I would give out that hymn." Striking to relate, that was the very first hymn given out that day! The thought came into my mind, "*The One Spirit!*"

Since then it has been my happy privilege to assemble with His own, to "do this in remembrance of Him"; and I have

never since found a Scripture to hinder me receiving others *as I was received*. T. C.

A SHORTER WAY.

IN the wilderness Temptation (Matt. iv. 8-9) Satan offers to hand over to Christ all the kingdoms of this world, if He would only fall down and worship the Tempter. This was virtually as if he had said to our Lord that there was "a shorter way to the Kingdom of His glory than by the Cross of His shame." But no "shorter way" would be taken by Him who had said, "Lo, I come, to do *Thy* will, O God." By the Cross of His shame, and by no other path, would He reach the throne of His glory. Even here we can see the lesson our great Exemplar left *for us*. The path to the glory of His Father's throne might lead by Gethsemane and Calvary. Yet it was the path appointed by His Father God; and in that path He

would rejoice; for it was "according to the *will of God*." We, too, may be tempted; yea, if faith is to be duly "tried," we *shall* be tempted. And, whatever our temptations may be, we are certain to be assailed by some suggestion of the Evil One to take "a short way," devised by carnal wisdom, to reach an undoubtedly good end. "These weapons are slow in accomplishing their purpose," the Tempter seems to say. "By a little sacrifice of principle, a little stifling of conscience, you could use other weapons, and see far mightier results." Thus the adversary seems to reason. The temptation is strong; and, where there is but a feeble faith in the unseen powers, the temptation has every chance to be overwhelming. On the other hand, if we are truly living "by the faith of the Son of God," it shall be our joy to *watch with Him*—to tread the path of the Father's will, and to reach the Heaven-appointed goal by the Heaven-appointed way.

LOOKING FOR THE "BLESSED HOPE."

THE expectation of the early saints was what we find in Paul's Epistle to Titus (ii. 13, R.V.)—"Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." The Thessalonian saints at conversion "turned to God . . . to wait for His Son from Heaven." The Philippians *looked* to Heaven for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. iii. 20). The Hebrews also looked for Him to "*appear* the second time, without sin, unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 28). And "every one that hath this *hope* set on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (I Jno. iii. 3, R.V.).

When this "blessed hope" is embraced, it has a wonderful transforming power. By faith Abraham "became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, having taken up his abode in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the

same promise; for he *looked* for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. xi. 8-10, R.V., margin).

The Lord is coming *for* His saints (Jno. xiv., I Cor. xv., I Thess. iv.); and He is also coming in glory *with* His saints (Titus ii., Jude 14, Matt. xxv.).

When we lose sight of this "blessed hope" we become "dwellers in the land," and confess not that we are strangers (not at home) and pilgrims (going home).

When we arrive at the railway station, we draw our ticket and wait the arrival of the train. We have thus, so to speak, already "booked" for the celestial city, and are now on the platform of expectation, waiting for the shout (I Thess. iv. 16).

Of recent years the cry has been heard by a sleeping Church, "Behold the Bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet Him" (Matt. xxv. 6, R.V.). And His last words have been re-echoed, "Surely I come quickly" (Rev.

xxii. 20). Dear fellow-saints,
may we heartily and truly sing,

"I am *waiting* for the coming
Of the Lord who died for me :
Oh ! His words have thrilled my spirit,
'I will come again for thee.'
I can almost hear His foot-fall
On the threshold of the door,
And my heart, my heart is longing
To be with Him evermore."

R. S. M.

LIKE THE WORLD.

EVEN in our holy things there may be such a thing as becoming "like them that go down into the pit" (Ps. xxviii. 1). It is customary, in the religious world, to "do as much religion" on Sunday as is supposed to be sufficient for the whole week. In these lukewarm days there is a danger of our becoming like the world. The prayer-meeting is in many cases being sadly neglected ; and "entering an appearance" on Lord's-Day is often regarded as quite sufficient for a decent Christian profession !

CONDITION DETERMINES.

CHRI^ST'S words and life had a very different effect on different persons. This was not due to any change in Him. He was "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." In Him the perfection of beauty ever shone. But those who heard and saw Him were widely different from each other. Their *condition* determined their estimate of Christ and His words. The same Jesus and the same words roused the opposition of some, while bringing joy and rejoicing to others' hearts. This law still operates. Our condition will determine our estimate of Christ and His words. The message that comes from Him shall have an abundant entrance to the heart that "longeth" for His courts.

—♦—
EARTHLY success is not gained without resolution and grappling with difficulties. This is likewise true of heavenly promotion. Our God has no rewards for indolence and indifference.

FIRST EFFECT OF LIGHT.

WHEN a company of God's people have been "educated" into an unscriptural line of things, the presentation of the simple Truth has a tendency to startle them—perhaps to trouble them. And the conclusion is sometimes arrived at that the teaching cannot therefore be according to Scripture. But this really proves nothing. Have we not often been startled by the presentation of truth which did not coincide with what we had been accustomed to believe? If we have got away from the mind of God in carrying out the details of His worship or His service, we shall certainly be startled if we are brought face-to-face with the simple teaching of the Word. And the further we are away from God's "meridian line" the more we shall be startled. If saints have been "educated" into a wrong path, they simply need now to be educated into the right path. Fresh light has doubtless

a dazzling effect. That, however, is not the fault of the light, but of the vision that receives it.

ACCORDING TO THE HEAVENLY RECKONING.

PAUL said, "And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. ii. 20). It is only as we thus live that our life is worthy of the name. Mere existence is not Christian life. Mere consciousness is not Christian experience. I must live "by the faith of the Son of God." If my life is not of this character it is a blank, or worse. My life, according to heavenly reckoning, consists of those parts over which the words may be written—"I live by the faith of the Son of God." According to this reckoning how short a Christian life may be, though long in years! How long, on the other hand, may be a life "prematurely cut short," speaking after the manner of men!

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Vol. X.

“THY LIGHT AND THY
TRUTH.”

N the prayer of the Psalmist, “O send out Thy light and Thy truth” (Ps. xliiii. 3), we have two things joined together, namely, *light* and *truth*. This divine blending is followed by a divine leading—even unto the holy hill and the tabernacles of the Most High.

Let us briefly glance at the progression—the going “from strength to strength”—which is thus brought before us in this wonderful Psalm.

Mark the *two-fold* character of that force by which we are to be led and brought to the tabernacles of our God,—not light by itself—not truth by itself—but light in sweet company with truth. It shall be at our peril if we

seek to divorce the two. You may attempt, as some have attempted, to do without *the truth*—to give the written word an obscure place in Christian testimony, and to claim that as we have got *light* direct from God Himself, there is no more need for the written Word. Or, you may claim that “we have the truth,” and that there is no need for any further light being sent from the upper sanctuary. In either case the “more sure word of prophecy” comes in with its withering rebuke. Professed light, apart from truth, is sure to resolve itself into the blindest fanaticism; and professed allegiance to God’s truth, apart from God’s light, is sure to lead to a cold and repelling formalism. The danger is as great in the one case as the other. But we are

left with no liberty to select and choose in the matter. Our safety is in keeping to God's path; and in that path God's light *and* His truth will ever be found leading and guiding—to *Himself*. Such is the true goal of all divine leading.

David desired God's light no less than His truth, and His truth no less than His light. Let us see that we are not content with anything less. As the sun can only be seen by its own light, so the truth can only be apprehended in the presence of Him from whom it came. In seeking to find our true path while here below, and to carry out what we find recorded in the Scriptures of Truth, let us remember that we shall simply reach a self-satisfied Pharisaism if we fail to walk in that pure and gladdening light which is ever shining from the upper sanctuary! O how that light searches us to the core—rebukes the unlovely thought—witheres up the root of bitterness—fits us to see truth in the light of God, and carry it out in the

Spirit of Christ! When truth is thus held *in the light*, and carried out *in the light*, we may well count upon the power of God resting on our testimony.

David says of God's light and truth, "Let them bring me unto Thy holy hill." The Psalmist confidently expects this to be the outcome of God's light and truth being blended harmoniously together. The holy hill of God shall then be reached. Blessed prospect! And no less shall it come true in our experience that if we are seeking to subject ourselves to the truth, and to walk in the light of God, we shall assuredly be brought to His holy hill—even unto where His dwellings be. If hitherto we have been indifferent to His light or to His truth, let us now arise and call upon our God, saying, "O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles." "For with Thee is the fountain of life: in *Thy light* shall we see light" (Ps. xxxvi. 9).

STILL ASCENDING.

THE Psalmist is still ascending. On the all-powerful pinions of light and truth he has soared away to the hill of God. And now, he says, "will I go unto the altar of God" (Ps. xliii. 4). The sacrifice of praise must needs ascend; and, like Jeremiah, he is weary of forbearing, and he cannot stay. Holy is that hill, and amiable are those tabernacles (Ps. lxxxiv. 1). Therefore the stream of praise ascends. Blessed are they who are thus in spirit borne, by the shining forth of light and truth, to that hill of God, where the light of earthly glory dies, and the soul is bowed in adoration in the presence of the Holy One! Precious times are to be found in the hill of God. It is there, almost under the constraint of an irresistible impulse, that we call upon our souls and all that is within us to bless and magnify His holy name. Moreover, the altar speaks of *sacrifice*. When we are come to the hill of holy

communion, it is then that we are prepared to make sacrifices for God. When we are being made glad by His countenance, we scarcely consider anything "too much" to offer to Him. At other times the hand is put into the pocket cautiously, and some tiny coin is selected for an offering to Jehovah. But, when we come to the holy hill and the altar of our God, it is a different matter. It is then a delight to sacrifice; and we say with the Psalmist of old, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me?" And the reason for this is not far to seek; for at the altar David meets God as the God of joy. "Then will I go," he says, "unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy," or, as we have it in the margin, "unto God *the gladness of my joy*" (Ps. xliii. 4). When such is our happy experience, sacrifices are sure to ascend; not the sacrifices of mere lip adoration—telling the Lord how much we are prepared to yield up to Him; but a practical compliance

with that word which says, "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase" (Prov. iii. 9). Such "worship" becomes easy and natural when God is the "gladness" of our joy.

THE MIDDLE OF THE PATH.

IN days of difficulty the counsel is often given to "keep to the middle of the path." But this counsel may be very misleading. All depends upon what is meant by the middle of the path. Very likely you will find that it means the middle path between opposing factions—that is, the centre point between man's extremes. But this may leave you far indeed from the centre of *God's* path. The middle of the path in the estimation of many seems to be arrived at by taking a number of church theories and striking an average of them all, and then saying, "This is where I stand: I don't believe in extremes." But

this is a very uncertain method of arriving at the centre of the path—even man's path; while it affords no certain light as to what is the path *the Lord* would have His people to tread while here below. We are not called to find out all the ecclesiastical practices that prevail around us, and then to shape *our* course accordingly. If we would know the path which God would have us to tread we shall find it in *the Word*. "Wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isa. xxxv. 8). Let us take heed to our way according to His Word (Ps. cxix. 9), esteeming all His precepts concerning all things to be right (Ps. cxix. 128). In dealing with Church principles let us remember that it is not sufficient to test them by that which is *customary*—we must test them by that which is *written*. Having found God's path as revealed in His word, let us seek to keep to the centre thereof, no matter how religious systems around us may be swaying to the right hand or to the left.

“IN THE FELLOWSHIP.”

IN approaching this subject we desire to remember that not a few believers are exercised before God as to this matter—believers who are honestly seeking to know and carry out the mind of the Lord in the things that pertain to “the fellowship.” We also desire to remember that when a certain practice has prevailed for years it becomes so established as one of “the things most surely believed among us,” that to question the scripturalness of the practice is viewed by many as nothing short of self-will. Nevertheless, seeing we claim to go by *the Book*, we do not see how any one can object to our testing the practice by that which is written. If it stands the test, well and good: if it does not stand the test, then we shall have cause to praise God for having discovered where we were in error. We know that practices which it took long to learn may take a considerable time to un-

learn; and we know that when we have rigidly observed a certain practice for years, we are chary of anything that would interfere with the even tenor of our way. But, as believers professedly meeting in the Name do not claim *finality* in the matter of light on the written Word, we count upon the grace of Christ in our brethren to bear with us while we endeavour to test, by the Scriptures, that expression so well-known among us—“*In the fellowship.*”

When a stranger arrives at the door of the place of meeting on a Lord's-day morning, the question is asked—“*Are you in the fellowship?*” We know what is *meant* by the question. It does *not* mean the fellowship of all saints. It means, “Are you in one of the assemblies which *we* acknowledge—which we recognise?” If the brother can furnish evidence that he *is* in such a company of believers, he is held to be *in the fellowship*, and is therefore at once conducted to his place at the Table. But,

if the stranger cannot furnish evidence to that effect, he is not treated as "in the fellowship." There may be evidence that he is a child of God—adorned with the beauty of holiness, rich in the Christ-like spirit, and manifestly in fellowship with his God. Yet all counts for nothing if he has not "joined us," and is not walking in the path which *we* hold to be according to God. We are simply stating what is a very prevalent practice. The question now before us is a very simple one—"Is there Scripture for such a practice?" So far as we have been able to discover, *there is not*. "In the fellowship," in the usual acceptance of the phrase, means the fellowship of *a certain section* of the people of God. It means, "Have you *joined us*? If you have joined us, we will at once give you your place at the Table. If you have not joined us, then you must take a back seat." Is there any Scripture to support such an interpretation of *in the fellowship*? We have not succeeded in finding any. We

admit that we were startled when a certain esteemed brother pointed out some time ago that there was not such an expression in the Scriptures as "in the fellowship," and that "the fellowship," in Scripture, is never used in the restricted sense to which we have been referring.

When Scripture speaks of "*the fellowship*," it becomes at once clear what the Spirit of God means by that term. Take 1 Cor. i. 9, for example: "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto *the fellowship* of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." You thus see that "the fellowship," if we take the phrase from Scripture, is that fellowship into which God has called *every one* of His redeemed! This is *the fellowship* which God has formed. We have here the Scriptural phrase, *the fellowship*; and we have the *thing* which God means when He uses that phrase. Is it not startling that *we* mean quite a different thing when we use that phrase? No doubt long usage has accustomed us to it. Yet that must not hinder us from

seeking to have the mind of God as to what is really meant by *the fellowship*. If we turn to the phrase, "the *fellowship* of the Holy Spirit" (2 Cor. xiii. 14—the same word translated *communion*) we find that it is "*with you all*," and the "*all*" embraces "all that in every place call on the name of the Lord" (1 Cor. i. 2). Thus "*the fellowship* of God's Son"—"*the fellowship* of the Spirit"—takes in the whole family of God! Have we not been acting as if *the fellowship* were a tiny section of that family? Is it not the case that we have been attempting to *form a fellowship*, instead of recognising, and rejoicing to recognise, that fellowship which God has formed?

What lamentable failure has followed every attempt to form and define a fellowship! In every case it has been termed *the fellowship*; and sometimes there have been two, three, or more, existing at the same time—all claiming to be *the fellowship*! Yea, and with all these sad object-lessons before us, we

are such slow learners that some are making a fresh beginning to build again *after the same pattern*—to form something to be called "*the fellowship*"! Yet there are those, and their number is increasing, who in all these things are hearing the voice of the Lord saying, "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him?" (1 Sam. xvi. 1). In other words, "How long will you mourn after a fellowship which *you* can form and define and call *the fellowship*?—but a fellowship which excludes many who, according to their light, are seeking to please the Lord Christ, and a fellowship which, time after time, has been broken into pieces!"


We must have God's thoughts as to *the fellowship*; and we shall find His thoughts in His Word. Traditional custom cannot deliver us at this time. The reasonings of men cannot avail. We must get back to the simplicity of *the Book*. We must have "Thus saith the Lord" for the ground on which we stand.

The great movement of sixty years ago concerning the "Principles of Fellowship" was truly a remarkable revival of truth. Its outstanding features were *the oneness of all believers—the one great Gathering Name—the one fellowship*—and *the one test of fellowship*, namely, "Are you in the fellowship which God has formed, and are you sound in faith and practice?" Never was a movement ushered in with clearer marks of its divine origin, or with greater promise of power and blessing. But soon, alas—through the jealousy of party leaders, and as a bulwark against alleged defilement—the basis of "the fellowship" was *narrowed down* to a mere *section* of the saved. From that time the movement was bereft of that beautiful and heavenly characteristic—*the recognition of all who were Christ's*. Many have wondered at the calamities that have followed; and the question has been asked, "Is the sword to devour for ever?" But we do not wonder that such have been

the results of an attempt to "form a fellowship"—however good the intention might be.

The narrowing of the basis of fellowship was the fatal error. There were sects innumerable at that time; and God did not want another sect. He wanted a people who should rise clear above the din of sects and parties, and enter into *His* thoughts about His redeemed, and rejoice to recognise every member of the heavenly family! There are those who have been enabled by grace to go on for many years on those blessed and heavenly lines; and there are those who are longing for the simplicity and the power of that bygone time. That simplicity and that power may yet be ours. But, like Abraham of old, we must pitch our tent where it was at the beginning (Gen. xiii. 3). We must be brought into touch with the great heart of love that beats on yonder throne; and thus enter into the Lord's thoughts as to what it is to be *in the fellowship*.

"POINTS" AS TO FELLOWSHIP.

N connection with the fellowship question we submit the following "points" for the consideration of all whom it may concern:—

To recognise only a *section* of the heavenly family is of the essence of sectarianism. It makes us liable, and rightly so, to the charge of being a sect.

To recognise only a section of God's saints, and to call that section *the fellowship*, has no warrant from Scripture.

To recognise all the people of God, and to admit that the Table of the Lord is their birth-right place (with the exceptions specified in Scripture) is clearly established by that which is written.

The forming of a fellowship to the exclusion of numbers of "the excellent" has been the means of hindering many dear saints from being where we prayed the Lord to lead them.

We are not justified in refusing a brother his birth-right place because he does not see eye-to-eye with us in everything. We do not see eye-to-eye ourselves in everything. Let

us forbear one another in love. "Whereto we have already attained; let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" (Phil. iii. 16).

To recognise only a section of the Lord's people as being "in the fellowship," is not in keeping with the prayer of the great Head of the Church—"I pray . . . that they all may be one . . . that the world may believe, . . . and that the world may know" (Jno. xvii. 20-23).

It is said that a recognition of "all saints" might lead to difficulties, and that persons might be at the Table who should not be there. To this we reply that all this is true under the prevailing system. The question is not, "Are difficulties in the path?" but, "Is the path according to the Word?" Difficulties are few where love and spiritual power are ruling the day. Let us see to our condition of heart, and God will look after the difficulties. It is infinitely better to meet with difficulties while in God's path than to seek to avoid all such difficulties by laws and devices which cannot be found in the Word of God.

To get into the current of God's thoughts about His people, we must stand in spirit where *He* is. Viewing

His redeemed from that hallowed spot, hard thoughts would disappear, and that hymn, so often sung, would be the true language of the heart :

“Here every one that loves Thy name,
Our willing hearts embrace.”

The confederacy principle (“the fellowship” as meaning a certain recognised circle of assemblies) has all along brought forth division and strife; and from its very nature it is bound to bring forth seed after its kind. Why should we cling to a principle so prolific of disaster, and so utterly unsupported by Scripture?

Some admit that we are bound to receive all who are the Lord's and walking godly; but they virtually say, “A brother *cannot* be walking godly unless he is in the circle of assemblies which *we* recognise.” This attitude towards brethren who do not see eye-to-eye with us is truly lamentable. Yet those who contend for a confederacy theory are in a manner compelled to take up that attitude; for if they admit that a brother is godly, *why* reject him?

“But a brother, after breaking bread one day, may go back again to unscriptural associations,” you say. Yes, we reply; this is quite possible. But there is the same danger, no

matter *how* the brother is received. Moreover, if he goes back, that is *his* responsibility, not ours. We should then have occasion to expound unto him the way of truth more perfectly.

LETTER FROM THE STATES.

THE following letter, one among many, has been received from an esteemed brother in one of the great centres in the United States of America:

I have been much pleased in reading your recent articles in the *Treasury* on “Receiving into Fellowship.” I believe those articles are in harmony with the Word of God and in sympathy with the heart of our Lord. The sectarian spirit manifested by those amongst us has long been the principal barrier in the way of our being used of God as a testimony for Him, and in leading His own children out of the denominations unto His Name. For the most part we have *repelled* when we should have *drawn*. We have set up rules, and made them the standard for all to come up to, or be condemned. The simplicity of Christ has been concealed beneath human “regulations.” Had we been true to God, as M—— said, we would have been “the ruination of the

'churches,'” for we would have taken from them all those who had any spirituality and longing after the things of God. I do not advocate looseness. I do not believe in receiving every one who comes along and who says, “I am a Christian,” without knowing something about him ; but I do believe we are bound to receive all whom Christ has received, if we know them to be walking in no open sin, and, for ought we know, living up to what light they have. Our knowledge or our opinions cannot be the basis of fellowship for other children of God. We are not the standard by which they are to measure themselves, and we have no right to condemn them because they do not see as we do.

We are called upon to receive all who have been received by Christ, and who are seeking in measure to please Him by a consistent walk. If, after they have been received, they undertake to play fast and loose between the Lord's Table and the “churches,” their inconsistency should be shown to them. But it is wrong to say to a child of God, groping in sectarian darkness, “You must make up your mind either one way or another—come in and stay in, or keep away altogether.”

Most of us see but an inch at a time. So it was with me. Like the blind man of Bethsaida, at first I saw men as trees walking—indistinctly, until Jesus *again* put His hand upon me at

His own Table. Then it was I saw plainly ; and I never returned to my seat in the Baptist Church after I once broke bread. The Lord deals differently with different men. Some see clearly from the very first, as did Bartimæus. Others do not. With most of us it is a gradual unfolding of the things of God as we seek to “walk in the light.”

We need to be careful as to whom we receive. Not every stranger who comes along and says, “Lord, Lord,” should be taken in, but those who are sound on the “first principles” and can be vouched for by some brother known to us, should be received. There is absolutely nothing in the Word of God to authorise us in requesting such to “*sit back.*” I know of cases where this has been done ; and it has simply been the means of turning away permanently those who otherwise would, I believe, have been gathered to His Name.

Yours, &c.

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Believer's Treasury.

No. 158.

OCTOBER, 1895.

Vol. X.

A BEAUTIFUL LIFE.

N the 10th of September last, Captain Armstrong, of Girvan, Ayrshire, passed onward to his heavenly rest. We think it only fitting that we should pay this humble tribute to his memory. He was one of the most devoted men of God it has ever been our privilege to know—one of the purest souls to be met with in a sin-cursed world. He was remarkable for his humility and simplicity, and a beauty and holiness of character that made it nothing short of an inspiration to be in his company even for a few minutes.

Soon after his conversion to God he laid his "all upon the altar." Though possessed of ample means he at once began

to divest himself of his riches, feeding the poor and clothing the naked, while he dealt with them, in his own faithful and impressive way, as to their eternal salvation. He was, besides, a succourer of many saints and servants of God. He went about continually doing good; and it was manifest to all that "God was with him." On the failure of the hand-loom weaving, many in Girvan found themselves in very straitened circumstances. At that time "the Captain," as he was familiarly called, might have been seen visiting among the needy, with one pocket full of Gospel books, and another full of half-crowns! Nor was this due to any sudden impulse. "To spend and be spent for Christ," was the rule of his life. Although we have not seen him for years,


we used to meet him frequently during the 1874 Revival; and we never failed to be struck by the heavenly calm that rested on his brow. He was one of the most unselfish men we ever met. His manner of life conveyed a more searching rebuke than the thunders of platform eloquence. The reality and transparency of his Christianity — his absolute self-surrender to the will of God — sent us away humbled and chastened, and with strange longings after the same abiding calm that reigned in James Armstrong's breast. His *life* preached — is preaching still. The fragrance of his Christ-like walk will be felt for years to come. Speaking after the manner of men, he could ill be spared from the place of testimony here. But the Lord in His wisdom saw fit to take His servant away from the busy scene of service on earth to the joyful rest of the uppersanctuary.

The tidings of his departure were received with universal sorrow. Among the people of God each one seemed to feel that

a great personal loss had been sustained. And this feeling was none the less though some of us had not seen him for a long time. A great blank has been left in Christian testimony; and the world is a poorer world to-day without James Armstrong. Yet his work was done. His evening hour had come, although to our finite eye his sun went out while it was yet noon. But he has left us the inspiration of a pure and devoted life, while he has proclaimed the possibilities of the love of Christ, and faith in God, and what marvellous power is wrapt up in "the beauty of holiness."

If ever there was a man who shone with the Master's light, and glowed with the Master's fire, and breathed the Master's spirit, that man was James Armstrong. The local papers devoted a column to his reminiscences; but his biography has yet to be written. Let us hope that some fit and loving hand shall be found to give us the touching story of that "beautiful life."

"A FRESH START."

 BOOKLET has recently been issued, entitled, "A Fresh Start, or, Is there a way out of the difficulties of the present time?" We do not purpose just now to *review* the booklet, as there is in it a number of statements which we should require to controvert. But we think it right to call attention to certain important points in which we are *quite at one* with the writer of "A Fresh Start." He holds that we should "concern ourselves more about matters in which we are agreed than about those in which we differ." Now, this is exactly in the line of the things that make for peace. If this very simple and Christ-like rule had been observed in the past, what a sea of troubles would never have had an existence! Battles have been fought as to the points in which we *differ*, and the war is still raging! Are we prepared to reverse this order of procedure, and take our brother's counsel, and become

enthusiastic now over matters in which we are agreed?

Then, "A Fresh Start" teaches that we should give ourselves to "the consideration of divine principles, rather than to that of human practices." This is sound counsel. The lamentable thing is, that when a divine principle is found in the Word, it is generally tested by human practices, in order to discover if we would be safe in adopting it!

There is a strong tendency to question everything that does not coincide with what we have been accustomed to believe, and to hold fast to a thing simply because it has been a practice of long standing. "A Fresh Start" virtually says, and rightly so, that we have to find what are divine principles, no matter whether these principles are in agreement with human practices or not. This will tend to clear the ground. A certain degree of progress is made when brethren are prepared to go by principles, no matter what may have been "customary."

One of our brother's suggestions is "An effort to yield for harmony's sake everything that does not involve divine principle, according to the precept, 'Let your yieldingness be known unto all men.'" This suggestion we hail with joy. If it were acted upon it would prove a powerful factor in the promotion of godly unity. To "yield for harmony's sake everything that does not involve divine principle," is the very thing that has *not* been done in the past. One assembly has said to another, "Your practice is not uniform with ours; and if you do not *come into line with us*, then we must refuse all fellowship with you, either as an assembly or as individuals." This method of securing *uniformity* may have been successful in some cases; but it has failed in bringing about a divine *unity*. The writer of "A Fresh Start" has evidently seen this; and although his suggestion arrives somewhat late in the day, we receive it with gladness. It is at least a token that the hard-

and-fast yield-nothing attitude is beginning to give way, and that brethren are beginning to see that there must be a godly yieldingness if there is to be a godly unity. If this single suggestion as to yieldingness had been a guiding principle among saints who professedly gather in the Name, "the difficulties of the present time" would be very different from what they are. But, even now, let his recommendation be carried out, and its beneficial results would very soon be apparent. The principle of godly yieldingness which he recommends is one which many saints have sought to carry out for years. In carrying out that principle it has been found possible to have a goodly measure of true fellowship among individual believers and companies of believers, although there were a number of things in which we did not see eye-to-eye. Assemblies with varying degrees of "tightness" or "openness" on the question of "receiving," have been enabled, by a little godly yieldingness, to

maintain happy intercourse for a long period. Where this divine principle of yieldingness has been set aside, there has been friction and difficulty. It is refreshing, however, to see that a more conciliatory spirit is now beginning to assert itself.

In referring to "A Fresh Start," we have thus tried to confine ourselves to the points on which we are agreed, rather than to the points on which we differ. We may add, however, that there is an undertone of sadness in the booklet—a certain lack of hope for coming days. We do not wonder at this; for the writer of the booklet, so far as we can see, is virtually holding to the theory of a confederacy of assemblies, concerning which it may be well said, "How long dost thou mourn for confederacy, seeing the Lord has rejected it?" The new start is evidently an attempt to start again on *the same old lines* that have already proved so disastrous! These old lines of confederacy (whether it be written or unwritten) will

assuredly bring forth the same kind of fruit in the future as they have brought forth in the past. And if you put the new wine of godly yieldingness into the old bottles of rigid confederacy, the new wine will simply burst the old bottles!

There can be no "fresh start," except with *God and the Word*; and we rejoice to believe that many of His saints do not need to make a fresh start on those lines. They have, through grace, been already seeking to go on steadily in that simple and blessed path. The Lord has not called any of us to "found a dynasty," or "form a fellowship." Paul commended the saints "to God and the word of His grace," and Barnabas exhorted them that "with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." *Let us do likewise.* And, while others are mourning that the house of Saul is no more, we shall fill our horn with oil and go forth with a message of joy and hope to the saints of God in this evil day.

A WITHERING INFLUENCE.

BEWARE of the withering influence of a discussion as to Church Truth with one who is more remarkable for ecclesiastical zeal than for vital godliness. You will simply vex your soul. There are men who are ready, at a moment's notice, to enter into a debate on that subject. They have got it at their finger-ends—at least they have been thoroughly posted up in a *certain system* of Church order. But they seem to act as if contending for their particular system was the be-all and end-all of Christian testimony. We cannot object to a brother contending in a godly way for what he holds to be the scriptural order of worship. But we have serious objection to a man contending for any order of worship while he does not as earnestly contend for the great truths of practical godliness. A man may glibly run over the points of his ecclesiastical system—his eye lighting up with enthusiasm as

he dwells on the blessedness of being found within its pale. But when you propose to accompany him into the inner court of heavenly communion, and to speak of "the life of Jesus" made manifest in these mortal bodies, perhaps you find that he at once becomes a dull and uninterested listener. His enthusiasm has suddenly evaporated! Is a man in a condition to herald forth the truth as to the outer court of the temple when he is so manifestly a stranger to the inner court thereof? We trow not. This is the great reason why discussion upon church truth is so often withering to the soul. Men rush into it who are not in communion with God. These have no call to that work. Their call is of a different kind entirely. For the time being they are called to self-judgment—to seek the presence of God and the restoration of heavenly communion. *Then* they shall go forth in the Spirit of Christ, and with the meekness and gentleness of Christ, to contend for a separation that has to

do with heart and life, as well as with church position and church government.

WORDS OF CHEER.

THE following is an extract from a letter just received from an esteemed brother in the South of Scotland. He has never, so far as we are aware, been accused of so-called "looseness"; and when his letter reached us we half-expected a "lecture" as to the principles of fellowship which we have been expounding in these pages. But we found that our brother was writing to strengthen our hands in God! Through years of storm and change he has been enabled to hold fast the same simple and scriptural principles which he learned "at the first." This is refreshing. Who can tell how many brethren there are who, for a longer or shorter period, have been rejoicing in the same Truth, and who are prepared to receive all whom the Lord has received

and who are manifestly seeking to walk with Him! Our brother says:—

When my dear wife and I came out to the Name of Jesus, about fifteen years ago, there was no one hereabouts to teach us anything at all about receiving, and fellowship, and separation from evil. But the Spirit taught us from the Word exactly what you have been writing the last few months back. Now, amidst all the din and clamour of the last few years about these things, I have never yet seen cause nor found the slightest reason to give up the principles which (I believe through the Spirit's teaching) I learned at first. It is easy to embrace and hold a theory about *receiving*, and *fellowship*, and *separation from evil*. But a theory that will not stand the strain of actual practice is virtually worthless. There are those among "Exclusives," and even in the "New Exclusivism," who are blindly, though honestly, setting up barriers to guard the Lord's Table from being polluted. It is certainly right to guard the Assembly and the Table from that which would defile. But surely this end cannot be reached by our setting up a test or standard which *God has not set up!* I am, therefore, quite at one with you, dear brother, in what you have written, and am glad to see it so pointedly and plainly put. Yours, &c., J. G.

HAVE OBEYED THE TRUTH.

THEY incur a very solemn responsibility who claim that they "have obeyed the Truth," and who point to other believers as those who "have *not* obeyed the Truth" and are therefore walking in disobedience. When you test such claims you find that "the Truth" is narrowed down to embrace two or three commandments. If you have obeyed these commandments *according to a certain interpretation*, you are looked upon as having "obeyed the Truth." If you have not thus obeyed, you are treated as disobedient.

Now, we do not seek to justify any believer in walking in conscious disobedience of any commandment of the Lord. "Blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it" (Lu. xi. 28). There is no blessing promised to disobedience, or neglect, or indifference. At the same time we must point out the danger of selecting two or three commands of Scripture, and pronouncing a

believer obedient or disobedient, according to his attitude towards these commands. "The Truth" embraces very much more than the ordinances of Baptism and Breaking of Bread. We are perfectly convinced that these ordinances are of God—that Scripture directs the baptism of those who have believed (Matt. xxviii. 19), while it says to the saints, concerning the Memorial Feast, "This do, for a remembrance of Me" (1 Cor. xi. 24). But we must beware lest we conclude that compliance with these two ordinances, coupled with a certain church position, entitles us to claim that we *have obeyed the Truth*. "The Truth" takes a far wider sweep. "Thy commandment is exceeding broad" (Ps. cxix. 96). It would not be difficult to point to a hundred commandments, all of which have been given for our observance. Have we so obeyed all these commandments that we can sit down and say, "*We* are of those who *have obeyed the Truth*"? He who said, "This do, for a

remembrance of Me," also said, "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. v. 18). Have we obeyed the Truth in respect to *that* injunction? We are also commanded to mortify our members which are on the earth (Col. iii. 5); to walk in love (Eph. v. 2); to grieve not the Holy Spirit (Eph. iv. 30); to quench not the Spirit (1 Thess. v. 19); to pray without ceasing (ver. 17); to rejoice evermore (ver. 16); to present our bodies a living sacrifice (Rom. xii. 1); to let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from us (Eph. iv. 31); to let that mind be in us which was in Christ Jesus (Phil. ii. 5); to abide in Him (1 Jno. ii. 28); and to love one another with a pure heart fervently (1 Pet. i. 22). You have here a selected few of "the commandments of the Lord." Yet who will dare to say, even of these, "*I have obeyed the Truth*"?

They take up very lofty ground who make such a claim. But all who have learned, in some little measure, to walk humbly

with God, must see the presumption involved in the statement that "*we have obeyed the Truth.*" To take up such ground is sure to minister to our own spiritual pride, and blind us to the true need of the soul. We may have obeyed the Truth in regard to certain ordinances, and yet be walking in disobedience or neglect of commandments that would test our spiritual condition to its inmost core! It is quite possible to claim the highest obedience to certain of the commands of Scripture, while sitting lightly by the very truths that would reveal to us how far we are away from God in things that pertain to the Christ-like life and the beauties of holiness! Surely no one can fail to see how mischievous it is to select certain external acts, and to accept the performance of these as evidence that we have obeyed the Truth! The flesh can easily go through the whole form. The flesh can go down into the waters of baptism, and sit at the Table, and take up a certain church

position, and cry "Shibboleth" with all its might, and say, like Saul of old, "I have performed the commandment of the Lord" (1 Sam. xv. 13). But the flesh cannot mortify the deeds of the body; the flesh cannot walk with God, nor show forth the virtues of Christ, nor spread abroad the savour of His Name. Ah! do we not see that obedience to the Truth is a wider and a deeper thing than many are aware of? Let us not slacken our hold upon the Truth which the Lord has already taught us as to His ordinances. At the same time, let us take *the Truth* in all its breadth, and we shall find that *obedience* is a big word. We shall find that, instead of sitting down complacently with the remark that *we have obeyed the Truth*, it will be more becoming to let *others* bear testimony to our obedience. If we give our reasons for the path we tread, we can only say that "*by grace we are seeking to do the will of God, as we have learned it from His Word.*"

THE FRAGRANCE.

"**H**E has left behind him the fragrance of a beautiful life." Quite recently these words were spoken of one who has just entered into his eternal rest. Such was the estimate, and we believe a true estimate, of a life that has just closed. It is not every believer's life that will leave such a fragrance behind it. This is a startling thought, and may well cause great searchings of heart.

Our departed brother was doubtless "a prince and a great man in Israel." But what made him great? We may find the answer in the words of Holy Writ — "Thy gentleness hath made me great" (2 Sam. xxii. 36). He was great in gentleness — great in love — great in the Christ-like spirit. His life was beautiful because it was Christ-like. And, this being so, there was a sweet savour in that life — a fragrance that lingers still. He was not great in logic; he was not great as a debater; he was not great as

some are great, by the dominating power of one will over another. He laboured not to persuade his brethren that he was right and that all others were wrong. He pointed saint and sinner to *Christ*; he allured to *Christ*; his life was a manifestation of *Christ*. The "fragrance," both in life and in death, was the natural outcome of a life truly hid with Christ in God. The fragrance, if we may so speak, could not be hid. The precious ointment "betrayed" itself. And thus must it ever be. The Christ-like character shall send forth, and cannot fail to send forth, the savour of the Master's presence. Have we discovered that this is our true calling—to *manifest the life of Jesus*? Are we shedding around us the fragrance of a Christ-like disposition? If our testimony lacks this fragrance it lacks everything. We may be reckoned great in the church, and held in adoration by those who, in this superficial age, are ready to tremble at the sound of a man's voice. But if our dis-

position lacks the fragrance of the Master's spirit—if we are not great in the gentleness that made *Him* great—we are simply occupying a false position, wielding a false influence, helping to establish a false standard of Christian life, and leading into a condition of carnal security all who are willing to rejoice under our shadow.

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Believer's Treasury.

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Vol. X.

THE "HIGHER LIFE" MOVEMENT.

MANY of our readers will be more or less familiar with what is called "The Higher Life Movement," which for years has exercised the hearts of a large number of God's people. The movement may go under different names; but, whatever objection may be taken to some of these names, *the thing itself* cannot be misunderstood. A number of years ago, a widespread conviction arose in the minds of some of the people of God that their Christian experience was far below the standard of Scripture. They found, in the Word, that God had designed for His redeemed a path of abiding communion to which they had been in great

measure strangers. They were persuaded that, instead of a life of habitual failure, their true calling was to a life of habitual victory over the power of sin. Conferences, or "Conventions," were held for the one great purpose—a deepening of spiritual life. To these meetings there went up many longing hearts—longing for "the fulness of the blessing," for the rest of the surrendered heart, and the purity and power of the overcoming life.

We cannot doubt that in this movement many of the Lord's people have received definite and abiding blessing. By "blessing" we do not mean a kind of pleasant feeling experienced under the spell of an eloquent address. We mean definite and abiding fruit in the life—the

violent temper mortified — the hard spirit replaced by the gentleness of Christ—conformity to the image of God's Son — victory over temptation—power for service, and appetite for prayer and the Word. — Explain it how you will, there can be no doubt that, through this movement, many saints have been led into a deep and blessed experience of communion with God and power over the lower nature.

One of the singular things about the movement is, that it has been almost exclusively identified with denomination-
alism. And has not this its significance for those of us who profess to have taken our stand outside of all sectarian names, and to gather simply in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ? Is it not suggestive that the Gospel of the inner court of heavenly communion has been specially taken up by children of God bound up in religious systems which we hold to be unscriptural? Yet the fact remains. And a great work has been done, and

is still being done, through those whose great mission it is to tell of the "closer walk" and the "overcoming life."

Whereabouts are *we* in relation to this great movement? You say that the movement represents only *one* department of the truth. That is admitted. But consider the *overwhelming importance* of that one department. If there be failure *there*, what does it matter although you are valiant for some other department of the truth? If we are not treading the path of realised communion, what shall it profit us to contend for a separation which does not embrace the great realities of the inner life?

We believe that our brethren specially identified with "the higher life movement" have yet to learn some most precious truth concerning the gathering Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the priesthood of believers, and the oneness of all saints. At the same time we must admit that they have rightly apprehended that the great need of God's

people is to be *right with Him*. They have taken the lead in a movement that must exercise a beneficent influence on the lives of all who come under its power. The movement is one fitted not only to mightily help God's people as individuals, but to bring about a greater nearness to each other, and thus prove one of the things that make for godly unity.

Looked at from any point of view, this movement for the deepening of spiritual life is one assuredly fraught with blessing to ourselves, if we are honestly prepared to place "Holiness to the Lord" on the forefront of our "Confession of Faith." We think it will be admitted that we have not given this great subject the place of prominence to which it is undoubtedly entitled. Seldom, indeed, in our own special circles, does the fiery cross go round with the announcement, "*Convention*: subject—'The over-coming life; The walk with God; Victory over sin.'" When we have been aroused to the vital

importance of this great subject, we need not doubt that the Heavens shall be opened; and that many believers, weary of party cries, shall come up with Heaven-begotten thirst to drink of that river which maketh glad the city of God. For such times let all the godly pray. And in the rising tide of heavenly power many a "vexed question" shall be swallowed up in victory. The reign of love shall cast out the bondwoman of strife; and we shall see eye-to-eye in the Zion of the presence of God!



"FELLOWSHIP with Jesus Christ does not maintain itself. The consciousness of God fades quickly from the mind of him who does not pray. The consciousness of God fades also from the mind of him who does not in the Bible hear God speak to him, and who does not in a life of self-denying service endeavour to do the will of God. The life of faith is no merely passive life. It is a life of blessed rest, but also of intense activity of soul."

HATH FORSAKEN ME.

IN Jeremiah xix. 7 the Lord, speaking of His ancient people, says, "I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies." Israel were to be judicially let alone. A terrible chastisement was to be meted out to them: they were to be handed over to the will of their enemies.

But was there not a *cause* for this forsaking of His people by Jehovah? We may be assured that there was some sufficient reason why the longsuffering One thus left His people to their own devices. On turning back to the fourth verse of the same chapter we find a few solemn words that furnish us with the key to the mystery—"*Because they have forsaken Me.*" These words explain everything. And, if you bring the two passages close together, their connection will be apparent at a glance; "Because they have forsaken Me . . . I will cause them to fall by the sword before

their enemies." Now, we must remember that those earthly enemies by whom Israel were exposed, and by whom they were so often overcome, are typical of the *spiritual* enemies with whom we, in this dispensation, are brought into conflict in the heavenly places. If we are overcome by these enemies of the soul, we may rest assured that, as in Israel's case, there is *a cause*. When Israel were right with God—hearkening to His voice, and walking in His ways—a Philistine victory was out the question. In such circumstances it is inconceivable that the nation should have been brought into bondage to Midian. We find no record of any such *mysterious* victories for the enemies of the people of God. Israel, treading in God's ways, were, so to speak, invincible. If they fell before the sword of their enemies, it was because they had first forsaken the Fountain of living waters.

We have here a great principle—a principle that may account for much of the seemingly mys-

terious failure that attends our conflict in the heavenly places. Israel had departed from God; and they could not stand before their enemies. If we have been departing in soul from God, how can we count upon Him for victory in conflict with the powers of darkness? "The temptation came suddenly," you say, "and I was not prepared for it at the moment." But may there not be a deeper cause? Many are overcome and held down by the forces of evil because there has been *secret departure from God*. That word has come true of them, "They have forsaken Me." Thus they may continue to fight. But they fall before their enemies. No doubt we are exhorted to watch; but we must watch *in fellowship with God*. If we tread not the path of subjection to the Father's will, we shall look in vain for victory in the heavenly places. *To abide in Christ* is the secret of being "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

MODES OF CONDUCTING A CONFERENCE.

THERE are several different ways in which Christian "Conferences" may be conducted. We do not write to suggest any method that has never been tried before. Our present object is rather to review the methods already in use, and to make a few practical reflections thereon.

There is, first, *the open principle*. That is the method of inviting saints over a wide area to come together in a particular hall, to wait on the Lord for ministry as He may guide. Such a Conference is at once "thrown open"; and, if any brethren in the body of the hall have a desire to minister the Word, they are told that they are expected to speak from the platform. It is thus clear that any brother who feels his call to speak, is at liberty to stand forth and deliver his message. We do not doubt that Conferences, conducted on this principle, have often been found

helpful—yea, have in many cases proved times of refreshing. Yet it is only fair to say that many brethren question how far it is right to take the "open" principle that rules at the Breaking-of-Bread in a local assembly, and apply it to the very much larger and more varied circle of a general Believers' Conference. Such liberty in a Conference may easily be abused. As a matter of fact it *has* been abused. No one will deny that brethren without the fitness for ministering the Word on a Conference platform, have been only too ready to avail themselves of what they call "their liberty." The result has been that godly souls, who had travelled a long way to hear a message from God, have been grievously disappointed. Some may say that failure of that kind does not necessarily prove this method of conducting a Conference to be wrong. But may the failure not be traceable to this, that we apply the "open" principle to meetings to which Scripture does not intend that

principle to be applied? If a Conference is thrown open, it becomes a delicate matter to silence a brother when once he has made a beginning, no matter how manifestly unequal he may be to "the occasion."

These difficulties have been perceived; and the result has been that a slightly different mode of conducting a Conference has become common. To avoid the risk of a brother rising and "wasting" the meeting, and also to let the saints know at whose mouth they are to hear the Word, invitations are sent out by a local assembly to certain ministering brethren. On receiving their promise to be present, the local brethren issue a circular saying that these three or four ministering brethren, with others, are expected to minister the Word. This kind of Conference is not "thrown open"—at least not until the brethren named on the circular have all delivered their message. This has the merit of letting you know what ministering servants you

are going to hear, and that *they* will have the privilege of speaking *first*. By the time they have delivered their soul, the hour of closing is usually near at hand, and there is not likely to be further ministry. This method, when wisely gone about, is generally successful. It at least gains its point in securing that the time is occupied, or almost entirely occupied, by well-known ministering brethren. When we say "wisely gone about," we imply that the securing of the speakers may *not* be wisely gone about. We have known cases in which invitations were sent to several ministering brethren, each of whom came together without any idea of what other brethren were to be on the platform. The result was, that brethren of "diverging schools of thought" found themselves upon the same platform; and what one brother built up another pulled down!—a danger to which the "open" Conference is no less exposed. If a ministering brother has no idea who is to be

associated with him on a public platform, this may gender to bondage. Local brethren who are "wise" will observe these things; for it is certainly an important matter that those on the platform should, with one mouth and one voice, glorify God.

In the remaining method which we have now to consider, there is no pretence whatever of acting on the "open" principle. We refer to the method of three or four ministering brethren taking the initiative themselves, and calling a Conference of Believers. These three or four ministering brethren "gravitate" towards each other by the law of a common affinity; and, feeling the burden of a certain message needed for the times, they invite God's people to come and hear that message. The advantages of this method of arranging a Conference (or "Meeting of Believers," as it would more correctly be called) are apparent. The ministering brethren are of one mind, else they would not have gravitated towards each

other of their own accord. This is a great matter. We need not doubt that the "witnesses" shall agree with each other. Assuming the three or four ministering brethren to be men of God, we may reasonably expect a message from God. The fact that they have been burdened as to the need of the saints, and have "found each other out," is a better guarantee that they are "sent," than those who are merely "selected" by some brethren in a local assembly. It seems to us to be specially in keeping with the dignity of the Lord's servants that they should act spontaneously, in obedience to the call of God, and not remain inactive until some local brethren make their selection and say, "We would like brothers So-and-so, and So-and-so, and So-and-so, to address us."

We may say that it is not uncommon for *one* ministering brother to say to a company of believers at a distance, "I have a message I should like to deliver on such a night." They are glad,

and arrange accordingly. Now, it is the same principle—only on an enlarged scale—when two, or three, or more ministering brethren call a believers' meeting in a wider area to hear some special message. We see this principle in operation in certain circles, and with manifest tokens for good. And we humbly think that there might be among ourselves a wider recognition of the same principle. When the Lord's "sent ones" shall arise to a higher apprehension of their true calling, and go forth at the bidding of God with messages from the Throne, we do not think they shall find any lack of "recognition" of the principle to which we have been referring.

A CONFEDERACY OF ASSEMBLIES.

WHEN companies of believers bind themselves together as a confederacy of assemblies, they are bound to stand by each others'

acts, *or*, if they cannot do this, they are bound to cut off the assembly or assemblies whose acts they cannot endorse. Now, it has long been clear to us that the central authority, or representative council, of these assemblies must find itself in a very serious position when it proceeds to cut off an assembly. What if an assembly is *unrighteously* cut off? All the other assemblies may be quite agreed, or certain acknowledged leading men may be agreed, that the assembly in question must be excommunicated. It is accordingly expelled from the confederacy. But what if this action be in itself unrighteous? It never seems to occur to the confederacy leaders that if they shut out an assembly, or a brother, unrighteously, then, according to their own theory, they virtually shut out God along with that assembly or that brother! This is an aspect of the confederacy question which they must face. Honest hearts are perceiving that those who expel contrary

to the mind of God are thereby shutting out God! But the advocates of Confederacy see that if they admit the *possibility* of their making a mistake, they thereby admit the possibility of God being outside the confederacy! This would never do. Confederacy leaders are thus compelled to adopt what is *nothing less than the dogma of infallibility*. They virtually say, "It is impossible we can make a mistake." And the "rank and file" of the believers are taught that it is their duty to "abide by the decision of the Church" through its leaders. It may be clear to all who have eyes to see, that a grievous wrong—an unwarranted excommunication—has been carried out by the confederacy leaders. Yet all must submit to the decision of these leaders. Godly saints may be perplexed; but they must make up their minds—or be excommunicated. Others may be of opinion that a serious injustice has been committed. Yet they must change their mind—or

submit to excommunication ! Assemblies may differ in judgment as to what has been done. But oneness of mind *must* be secured ; and this is secured by *cutting off all who dare to differ from the central authority.*

Such is the confederacy principle, if it is honestly carried out. The wonder is that any intelligent believer can be found to bow down to such a principle for a single hour. A confederacy may go on smoothly enough for a time—so long as no one disputes the decisions of the leaders. But no sooner does some difficulty arise, involving a difference of judgment—no sooner do saints find that they must act conscientiously before God, according to the light He has given—than the confederacy begins to fall in pieces. And, mark you, this breaking up is not the result of mere accident : *it is the inevitable result of the confederacy principle.* When the confederacy thus begins to break up, godly souls are found saying, “ I wonder which fragment is the

right one.” This may be a very perplexing question ; but it is perplexing only to those who are held fast in the meshes of confederacy. It is really pitiful to see one of the fragments maintaining its claim to be “ *the Fellowship* ”—“ *the House,*” and so on. But, when the dogma of “ infallibility as to discipline ” gets hold of some men, they reach a remarkable pinnacle of assumption. They will not allow their faith in a confederacy of assemblies to be shaken—not even by the manifest breaking up of the confederacy with which they are identified. We are convinced, however, that there are not a few godly souls who, in the school of bitter experience, will be compelled to search God’s Book for a confederacy of assemblies, and will be surprised to find that there is not a vestige of it there ! They will also be surprised to find that there is not a vestige of Scripture warrant for cutting off an assembly. This heresy and the confederacy heresy stand or fall together.

Key G flat. GOSPEL HYMN. M. 120.

:s₁.s₁ | d : d | r : r | m : — | f

There is One who died to save thee

:f.f | m : r | d : t₁ | d : — | —

From the curse of sin and woe;

:s₁.s₁ | d : d | r : r | m : — | f

There is One whose blood can cleanse thee,

:f | m : r | d : t₁ | d : — | —

And make thee white as snow.

:m.f | s : s | l : s₁s₁ | s : f | f

So we tell the fame of the Saviour's name

:r.m | f : f | s : f | m : — | —

And the won - ders of His love;

:s₁ | d.d : d.d | r : r | m : — | f

'Tis deeper than the depths of o . cean,

:f | m.r : d.r | d : t₁ | d : — | —


And higher than the heights above.

- 1 THERE is One who died to save thee
From the curse of sin and woe;
There is One whose blood can cleanse thee,
And make thee white as snow.

Chorus, So we tell the fame of the Saviour's Name,
And the wonders of His love;
'Tis deeper than the depths of ocean,
And higher than the heights above.

- 2 There is One whose death on Calv'ry
Has atonement made for sin;
And now the greatest sinner
By faith may enter in.
- 3 There is One whose arm is mighty
To redeem from Satan's pow'r—
To break ev'ry chain, and shield thee
In danger's evil hour.
- 4 If thou wilt now receive Him
Who was nailed to the shameful Tree,
It shall be well for ever,
O trusting one, with thee.
- 5 For the Christ of God shall keep thee
Till the storms of life are o'er,
And in endless joy shall meet thee
On yonder happy shore.

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S the close of the year is now approaching, we would like to see the *Treasury* brought under the notice of as many of the Lord's people as possible. To this end we shall esteem it a favour if those to whom this periodical commends itself will kindly send us a post-card with their name and address, and say how many free copies they require for distribution among the saints. After seeing the paper the Lord's people will be able to decide as to whether they wish it regularly. We bespeak the co-operation of all who are in sympathy with the aims of this periodical. If in each local centre there were even *one* energetic brother interested in seeing the "Treasury" circulated among the saints, it would be no small encouragement in this ministry.

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Vol. X.

A RETROSPECT.

 MID the shadows of the year that is closing, it may be well for each of us to take a retrospective glance. What kind of a year has it been in our experience? Has it been a year of revival in the Lord's work in our own souls?—we mean the great work of conformity to the image of Christ. Has it been the supreme object of our heart *to be like Him*? We do not know of a more important department of the Lord's work than this—to be conformed to the image of God's Son. It is the great purpose of God concerning us His people. If that great purpose is being fulfilled in us, the Christ-like disposition will pervade our work, and give a tone to our life. If

that great purpose is *not* being fulfilled in us, we shall be as those who go a warfare at their own charges—carrying on professed work for God on our own account, and importing into it another spirit than the Spirit of Christ.

The great truths that bear on the Christ-like life may be forgotten, or overshadowed, by other truths, until believers have actually forgotten that there is such a passage in Scripture as Romans viii. 29—“For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.” But no sooner is this great truth lost sight of than the down-grade of spiritual declension sets in. And as the standard of vital godliness *descends*, the standard of high-sounding profession will very likely *ascend*. But the godly

will not be deceived by this ; for never did Israel shout so loudly as when God had left them to their own devices ! (1 Sam. iv. 5).

When the Christ-like life is no longer the great object before us — when other aims our hearts have learned to prize—we shall find our life and testimony bereft of their most potent charm, and our Christian character destitute of the most powerful influence that can mould our destiny. Apart from the Christ-like life, our right hand shall lose its cunning—its delicacy of touch—in the things of God ; and, saddest of all, we shall communicate to others the very spirit and disposition we have fostered while walking in the light of our own fire. We need not wonder at this ; for we cannot expect God to honour that which is not like Christ : and we must remember that that which is not *like* Christ is not *of* Christ.

If we fail to walk in the light of the Master's presence we shall not only cease to manifest His

spirit, but we shall lose the power to *perceive* that which is truly Christ-like. This "lack of power to perceive" is not our misfortune — it is our fault ; for it is the *result* of a certain condition of soul. With this blindness upon the heart, it need not be surprising if the workings of the flesh are looked upon as "zeal for God," while wrath, strife, and envy are set down as "righteous indignation" and "faithful testimony." Little wonder if in such circumstances the remark is made, "If this be Christianity, I want none of it." But it is not Christianity. It is the flesh dominating men who would not be dominated by the Spirit of Christ. It is simply the outcome of that "line of things" which may boast of being "all for Jesus," but which will not give Jesus His place on the throne of the heart. It is the result of neglecting, or removing from its true place, the great truth that our highest business here is to be *conformed to the image of God's Son*.

The Christ-like life is sure to tell for God. Men of intellectual power and determined will may seem to exercise a wonderful influence; but such influence is altogether deceptive. The true influence is with those who are drinking of the Master's spirit. Influence for God means *God influencing others* through us as the channels. But how shall we be channels if we are not permeated with the Spirit of Christ? If we are not manifesting His life, and bearing about the savour of His Name, we are truly called to other work than that of seeking to be channels for Him.

Your brethren may differ with you as to church-government, and the world may misunderstand you as you bear witness that its deeds are evil. But, if you bear about with you the Christ-like spirit, you shall wield an unconscious but certain influence—an influence which shall make for righteousness, and whose fruit shall be holiness—an influence which shall attract to Christ, and

cause your brethren to "consider" *Him* who is "fairer than the children of men." Even your opponents shall acknowledge your influence in their heart of hearts, however much they may deny it openly. Like Ahab, they may sentence you to "bread of affliction and water of affliction" (1 Kings xxii. 27); but the life of Jesus manifest in one of His members shall give them a troubled heart, conceal it as they may. It is surely nothing less than remarkable that Ahab, in disguising himself before he entered the battle, showed that he was more influenced by the man he sent to prison than by all the four hundred prophets of the groves!



IN the Lord's work it is vain to profess that we are acting on the principle of faith in God, when it is evident that we have laid hold of carnal weapons—as if the God in whom we trust was not to be depended on! We must beware lest we dignify unbelief by calling it faith.

"THE RIGHTEOUS."

WE learn from I Jno. ii. 1 that "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." That word "righteous" lets us understand that there will be no "glossing the matter over." Our advocate is the *Righteous One*. In the things of the world an advocate may be found to show your offence in the best light—perhaps even to deny it entirely, and bring you off as an innocent man. But, if you sin, you have to do with an Advocate whose eyes are "as a flame of fire." Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. There must be an unreserved confession of what we have done. The sin must be dragged to the light and made bare before the eyes of God—not that He may be informed, but that we may be humbled and restored. Having to do with an Advocate of infinite righteousness as well as infinite love, we find the work of righteousness to be

peace. Restoration is deep and effectual, and sin is more dreaded than ever before.

"REDEEMING THE TIME."

(Col. iv. 5.)

THE days, the weeks, the months, the years,
So quickly pass away,
That life itself doth almost seem
As if it were a transient dream—
Born only to decay.

To-day we're here, to-morrow gone;
So brief our little day,
We scarcely think it has begun,
When darkness hides the setting sun,
And we are moved away.

Thus on the speeding wings of time,
Which can return no more,
We're carried on with swifter pace
Than finite thought can grasp or trace,
To the eternal shore.

Why am I here? what can I do?
The day is almost gone;
This moment use, this instant buy,
And never say, "I'll bye and bye
Do what can now be done."

Can I redeem? can I buy up
The opportunity
Which like a meteor flashes by?
If bought, its light can never die,
But lost, noUGHT can redeem.

Oh may I store in God's own safe,
Where thieves can ne'er break in,
Nor moth corrupt, nor time decay,
The "Now" redeemed for endless day—
The Master's smile to win.

E. A. M.

A HOLY LIFE.

WE have been glancing over "A Holy Life, and How to live it,"

by Mr. G. H. C. Macgregor. It contains many striking statements on the great question of practical holiness. We have made the following extracts from the little treatise; and we think these will commend themselves to our readers as setting forth a great and needed truth for the present time:—

Many think that if they are to get great blessing, it must be through the preaching of some man, or through going to some place. May God help us all to cease from man, to cease from places, and to come to Jesus.

Do you believe that Jesus Christ can cleanse you from impure thoughts, bad temper, envy, malice, pride, and every evil thing? Have you ceased to say, Can God? Have you learned to say, God can? Then rejoice, for your deliverance is at hand.

The life of holiness, with its continuous victory over temptation, with its deep, permanent consciousness of God's nearness, with its abiding peace and conquering power, no single

act of consecration, however deep and thorough and blessed, is sufficient, but must be followed by an attitude of never-ceasing dependence, hourly and momentarily, on the Lord Jesus as our Keeper.

Full consecration will not bring freedom from temptation. Some have expected this, and have been grievously disappointed. Our entire surrender to the Lord Jesus will rather be the signal for the great enemy assailing us with greater fury than ever. It should never be forgotten by those seeking to be holy that the sinless Son of Man was constantly being tempted (Matt. iv. 1), and that immediately after His Baptism, when the Holy Ghost came upon Him, He was driven into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil (Mark i. 12).


Though full consecration does not bring freedom from temptation, thank God it brings victory over it. When we in faith commit ourselves to the Lord Jesus to be kept, we find as a matter of fact that we are kept. Though naturally hot-tempered, and formerly given to losing our tempers, we find now that we are kept calm and quiet in the midst of the most trying provocation; though formerly given to worry and still tempted to it, we find ourselves the possessors of a peace that passes understanding. When tempted to envy the success of others,

trust in the Lord Jesus will enable us to rejoice in it ; when tempted to narrowness and to uncharitable judgment of others, the same trust will bring to us a love wide as that of Christ Himself. The immediate consequence of yielding ourselves to God is that sin has not dominion over us (Rom. vi. 14) ; the result of walking in the Spirit is that we do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh (Gal. v. 16). And when we fall—and fall we do mournfully often—we fall not because the Lord Jesus was unable or unwilling to hold us up, but because we failed to trust Him. Therefore to our sorrow at our fall a new element of pain is added. It is not only sinful, but it is unnecessary. No one definite act of sinning of which I have been guilty need have taken place.

There are two methods of meeting temptation, which it is worth while contrasting. When temptation meets me I may brace my whole nature to resist it, opposing it with all the energy of my will, and crying to God for help. I may attack the temptation directly, facing it with the determination not to be overcome ; and, to strengthen my determination, I may summon to my aid all right motives, and betake myself to prayer and the reading of God's word. Or, on the other hand, when temptation approaches, I may betake myself instantly to fellowship with the Lord

Jesus. I am abiding in Him, and the moment temptation appears I say, "Lord, temptation is coming ; be Thou my Keeper." Instead of directing the energies of my soul towards the temptation in resistance, I direct them towards the Lord Jesus in faith. In both cases there is effort ; there is intense activity of soul, but in the one case the effort is to overcome the temptation, in the other the effort is to maintain communion with the Lord. The first of these is what might be called the Method of Moral Resolve. It is that taught by moral philosophers, by many of our preachers, and is followed in the main by the mass of professing Christians. Its characteristic is stress of soul, and its outcome, if judged by the confession of those who have followed it most earnestly, is, "O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. vii. 22). The other is what might be called the Method of Spiritual Reliance. Its characteristic is rest of soul, and its outcome is the song, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and of death" (Rom. viii. 1, 2). I need scarcely add that it is this second method which it is the blessed privilege of the surrendered soul habitually to follow.

A CHARIOT OF LIGHT.

N the forthcoming biography of the late Mr. Radcliffe there is a striking passage relating to the secret of his power. The biographer says:—

“There was never anything striking in Mr. Radcliffe’s addresses, in the way of depth of thought, or freshness of illustration, or novelty of interpretation. Through communion with the living Christ, the word came forth with living and life-giving power. It was simply *a chariot of light and fire, in which Christ rode in conquering power into the hearts of men.*”

Let all engaged in Gospel work take a note of this. The most important requisite for testimony is “communion with the living Christ.” We do not say it is *everything*. There must be a certain fitness for the great work of witnessing publicly for God. There are certain “elements” that go to make up the heavenly ambassador; and communion with the living Christ will set these elements on fire, and send the man forth in “the fulness of the blessing.” But the “elements” must first be there before they

can be set on fire; and if these are wanting it is vain to claim that devotion to Christ is all the equipment required. Many a dear and devoted child of God, in attempting platform service in the Lord’s work, has found that he was attempting a thing to which he had no heavenly call. When God calls to a particular work, He furnishes for that work; and devotion to Christ, however blessed in itself, cannot take the place of that furnishing. At the same time, we must remember that even a certain measure of “gift” is a useless thing, and may become a dangerous thing, if it is not exercised in fellowship with God. It is not a difficult matter to become a “talker”—to work up a subject, and fill up the time of a Gospel meeting. Intellect itself may accomplish all this. But, if hearts are to be reached and broken—if business is to be done for eternity—the preacher must be “in communion with the living Christ.” His gift may not be brilliant; his measure may not be great; but, if he be

truly in the Master's hand, he shall be as those messengers who publish good tidings, and whose feet are "beautiful on the mountains." He shall carry the tidings of peace to weary hearts. Blessed are they now, and thrice blessed shall they be in the coming Day, who, through deep and abiding soul-surrender, are as "a chariot of light and fire, in which Christ may ride in conquering power into the hearts of men!"

JOY is the happiness of love; it is love exulting; it is love aware of its felicity, and rioting in riches which it has no fear of exhausting; it is love taking a look of its treasure, and surrendering itself to bliss without foreboding.

MEN bow before talent even if unassociated with goodness, but between these two we must make an everlasting distinction. When once the idolatry of talent enters, then farewell to spirituality; when men ask their teachers, not for that which will make them more humble and God-like, but for the excitement of an intellectual banquet, then farewell to Christian progress.

WILT THOU COME?

Key A. (GOSPEL HYMN). M. 110.

: s₁ | s₁ : m₁, f₁ | s₁ : d₁, r | m : f | m

O say wilt thou come in life's young morn,

: t₁, d | r : r, m | f : m, r | d : t₁ | d

Ere thy heart has learned to turn in scorn

: s₁, s₁ | s₁ : m₁, f₁ | s₁ : d₁, r | m : f | m

From the love that waits to welcome thee

: t₁, d | r : r, m | f : m, r | d : t₁ | d

To the cease-less joys of E-ter-ni-ty?

: s₁ | s₁ : d₁, r | m : m, f | m : r | r

O say wilt thou come to the Cross of shame?

: s₁ | r : r, m | f : f, s | f : m | m

O say wilt thou trust in the Saviour's Name?

: m, f | s : s, s | m : d, d | t₁ : r | f

O say wilt thou rest on the cleansing Blood,

: f, f | m : m, f | s : s, f | m : r | d

And be saved by the power of the Son of God?

- 1 O SAY wilt thou come in life's young morn,
Ere thy heart has learned to turn in scorn
From the love that waits to welcome thee
To the ceaseless joys of Eternity?

CHORUS—

O say wilt thou come to the Cross of shame?
O say wilt thou trust in the Saviour's Name?
O say wilt thou rest on the cleansing Blood,
And be saved by the power of the Son of God?

- 2 O say wilt thou come in life's fair prime,
While around thee are spread all the joys of time,
To ensnare thy soul?—O make haste and flee
While the Christ of God doth wait for thee.
- 3 O say wilt thou come, though the sands of life
Are sinking fast 'mid the woe and strife
Of a world that has nothing left for thee
But the wail of a lost Eternity!
- 4 O say wilt thou come?—whosoe'er you be,
There is One whose love has gone forth for thee;
And the arm of His might, from sin's dark wave,
Shall bear thee away in His power to save.

REVIEWING MATTERS.

BEFORE closing the present Volume it may be well that we should refer to a subject which we have dealt with at some length in these bygone months, namely, "Fellowship of Saints." We need not say that while the articles referred to have brought joy to the hearts of many of the Lord's people, a different effect has been produced on the minds of some. But this is not to be wondered at. After saints have been grounded for years in the theory that "the Table" is only for those who are within a certain circle of assemblies, it perhaps could hardly be expected of them to see in a single day that their joy and privilege is to recognise brethren who are known to be *godly persons and sound in the faith*, whether in a "recognised" assembly or not. Nevertheless, there are not a few who are beginning to see that if they put into the back seat all who are not in one or other of a certain

circle of assemblies, they are virtually putting the "confederacy" principle into force, while professing to reject the theory. It is being seen that it is a serious matter to conduct to the back seat one who is known to be a godly person—perhaps more so than many at the Table—and whose only "crime" is that he does not see exactly eye-to-eye with *us*! Many are also perceiving that they have been narrowed down in practice by the very restricted meaning which is attached to the phrase, "In the fellowship." They are learning now that "the fellowship" is something which God forms, and not man—something vastly deeper and wider than a certain circle of assemblies, all seeing eye-to-eye with *us*. Indeed, it is being more closely apprehended that we are not called to form a fellowship, but to *recognise* the fellowship which God is forming.

When this simple but blessed truth gets hold of a believer, it certainly works an enlargement

of heart. He sees himself *one with all who are "in Christ."* Hair-splitting definitions and far-fetched inferences will have very little weight with him in explaining away what is clearly written in the Word. He rejoices to find himself *one of the family*—redeemed by the same precious blood—sealed with the same Holy Spirit of promise—being conformed to the same blessed likeness—and travelling to the same eternal home. What a wonderful oneness is there! "But is he in the fellowship?" you say. Unquestionably—the fellowship which has for its centre the throne of God—the fellowship into which the Lord is bringing His redeemed. The brother may have much to learn as to his true path down here. But, if he is manifestly a godly person, on what principle is he to be rejected? This is the question which *all our opponents have failed to answer!* And let it be noted that this question goes to the root of the matter.

We have received communica-

tions saying, "We do not believe in receiving *anybody* that comes up and declares he is a Christian"—"We do not believe in receiving every Tom, Dick, and Harry, who profess to be the Lord's."

To this we reply that we never believed in, or advocated, such a system of reception. Those who write us in that strain are not meeting the point at issue, but evading it. *If* the person desiring to be received is a believer and *known to be sound in the faith and walking godly*, where is the Scripture for setting such a person in the back seat? This question remains literally unanswered.

We have taken our stand here, and we are convinced that in our stand we have God and the Word, and a good conscience. This being the case, it matters not to us how the wind may blow—or how the crowd may go—or how the circulation of the *Treasury* may be affected.

We hold the same truths we have held for many years, with the solitary exception that, in-

stead of *excluding* from the Table of the Lord all believers who are not in a recognised circle of assemblies, we believe that all saints, godly in faith and practice, have a birth-right place there. We have not hesitated to give our reasons for this — reasons which we hold to be strong and Scriptural — in preceding numbers of the *Treasury*.

But divergence of judgment even on this point need not be any hindrance to fellowship. Let there be the humble and the waiting spirit — the bearing and the forbearing in love — the endeavouring to keep (not to mar or hinder) the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded God shall reveal even this unto you.

TO OUR READERS.

We doubt not that through the prayers of many we have been sustained in the year that is past. Let prayer still ascend, that by the lovingkindness of our God the ministry through these pages may prove His message unto many in the year that is to come.

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WE shall esteem it a favour if those to whom this periodical commends itself will kindly send us a post-card with their name and address, and say how many free copies they require for distribution among the saints. If in each local centre there were even *one* energetic brother interested in seeing the "*Treasury*" circulated among the saints, it would be no small encouragement in this ministry.

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