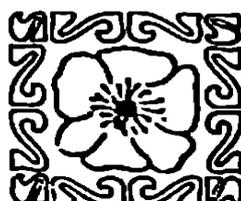
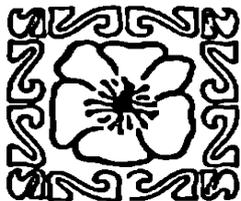


Out of Touch  
with  
The Master

By  
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**This very characteristic paper was the last written by the late Editor. It was penned shortly before his departure to be with Christ.**

## OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE MASTER.

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I AM going to invite the reader's attention to a fact that seems to me full of significance, and one which, I venture to say, claims more than a passing thought. Briefly stated it is this: *It is easily possible for any of us to stand in the most favoured of all Christian associations and yet to be out of fellowship with our Master in feelings and sympathies and spirit and ways.*

No one will doubt that when the Lord was on earth the twelve men who were chosen by Him to be His companions and messengers were privileged beyond all others. They were with Him all the days of His public ministry, and if in His teaching there were things they did not understand they had every opportunity of asking Him to pity their ignorance and to explain His meaning. They were with Him also in His private

life, seeing, hearing, and observing things that could only be known by those who were admitted to His dear and hallowed companionship. "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see"—said He to them on one occasion—"for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Luke x. 23). Yes, beyond all doubt they enjoyed unequalled privileges, and yet their thoughts and wishes and ways often jarred upon their Lord and Master and had to be corrected by Him. Let me give you some examples.

"And they brought young children to Him, that He should touch them: and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (*Mark x. 13*).

We may be sure it was the best of motives that led them to bring these dear babes to Jesus. They prized His blessing and believed that His touch would do them lifelong good. Therefore did they come and ask that His hands might be laid on their little ones. But this wish found no favour in the eyes of His disciples. *Their* Master was not to be troubled about a matter of such trifling moment! Other and more important concerns engaged His time and attention, and so they took it upon themselves to bid them go away. Oh, how little did the twelve understand their Master! How little they knew His

heart! This they were soon to see. For when Jesus saw it "He was much displeased"—*indignant* is the word—"and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." And instead of touching them only, He laid His hands upon them and took them in His arms and blessed them. Now that word *bless* is a strong one and means that He blessed them abundantly. How ashamed should these disciples have been at the rebuke of their Lord and Master! They learned in that hour that His thoughts were not their thoughts, neither were their ways His ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so were His ways higher than their ways, and His thoughts than their thoughts.

And He who abundantly blessed the little children when on earth is still blessing them. The years may come and go and the centuries may roll away, but there is no change in His love. He is always the children's Friend. And they are most in the secret of His mind who are earnestly striving to bring the little ones to Jesus. To this end they labour in fervent prayer. To this end they seize every opportunity to tell them of the Saviour's dying love, of His precious blood that cleanseth from every sin, and how He longs that they should know and love and follow Him.

Strange to say there are those—followers of Christ in some things—who frown upon Sunday-

school work and have given it up as not being in accord with the mind of heaven for to-day. Thank God their number is not large. Possibly they think that parents are responsible to teach their own children and that they should not be encouraged to pass on their duties to others. But if I am a Christian parent may not my children sometimes hear the story of redeeming love from other lips than mine? And then the children of our Sunday-schools, for the most part, come from homes where the Bible is never read and where the children are never taught to pray. Oh, it is Christ-like work, let others say what they will, to gather the children together by twos or tens, by hundreds or thousands, if possible, to tell them, for one brief hour a week, of Him, their best Friend, who came from heaven to save them, and who, saving, will be their Guardian and Guide through life.

“ Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followeth not us : and we forbad him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not : for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My name, that can lightly speak evil of Me. For he that is not against us is on our part ” (*Mark ix. 38*).

Who this man was we cannot tell. Nor does it matter. Enough that he was one who hated the devil and all his works, and when he met one possessed of demons he cast the demons out in the power of the name of Jesus. But the disciples forbade him. Had they been in a right frame of mind they would have been glad to see one able to spoil the “strong man’s” goods in

their Master's name. And more especially as they themselves had just failed to cast out the evil spirit from the son of the sorrowing father who had brought his afflicted boy to them. It is a sure mark of singleness of eye and largeness of heart when we rejoice unfeignedly in seeing others possess a richer measure of spiritual power than ourselves, even though they follow not us, and it is an equally sure sign of a narrow spirit when we do not. But in the eyes of the disciples the fact of his not following them was a fatal flaw. It seemed intolerable that he should cast out demons in Christ's blessed name and yet not be of their company. So in their mistaken zeal they bade him cease. And in returning to their Master John made haste to tell Him what they had done. Instead of commending, the Lord corrected them and bade them never do it again, saying, "For there is no man which shall do a miracle in My name, that can lightly speak evil of Me. For he that is not against us is on our part."

How we need to guard against the same sectarian and ungenerous temper. We are too ready to suppose that spiritual power can only be found along the lines on which we move, and to criticize and find fault with the devoted service of another because it is not cast in our mould and carried on according to our methods. *He followeth not us* is reason enough to condemn him root and branch. True, he is winning souls for Christ, he is seeking by devoted labour to feed the flock of God, and he is waging unceas-

ing war with the forces of evil. Yes, all true, but *he followeth not us*. Our thoughts are not his thoughts, and our ways are not his ways, and that is an offence which cannot be overlooked. So we shut up our sympathies, we give him no words of cheer, and brighten his life with no kindly deed. We leave him severely alone, and in acting thus sincerely believe that we have our Master's mind. But it is not so. We are as completely astray as were the disciples on the occasion of which we have spoken. Oh, let us jealously guard against such a spirit. Let us ungrudgingly recognize all the good we can in another even though *he followeth not us*.

"And it came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him. And they did not receive Him, because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But He turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village" (*Luke ix. 51*).

These Samaritans made a great mistake in refusing to receive the Saviour even as a passing guest. Strong religious prejudices were at the bottom of it. They profoundly differed from the Jews as to the place where men should worship. Mount Gerizim was their sacred spot and Jerusalem was that of their rivals. Now the face of Jesus was stedfastly set towards Jeru-

saalem, and they, knowing this, would suffer Him to tarry in their village, no, not for an hour. They were wrong, very wrong, but their refusal serves to show how religious prejudices darken the understanding and lead to sorrowful results. It is always so. We have, even in our day, to beware of the Samaritan spirit. It steals into the heart and takes possession of it all unawares. And under its influence it becomes easy to close the door against those who should be warmly welcomed. It is not that we are insincere. Far from it. Deep down in our hearts we think that we are doing God service and caring for His glory. Doubtless the Samaritans thought the same.

And this affront to their Master was more than His disciples James and John could endure. That the despised Samaritans should treat their Lord thus was an offence that deserved signal punishment, and they were ready to inflict it. Should they command fire to come down from heaven and consume them even as Elias did? How gladly would they have done it and how vehemently, and with what plausible reasons, would they have justified their act had it been challenged! But these disciples did not know their Master! Nor did they know what manner of spirit they were of. He had not come to destroy men's lives but to save them. And they went to another village. Here is the meekness and gentleness of Christ!

Alas! how many un-Christlike things have been done under the plea of faithfulness to

Christ. Possibly we have done them ourselves. And when we did them our zeal for our Master's honour sprang from the very same spirit that made James and John eager to call down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans. And if there was a voice that would have restrained us, saying, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of" our ears were so filled with the clash of tongues that we did not heed it. We *would* vindicate our Master's name, we *would* uphold His rights, regardless of all consequences, and we called down the fire!

But we need go no further. These examples show the truth of what we said at the beginning: *It is easily possible for any of us to stand in the most favoured of all Christian associations and yet to be out of fellowship with our Master in feelings and sympathies and spirit and ways.*

Perhaps you believe that the immediate circle in which you move is the most favoured of all circles. You are constantly receiving—so you suppose—fresh light from the Word, and you complacently regard yourself as standing on a spiritual elevation from whence you can look down with feelings akin to pity on your fellow Christians who have no eyes to see what you see. But take care that you are not out of harmony with your Master's mind. It is easy to be far, far astray and utterly unconscious of it—easy to be filled with a zeal for His honour and rights which instead of receiving His approval

only meets with His rebuke. What need there is ever to pray the Psalmist's prayer: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm cxxxix. 23). Have you ever prayed it? May we ask you to pray it once more.



*BY THE SAME AUTHOR.*

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