

THE

BELIEVER'S TREASURY.

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VOL. V.

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THE

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## THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN OPENED.

**W**E have no objections to any one praying that the windows of Heaven may be opened, and such a blessing poured out that there will not be room enough to receive it. We know what such a prayer *means*; and the *desire* is good. But while we may express it in *our* way, the Lord may answer it in *His* way. He may refer us to the *conditions* upon which He has promised to open the windows of Heaven. He may bring to our remembrance what He has already *said* in the Scriptures of Truth concerning the windows of Heaven being opened. There is *something* that must take place *first*. What is that "something"? It is *the bringing in of the tithes* (Mal. iii. 10). We wish to point out that this is *the* important element in the much-used passage in Malachi as to the opening of the windows of Heaven. The passage is generally quoted without any reference whatever to the bringing in of the tithes. It has become customary in many quarters to seize, or attempt to seize, every precious promise of God, while utterly neglecting the *duties* upon which the promise depends for its very existence! Precepts

may be irksome; the *conditions* of a promise may be very trying to the flesh. Therefore, the conditions are not dwelt upon; while the exceeding great and precious promises are extolled unto Heaven. What end does such teaching serve? None; except it be to foster the delusion that those who neglect the *precepts* of God shall nevertheless rejoice under the shadow of His *promises*. But this cannot be. The promises and the precepts are bound together by a law as inexorable as that of cause and effect.

God is ever His own interpreter; and sometimes one passage of Scripture will throw light upon another, although far apart in the sacred Volume (Compare Gen. xviii. 20 with Ezek. xvi. 49). But in the question as to the windows of Heaven being opened, everything is so plain that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. iii. 10). We thus see that the first thing to be done is to bring in the tithes. In other words, the Lord

is first of all to have *His portion*. He does not say, "Prove Me with *your professions of devotion*." It is, "Prove Me now *herewith*"—with the tithes, that is. So long as we withhold the tithes,—so long as we will not give the Lord His portion,—it is vain for us to stand up and sing,

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small."

If we are not giving the Lord His portion, our high-sounding profession will have no effect whatever in opening the windows of Heaven. Higher than hymns of the highest devotion the words will be heard by every opened ear: "*Bring in the tithes—bring in the tithes.*" The Lord must have His portion; and perhaps at the present time it may be seasonable to ask the question, "Has the Lord been getting His portion?" *This* is the point that we have to concern ourselves about, and not very much about the windows of Heaven being opened. The Lord has pledged Himself to attend to *that* matter. The windows of Heaven, if we may so speak, shall *open of their own accord*, whenever all the tithes are brought in! Show us the people—however few their number—who in glad surrender are yielded up to God, and you have a people above whom the windows of Heaven *have already been opened*, and upon whom Heaven *is* pouring out such a blessing that the earthen vessels are running over. Such, we are persuaded, is the lesson of eternal value which our God would have us learn from Mal. iii. 10. Is it not the

case that we have been bending our energies to the task of opening the windows of Heaven, instead of setting ourselves to the great work of getting the tithes into the storehouse? Let this great work be now our aim. It may be withering to the flesh. It may rouse deadly opposition, even from unexpected quarters. Nevertheless, it is the *only way* by which the windows of Heaven can be opened.

### THE LORD GETTING HIS PORTION.

F God does not get His portion, we need not be surprised if things go wrong. "*This* has gone wrong," you say, "and *that* has gone wrong; and all these things are against me." But has the Lord been getting His portion? "Portion of what?" you say. Portion of *time*—portion of *money*—portion of anything. Has He been getting that which is His *due*? Has God been acknowledged? Have we *brought in the tithes*? These are solemn questions, which we do well to put to ourselves, while girding up the loins of our mind for the warfare of another year. "Will a man rob God?" (Mal. iii. 8). "Wherein have we robbed Thee?" said the people in Malachi's day. Then comes the answer from the Lord Himself: "In tithes and offerings." The Lord had not got His portion. Therefore there could not be blessing. "Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow

upon it" (Hag. i. 9). It is simply hopeless to seek to secure the blessing of Heaven if we are withholding from God. We may flatter ourselves that there is blessing. But God looks deeper, and sees that there is none. To the remnant in the latter day of Old-Testament history did He not say: "I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart"? (Mal. ii. 2). This is startling. Our God will not be overreached. Yonder is a faithful labourer for God, with special claims, it may be, on our heart; and for weeks—perhaps months—we have not been exercised as to how it fares with him in temporal things! Yet we expect the God of Truth and Righteousness to open the windows of Heaven for our especial benefit! If He did, it would be something altogether out of keeping with the whole economy of grace.

### THE LORD WILL DELIVER HIM.

**I**N giving the Lord His portion (say in ministering to the need of others), we thereby serve ourselves heir to a special and precious promise. "Blessed," says Psalm xli., "is he that considereth the poor" (that is, sick, or needy). It is sweet at any time to have God's blessing. But in this case the blessing takes a very tangible shape. Of him that *considereth* the needy, it is written, "The Lord will deliver *him* in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve

*him*, and keep *him* alive; and *he* shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver *him* unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen *him* upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all *his* bed in *his* sickness" (ver. 1-3). What a catalogue of deliverances! And who are these deliverances for? They are for a particular brother or sister—the one who *considers* the needy. The need may be a word of sympathy; or it may be a half-sovereign in hard cash; or it may be succour in the hour of trial. But the *considering* one is assured that in the evil hour the Lord will "consider" *him*, and deliver *him* in time of trouble.

### PUTTING MYSELF INTO BONDAGE.

**I** AM not going to put myself into bondage," says a professed believer as he elbows his way into the world's entertainment. But to such professed believer we would say, How does it come that you find yourself *at home* in the world's entertainment? When did the world and you come to an agreement? If you were by some means to *compel* a believer, in communion with God, to sit beside you, that believer would be in the most painful bondage. How is it that what is pain to *him* is joy to *you*? The liberty you claim is not liberty in the Lord. It is liberty to follow the dictates of the flesh. You thus prove that your communion is not with the Father.

## THE ABSALOM REBELLION.

*Seventh Paper.*

**D**AVID found his way safely into the wilderness, followed by that little band, whose devotion was expressed in the touching words: "Thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint" (2 Sam. xv. 15). What a wonderful change had taken place in David's fortunes in a few days! Yesterday a king in Jerusalem: to-day a wanderer in the wilderness. Yesterday ten thousand were ready to do him homage: to-day he finds it hard to escape with a mere handful of followers. Truly we have here a fitting type of David's Son and Lord, when they hailed Him with "Hosanna" to-day, and on the morrow were as ready to cry out, "Let Him be crucified." That which was true of David, and of David's Lord, will not seldom be true of those who seek to guide the flock in the ways which be in Christ. Many a God-given leader among the saints has been as suddenly rejected as David was, and with as little cause. "The people"—even God's people, unless in communion with Himself—are very uncertain in their likes and dislikes. You may spend and be spent for years in washing their feet and bearing their burdens, and yet wake up some morning to find that a worthless Absalom has enthroned himself in their affections, and that there is now very little need for *you*. Yea, you may meet a storm of opposition, and discover in the opposing force many a

familiar friend in whom you trusted. All this may take place even without the intervention of an Absalom. The rising tide of worldliness may deaden the ear to the sound of the Great Shepherd's voice; and your testimony against the fashionable sins of the day may so rouse the enmity of that powerful faction who are ever at ease in Zion, that you will be openly proclaimed a troubler of Israel and a dangerous man. Or, it may be that when some burning question arises in the world outside, you testify to the heavenly calling of the Church, and show that the potsherd should be left to strive with the potsherd. If there be a "worldly element" in the Church, you need not be surprised if you cannot be longer acknowledged as a leader among the saints. The experience may be new to you; but it may, nevertheless, be needful. It is not difficult to manifest a gracious spirit so long as your gift is recognised and your position as a leading brother is acknowledged. But let the tide turn—let the "Hosanna" to-day be changed into the "Away with him" to-morrow, and your "stock of grace" will at once be made manifest. The gracious spirit under such circumstances will be a most significant "sign" that God has called you to the position, no matter how man may cast you out. A "majority" may reject you. But that *of itself* is no conclusive evidence that the Lord has not sent you. You may have been sent; or you may not. A majority *for* or *against*, does not necessarily declare the voice of Heaven. If you are

a true shepherd of souls you will undoubtedly be acknowledged by a spiritually-minded company of believers; for "he that is of God heareth God's words" (Jno. viii. 47). With a worldly-minded company the case might be vastly different. The man for them would be the man who can preach smooth things. Therefore, let not the heaven-sent shepherd be cast down by rejection. Neither let the would-be overseer fancy himself a martyr because the saints will not acknowledge his rule. Samuel's sons were rejected, and rightly so. David was rejected, and wrongly so. Every professed leader must stand or fall on his own merits.

Nevertheless, the godly in Israel are not without tokens of some kind, as to that which is of God, however little these tokens may be observed by the many in Israel. In David's case there were tokens. Absalom, no doubt, had the people. So far as *numbers* went he had no cause to complain. In the eyes of those to whom the argument of numbers is everything, Absalom would be recognised as the Lord's anointed. But with the few who clung to David there was a far more significant token than that of mere numbers. This leaks out in Hushai's counsel to Absalom: "All Israel," said he, "knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and *they which be with him are valiant men*" (2 Sam. xvii. 10). The men who accompanied David might be a mere handful. Yet they were good men and true. They had been proved. They were men of valour; and Absalom

was so conscious of this that he would not risk the chances of a battle until he could have all Israel gathered under his standard, from Dan to Beer-sheba. To the discerning eye such a token was a tolerably clear indication as to where the Lord's anointed was to be found. The valiant were with David: we have already seen the character of those who followed Absalom (2 Sam. xv. 11). In the churches to-day, tokens of a similar kind will not be wanting—mere straws on the stream, it may be; yet sufficient to enable the anointed eye to perceive the current of the divine leading. As it was with David of old, so is it with the Lord's Anointed now;—they that be with Him are valiant men!

### MUST BE AVOIDED.

**I** MUST shun whatever unfits me for communion with God. The thing in itself may be harmless. It may even have certain recommendations, from an earthly point of view. But if it takes the edge off my spirituality and lessens my desire to meet with God, it is an enemy of my soul; and I must treat it as such. This may cause me to take a narrower path than I have been wont to tread. I must sever the "old association," and break the link in the chain that holds me in bondage. If I refuse to do this, I deliberately come to terms with the enemy, and say to "my Lord" that He can no longer wield the sceptre on the throne of my heart.

## THROUGH THE FALL OF ANOTHER.

**I**T has been said that when a great man falls, little men fancy that they have suddenly become great. Certain it is, that there are men who never rise, except through the fall of others. By their own intrinsic merits they would never gain a position among the Lord's people. They are entirely dependent upon what is called "the chapter of accidents." If some leader in Israel falls, they see a chance of attaining a position which could never have become theirs in the ordinary course of things. A gap has been created. Why should they not step in and fill up the gap? Troubled with no scruples as to their own fitness for the post, and flattered by the thought of being rulers in Israel, they rush in "where angels fear to tread." The phoenix, a fabled bird of the ancients, and emblem of immortality, was said to live for five hundred years, and then rise from its own ashes. If the men under consideration attempted thus to rise, it would be well. If they passed through the fires of self-mortification, and rose from the ashes of all that was un-Christ-like, into a life adorned with the beauties of the Christian character, they would become powers for good both in the church and the world. They would not require to wait until they could force a passage into the place of power. Their own inherent excellencies would give them a place, at least in the hearts of those with whom is the secret of the Lord. But they seek not thus to rise.

Far other aims, alas! their heart has learned to prize. And even when "accident," as it is called, opens up their way to a prominent position, it is manifest to every anointed eye that they are not, and never were, the Lord's chosen vessels for that position.

## LEARNING WHAT THE FLESH IS.

**I**T would seem as if we were ever learning. The lesson we learned to-day simply paves the way for some new and harder lesson that we must learn to-morrow. But there are different ways of "learning" in the things of God. There are at least two ways. Many, in the path of spiritual declension, have learned what the flesh is. But happier far are they who, in the path of fellowship with God, have learned how utterly corrupt is all that pertains to the Adam nature. The hideousness of the "old man" is often discovered, when we have been brought under his power, and are smarting under a humiliating sense of defeat at the hands of the enemy of souls. It is well if even thus we learn to put no confidence in the flesh. But we shall have a deeper and a purer experience if, in the calm light of the Master's presence, we learn what the flesh is. In fellowship with the Holy One, all that is unholy must be abhorred. It cannot be otherwise.

HE hath great riches who, for Christ's sake, is willing to be without any.

## "THEY KNOW IT."

**N**OT long ago, one of the world's great philosophers was asked, "Do you believe in God?" "O yes," he answered, "I think all scientific men do that. Or rather, they don't believe it: they *know* it. It is for the masses to believe: the scientist *knows*." This is rather a remarkable answer. It is a powerful testimony against infidelity. The world's profoundest philosophers evidently know that there is such a person as God. They have beheld His handiwork. They have seen Him in the wonders of creation. In the beauties of an insect's wing, viewed through the eye of a microscope, no less than in the sublime spectacle of ten thousand worlds rolling through space with the most perfect harmony, the philosopher has seen, and could not fail to see, a great First Cause. The true scientist knows that one Almighty Hand whirled these heavenly bodies into the vast fields of space, and gave unto each its appointed circuit, wherein they run their race with an exactitude unaffected by the flight of centuries. It is left to the men with a mere smattering of knowledge to carry on the business of infidel lecturing. In their case it may truly be said that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." But the true philosopher in the fields of science, has beheld the wonders of God, whether it be in the depths below or in the heights above. Thus the voice of science is found to harmonise with the declaration of Scripture that "the

Heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament showeth His handiwork" (Ps. xix. 1).

## "THE GOLDEN SUNLIGHT."

Lines suggested by the words, "One hour in the golden sunlight" (See first article in "The Believer's Treasury" for August, 1889).

- "**O**NE hour in the golden sunlight,"  
One hour alone with Thee,  
Where earth-clouds cast no shadow,  
To hide Thy face from me.
- "One hour in the golden sunlight"—  
A noontide soft and fair,  
With heav'nly radiance beaming:  
O I would linger there!
- "One hour in the golden sunlight,"  
To meet Him face to face,  
Who won this heart for ever  
Through the riches of His grace.
- "One hour in the golden sunlight,"  
My Saviour to adore,—  
To hear Him gently whisper,  
"Thou art Mine for evermore."
- "One hour in the golden sunlight,"  
Where none but Christ is seen,  
And all of earthly glory  
Is as it ne'er had been.
- "One hour in the golden sunlight:"  
How swift those moments fly,  
While on Communion's mountain—  
Beneath Heav'n's sunlit sky!
- "One hour in the golden sunlight:"  
O let that hour roll on;—  
Stand still, thou Sun, on "Gibeon," (Josh. xi. 12)  
Till the battle of life is won!
- Let that hour in "the golden sunlight"  
Extend its gladsome ray  
O'er all life's pilgrim pathway,  
Till the dawn of Glory's Day,—
- Till the absent One, returning,  
These eyes at last shall see,  
And my longing spirit catcheth  
The songs of Eternity!

## A REVIVAL IN PARTICULAR.

**T**HERE are many who pray for a revival in general; but it is to be feared that only a limited number pray for revival in particular. In other words, it is one thing to say, "Lord, revive *us*," while it is quite another thing to say, "Lord, revive *me*." *Lord revive us* does not single *me* out from the general body of believers. The phrase is convenient, as it does not necessarily imply that *I* am needing revival any more than my brethren. I thus float myself in with the whole company included in the term "us," and I do not need to give any hint that I am anything below the general level. On the contrary, if I am found crying out that *we* may be revived, the inference may be drawn that I am somewhat *above* the general level. But if I find myself in the true valley of humiliation, crying out, "O Lord, revive *me*, for I have been departing in heart from Thee," I am tolerably safe in coming to the conclusion that I express the honest desire of my heart. Certain it is, that such a prayer will do far more to promote revival in the Church than any number of half-hearted petitions for a general revival.

— — —

"WE must not be so absorbed, even in labours consecrated to God, as to be unready at any moment for the higher life and service of Heaven."

— — —

BE ever ready to give a verdict against thyself; for thou art thine own greatest enemy.

## FRUITS OF REVIVAL.

**O**NE of the first fruits of revival in a believer's own soul, is a strong desire for a revival all around. It is only those who are drinking of living streams that have any real desire to see their fellow-believers drawing water with joy from the wells of salvation. A revived believer is a praying believer,—one who longs for the Consolation of Israel,—one who cries out to the Lord for revival in the midst of the years. The believer who is in happy fellowship with God is thus an intercessor. He has power with God, and prevails. He is not content that he should enjoy revival times himself. His desire is that many may taste and see, and that great may be the company of them that publish the same.

And not only is such a believer possessed by a strong desire for revival, but he has the *faith* to believe that the Lord will come in. The man of prayer is ever a man of faith. He is hopeful—expectant; yea, he is persuaded that deliverance is at hand, and that the Lord is about to stretch forth His arm in blessing. While others see no hope, the man of faith sees "God over all," and, even in the night of gloom, calmly waits for the coming day.

### THREE ANTECEDENTS.

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an *haughty spirit* before a fall" (Prov. xvi. 18). "Before honour is *humility*" (Prov. xviii. 12). "He that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise" (Prov. xii. 15).

## THE SELF-SACRIFICING SPIRIT.

**H**E who truly loves the Church has so entered into his Master's spirit that he is ready to "give himself" for the Church. We read that "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it" &c. (Eph. v. 25). And where there is His love, there will, in some measure, be His self-sacrifice. The heaven-sent rulers are willing to be nothing, that Christ may be everything, and that His Church may prosper. We hear Moses wishing that his name may be blotted out, if thereby Israel can be blessed. If Israel prospered, it mattered not to him that he was to be nothing. True lover of Israel's commonwealth! Yet the same spirit animates all who are true lovers of that heavenly commonwealth which is God's peculiar treasure in these last days. They have no desire to be great in the Church. They have no wish to make themselves prominent, and leave the impression that they are "somebody." They are willing to be forgotten entirely, provided the Righteous One (See Ps. cxii. 6) be held in everlasting remembrance.

While Moses is a true type of the ruler according to God, Absalom is no less true a type of the ruler according to man. In Absalom's case we see one who had no desire whatever for the blessing of Israel. Self-sacrifice was not in all his thoughts. We never find *him* saying, "Blot *me*, I pray Thee, out of Thy book" (Ex. xxxii. 32). On the contrary, we find him using every artifice

to blot out *another's name*, that he himself might be judge in the land! In this the successors of Absalom are manifest, and the imitators of Moses. Mere aspirants to the place of rule among the saints may profess to have a single eye for the "common-weal" of the people of God. But by their fruits they are known. They cannot conceal their real purpose. If they are not in the place of power, they can point to a hundred evils crying out for redress. But if they contrive to reach the coveted pinnacle of authority, they seem to be perfectly content, no matter how many abominations are walking at large among those they profess to rule!

## EXCUSES AT HAND.

**W**HEREVER there is a reluctance to obey the Lord, there will be a search for excuses to justify our disobedience. Such excuses will not be hard to find. A Jonah, fleeing from the presence of the Lord (Jonah i. 3), has no difficulty in finding a ship bound for Tarshish. And he who is not very eager to carry out what God commands, will find any number of "ships" ready to sail for Tarshish. Such "ships," however, are no reason why the revealed will of God should be set aside. They may make disobedience easy; but they do not make, and can never make, disobedience scriptural. It is an evil day for us when we have "comforts" in the path of disobedience.

## OUR CHILDREN FOR GOD.

**A**RE we training up our children for God? or are we training them up for the world? This is a solemn question in the light of Prov. xxii. 6, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." We have here a command and a promise; and, however strange it may seem to us, God will make good His word that the properly instructed child does not depart from the right way. Nevertheless, in the matter of training up children, it is to be feared that many Christian parents are sowing the seeds of a terrible harvest yet to come. Parents have in great measure the making, or the unmaking, of their children. We have heard Christian parents bemoan the worldliness of their offspring, and express the fear that they were going from bad to worse. But had these children been trained up "in the nurture, and admonition, and fear of the Lord"? It is to be feared that in too many cases the children had been influenced by parental example, and had simply *followed up* the training initiated by their parents. The hearts of the young are wonderfully susceptible to impressions, be the impressions good or bad—spiritual or carnal. The training they receive becomes part of themselves—woven, so to speak, into their very being. Everything a child sees, everything it hears, goes to make up its character, and influence its whole future destiny! This is solemn. Yet it cannot

be denied; neither can it be explained away. And once the character of a child is formed on the lines of carnal policy, what guarantee have we to expect that the child will tread the path of righteousness in after years? If we sow the fallow-ground of our children's hearts with the seed of worldly-conformity, how can we expect a harvest of fruit unto God? We are aware of the standard arguments, that one must move with the times, and that those who live in Rome must do as the Romans do. But we have never found such principles in Holy Writ. We are in the world (if "Rome" represents the world); but we are not of it, and have no call whatever to move with "the times," or do what the Romans do.

But let us go to the root of the matter, and ask what is the real secret of worldly up-bringing of children. We believe it is simply a case of *like producing like*. If parents are not living for God, they cannot bring up their children for God. Children are powerfully influenced by the atmosphere in which they dwell. If they are surrounded by an atmosphere of heavenly-mindedness, the "law of assimilation" will have its due effect; and the character of the child will get a "heavenward inclination" that may prove a mighty bulwark against the fierce temptations of coming years. But if you deliberately surround your children with the atmosphere of worldliness, the "law of assimilation" will not fail to act. A worldly atmosphere will make worldly children; and once the young heart has

received its "downward inclination," you have simply done your best, or your worst, to hinder that child from treading the paths of holiness and peace. If you train up a child in the way he should *not* go, be not surprised if, when he is old, he depart *not* from it. In the bringing up of children there is such a thing as sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind! (Hos. viii. 7).

### NOT MEASURED BY CIRCUMSTANCES.

**W**E must never measure God by circumstances. We must not be found saying, "It is hopeless to expect the Lord to work *here*,—the difficulties are so many and so great." It is true that the difficulties may be great. But we must not forget that our God is a great God,—able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. It is no part of the business of faith to underestimate difficulties. Faith measures the difficulties with a tolerably accurate measuring-line. Yet she is not dismayed. Why? Because she sees God over all, blessed for ever. Difficulties are the trial of faith. If there were no difficulties, there would be but little need for faith as we tread our desert way. Faith would thus be bereft of that "preciousness" whereof Peter speaks when he says, "The trial of your faith, which is much more precious than of gold" (1 Pet. i. 7).

—\*—\*—\*—  
"THE freedom of unrighteousness is the slavery of sin."

### FULL OF NEW WINE.

**W**HEN the Lord is working mightily, it is generally the case that His people are misunderstood by the world. At Pentecost we hear the multitude saying: "These men are full of new wine" (Acts ii. 13). If it is Pentecostal times in the history of a Church of Christ, similar remarks are made. The world, in such circumstances, is often heard crying out: "These people are beside themselves." We wish there was more cause for that reproach. It is not a bad symptom when the world tells us that we are too narrow, and that we make far too great an ado about the things of God. We remember the time when the world had much more to say in this line. It declared that the Lord's people had lost their senses, and had got so carried away with religion that it was their whole theme of conversation. But it would seem to be different now. The world has not so much to say about the strictness of professed believers; and it is only on the rarest occasions that any of us are singled out as men who carry religion too far. This is significant. Nor is the reason far to seek. The bright gold has become dim. The fire of heavenly love is burning low. We are living in the days of worldly-conformity and ease in Zion; and the world, instead of looking on us as religious enthusiasts, has come to the conclusion that, as a whole, we are very sensible people! What would they say if we were on fire for God?

## EVEN A FEW.

**Y**OU may have remarked that even a few truly surrendered men in a body of believers will give a *tone* to the whole company. Their godly example is a rebuke to lawlessness, and serves to maintain a certain standard of holiness. Thus, whether they are ministering brethren or not, their lives bear an unbroken testimony against that which is not of God. We have heard it said that the Church is the salt of the earth. But, if the whole truth were known, we would perhaps find that there is such a thing as *the salt of the Church*, viz., that godly remnant who are found hungering and thirsting for God, even in the midst of abounding declension. The Lord has set His mark upon those longing souls—He has marked them for blessing. In a bygone day we hear Him saying: "Go . . . through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry, for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof" (Ezek. ix. 4). We have no reason to believe that in *this* day the Lord has forgotten to hear the sighing of those who seek Him with the whole heart.

TRUE ministry in the Church will ever lead the saints to God. The ministry that is from above will ever point in the direction from whence it comes. On the other hand, ministry that is of man will rise no higher than man, and will raise the saints no nearer to God.

## REMNANT DAYS.

**T**HE last days of every bygone dispensation have been "remnant days"—that is, days in which the faithful were merely a remnant as compared with the surrounding mass of profession. Take Malachi's day, for example. The roll of Old-Testament history was about to close. Gross darkness had fallen upon the people. Departure from God was the great characteristic of the times. Profession abounded, it is true. But, when we read the divine testimony concerning the state of things in Malachi's day, we find it was really *hypocrisy* that abounded. Yet God was not left without *some* who found their all in Him. He never leaves Himself without a witness. In Malachi's day He had a remnant. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another" (Mal. iii. 16). Those "kindred spirits" soon found each other out. It is not hard to divine what was the burden of their converse; for we find that "the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name" (ver. 16). What peculiar delight Jehovah took in that remnant who thought upon His name! Now, the present day may be dark in the history of the Church, and a Laodicean torpor may seem to have paralysed the energies of the great body of professing believers. Yet let us not forget that our God has His remnant, a remnant who refuse to bow down to the

Haman of popularity, and who will not barter the dew of heavenly youth (Ps. cx. 3) for the gold or the flatteries of earth;—a remnant who read the signs of the times only too well; and who can discern that Rehoboam's shields (1 Kings xiv. 27), though very like the precious metal, are only brass after all! The multitude may shout with a great shout (1 Sam. iv. 5), and the uncircumcised may seem even to tremble for a little while (1 Sam. iv. 8). But "the remnant" perceive that the God of the Ark is not there. Let us therefore praise our God for His remnant, whatever that remnant may be. Yet, let us remember that no inexorable law has limited their number. The heavenly lists are open for you, brother, and for me, and for that sister who may perhaps fancy that she is of but little account in the Church.

Would'st thou secure a place  
Amid that remnant band  
Who see, by faith, the Master's face,—  
Who hear His voice, and love to trace  
The working of His hand?

Then know thou that no studied art  
Shall give thee claim to lot or part  
In remnant company;  
But one thing does our God desire—  
Nor less could love divine require—  
"Tis *the surrendered heart!*

THEY that trust God while the path is dark, have seldom to wait long until the path is clear. Light is sown for the righteous (Ps. xcvi. 11); and it will spring up in *due time*. He, therefore, that "doeth righteousness" may possess his soul in patience; for the light that is sown will not fail to appear. "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning" (Isa. lviii. 8).

"I will trust, and not be afraid."

(Isa. xii. 2; Ps. lxii. 8.)



ORD Jesus, I will trust Thee,  
I will not be afraid,—  
"Fear not," I hear Thee saying,  
"And be not thou dismayed:  
Fear not, for I am with thee,  
Thy strength and song to be;  
And who, or what, can harm thee  
If thou abide in Me?"

Thou knowest, Lord, 'tis easy  
To find in Thee our stay  
When all is joy and sunshine,  
And smooth and bright the way:  
But I would trust at *all* times,  
Whate'er my lot may be;  
For circumstances change not  
Thy love, O Christ, to me.

Lord Jesus, I will trust Thee,  
Though clouds at times may rise—  
Born of my care and sorrow—  
To hide Thee from mine eyes:  
Yet "Fear not, I am with thee"  
Shall all my fears allay,  
Assured that Thou art faithful,—  
Thy word shall stand for aye.

A. Y.

THERE is no lack of heavenly food—"hidden manna" though it be to the carnal eye. The fault lies in the appetite of those who are called to the banquet. The first great token of refreshing times is *renewed desire after God*.

IT is vain to sing that "it is well with my soul," if it be not well with my heart. No good can come of singing of heavenly experiences, if we are drinking at worldly fountains.

## THIS, AT LEAST, CAN BE DONE.

**I**F we have not much "gift" for carrying on a Gospel Meeting, there is at least one thing we can do,—we can avoid spinning out the meeting until it becomes a weariness to those that hear. This is often done when there is "nobody particular" to speak. Indeed, we have frequently found it the case that a brother really fitted of God to preach the Gospel will give a shorter address than one who is not specially cut out for that work. The reason is simply this, that the gifted brother knows what he is doing,—or, rather, what he is saying. He could easily fill up the time in saying commonplace things. But what he aims at is, to reach the conscience and the heart. He accordingly selects his matter, and strives to have every sentence as a nail fastened in a sure place. His aim is not to preach till the hands of the clock reach a certain hour; neither does he seek to please the popular ear. His one great aim is to grapple with the souls of his hearers concerning Judgment, Eternity, and the Great Salvation. On the other hand, the brother not specially gifted seems to be impressed with the idea that the longer he speaks the more chance there is that sinners will be awakened. His standard of preaching being a low one, he does not know when he is uninteresting and commonplace. He is like a man building a wall with anything that comes to hand, instead of with carefully selected blocks of stone. He seems to have lost

all reckoning of time; and as he is not given to "take stock" of his audience, he does not observe that the people are longing for the meeting to close. Then, to make matters worse, he leads everybody to believe that he has only got one thing more to say, and he will be finished. Yet he makes a new start, and seems to be as far from the end as ever! In such circumstances it need cause no surprise if results are meagre in the extreme. And what is the cause? It is due to the serious mistake of the preacher *trading beyond his gift*. If he were to minister "as of the ability which God giveth" (1 Pet. iv. 11) the saints would be refreshed, and we doubt not that sinners would be made to tremble. But when there is ministry that keeps not within its God-appointed bounds, it will fail to *command* attention. We say "command," because the testimony of the heaven-sent man will cause people to hear—no matter how they may reject the message.

## FEW THAT CAN BEAR IT.

**I**T is only a very select few that can bear to be told of the "refreshing word" they gave at the meeting. We do not refer to flattery; but to the simple telling a brother of blessing received through his ministry. You think it will encourage his heart; and so it does. But in many cases it also flatters his vanity, and to such an extent that he becomes in a manner intoxicated with a sense of his own importance. He

has not grace to bear a compliment. He has not sufficient of the ballast of humility to enable him to profit by the wind of a favourable criticism. On the other hand, the man with grace sufficient to bear a cheering word, passes the honour and glory on to the Lord; while he rejoices with trembling, knowing that there is nothing in man.

### A TREMBLING HAND.

**N**OTHING so weakens the arm of our testimony as the consciousness that we are not living the life of holiness that God has designed for us here. An accusing conscience makes a trembling hand; and such a hand is simply powerless to deal with the evils of this apostate day. But let there be the consciousness of integrity of heart and singleness of eye, and at once the trumpet gives no uncertain sound; for the righteous are as bold as a lion (Prov. xxviii. 1). The consciousness that we are "doing the right" gives a power to testimony that can be neither gainsaid nor resisted. Wherever this consciousness is awaiting, testimony will lack its most potent element.

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# Believer's Treasury.

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Vol. V.

## GOING IN TO POSSESS THE LAND.

**I**S there not a higher and a holier life designed of God for His children here below? Longing hearts are asking this question. It forces itself upon them; and an answer must be found. They feel that their experience has been far below the standard of Scripture, although quite in keeping with the general standard that prevails around. Once upon a time they rejoiced in Christ Jesus, even with joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Pet. 1. 8). But that time is past; and it did not depart in a day. The process was gradual. The general standard of Christian life came down by degrees from revival heat to the icy coldness almost of worldliness itself; and those believers *came down too!* They *accommodated* themselves to each step in the downward path of average Christianity, until now they have awoke to find that average Christianity is a perfect stranger to the inner court of heavenly experience. They have discovered that they are living a life far below their privileges, — a life in which they are suffering defeat after defeat in conflict with the powers of evil, while victory for God is

rare. They do not believe that this should continue. They are alarmed to find that it has gone on so long. They are convinced that the Lord has "some better thing" (Heb. xi. 40) for His redeemed,—an experience deep, abiding, satisfying, and separated by "a great gulf" from all that passes current as "Christian experience" in the present day. These longing souls simply refuse with all their heart to be satisfied with the mere husk of heavenly experience. That counterfeit of spiritual joy may do for the "general mass" of profession; but it will utterly fail to quench the thirst of those who are taught of God to cry: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God" (Ps. xlii. 1). Let us praise Him that such a cry is going up. Nor let us doubt that He who has created the thirst shall satisfy it.

A certain hymn tells us that "there is a better world, they say." But it is as true that there is a better *life*, even here below, than the easy-going, world-conforming life that seems to "rule the day" in which our lot is cast. Yes, there is a life of victory over sin—a life of joy in God—a life of abiding communion with the Father, which world-

conforming Christianity has never tasted—has never known. The Lord has reserved it for His redeemed. Unto them He has bequeathed an inheritance of untold blessing—"unsearchable riches." Who among God's saints is ready to go up and take possession of his inheritance? Who will serve himself heir to the unsearchable riches that are ours in Christ Jesus? The whole land lies before us. Have we not already lingered too long by this "Terah" in the wilderness,—adapting ourselves to the prevailing lukewarmness—doing as others are doing—and allowing the ties of flesh and blood to hinder us from stepping boldly forth into the Canaan of our promised rest? It is surely high time to awake out of sleep. We must tarry no longer. Ye thirsty ones, ye longing souls, gird up your loins. Let us go forth in spirit, at the bidding of our God, into the goodly land of His own abiding presence, where "the light of earthly glory dies," and where one day excels a thousand in the far country of popular Christianity. We need not be surprised although the general body of believers see very little cause for alarm. We need not wonder if world-conforming professors cry out against the reign of formalism being thus rudely disturbed. If there is such a thing as an overcoming life, that life must be ours, no matter although a thousand adversaries stand at our right hand to thwart the purposes of Heaven. If there is a path of abiding communion, that path must be trod. If the Lord has said that there is, within the believer, a

kingdom which is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit," we must see to it that all this is made good in our every-day experience. It may cost us something. The right hand may have to be severed—the right eye plucked out (Matt. v. 29, 30). If so, that which is dearly purchased shall be all the more dearly prized. Of this at least we are assured, that those who thus yield themselves in unreserved surrender to God, shall find that the sum-total of average Christianity is not worthy to be compared with a single "hour in the golden sunlight" of the Master's presence.

### NO ENEMY LEFT AT LARGE.



HERE must be victory all along the line. We refer to the great battle which every believer is called to wage against *sin*, in whatever shape or form it may appear. You may be victorious over three fleshly enemies, and yet remain helplessly under the power of a fourth. You may flatter yourself that you are tolerably secure because you have overcome all the sins that men can see; and yet the innermost core of your spiritual life may be sapped by some abomination that men cannot see! This will never do. That one unconquered enemy must be thrust out, else it will defile everything,—jarring like a harsh dissonance upon the melody of heavenly communion,—weakening the arm of your purpose,—drying up the streams of holy joy, and barring every

avenue to happy service! One such enemy left at large will soon lay waste the whole garden of the heart. Nor will that enemy remain the only victor. Allies will soon be found. Former enemies, once beneath your feet, will rise up and confront you with sevenfold power; and, before their fierce onslaught, you will be simply as Samson shorn of his locks. Therefore *that one enemy* must, like Agag of old, be hewn in pieces before the Lord. No quarter must be shown. There must be no excuses—no self-justification. Nothing less than a *war of extermination* must be waged against that one enemy. Then,—when the sword of the Lord has done its work, and you have tasted the sweets of liberty from that particular sin,—what a shout of freedom, what a hosanna of praise, rises in the soul! Well and truly has it been said, “they alone are free who are free from the dominion of sin.”

### MUST SEE JESUS.

**L**ONGING hearts are refusing to be satisfied with the outer shell of what often goes by the name of “ministry.” They must *see Jesus* in the ministry; and, if they do not see Him, they feel that they have seen nothing. There are “Marys” who are saying, “They have taken away my Lord.” There are “Greeks” who are saying, “We would see Jesus.” There are loving disciples who are saying, “Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?” These longing

hearts must be satisfied; and they will not be satisfied with the mere husk of fine-spun theories. They must “see Jesus.” You may “charm never so wisely”; but, like the deaf adder, they will refuse to be charmed (Ps. lviii. 4, 5). They must hear the Master’s voice. “But,” you say, “are we not to have doctrine?” Yes, we reply; but sound doctrine—the healthful teaching—will point to Christ, and lead to Christ, and unveil Christ. All true ministry will have some relation to Christ. A splendid address according to the wisdom of man, may cause you to extol the preacher; but an address in the simplicity and power of the Holy Spirit will cause you to extol the Saviour. Many are perfectly well-pleased to hear a finely-worked-out statement of truth, although Christ is invisible from beginning to end! They are not longing for *Him*, therefore they do not observe His absence! But longing hearts are quick to discern if Christ be not there. Therefore let ministering brethren see to it that these longing souls are satisfied. And, in satisfying *them*, the hearts of saints at ease shall be allured to Christ, until all around the cry shall be heard, “We have found Him whom our souls love.”

IT is not in attainments, but in *attaining*, that we are safe. He who rests in attainments will soon be found resting in formalism.

THEY are perfectly happy who are perfectly submissive to the will of God.

## WORLDLINESS IN HIGH PLACES.

**W**E have heard of a preacher who was one day observed rushing to catch a train in order to witness a football match. But, as he made no secret of the matter, we think his case entirely eclipsed by the professed leader in the Lord's work, who stole in to witness the pantomime in the City, and then passed himself off on Lord's-day as if he had been living in the third heaven all week! We do not know where this took place. Therefore, our remarks can have no personal application, so far as we are concerned. We simply point out that hypocrisy of this kind is detestable in the highest degree; and, if it were known to exist in any company of believers where Christ is owned as Lord, we are certain that its author would be summarily ejected from his position of authority, and be set down to learn the first principles of separation. We are persuaded that saints owning the Lordship of Christ are not prepared to acknowledge the leadership of men who are found to-day fulfilling the desires of the flesh in the world's theatre, and to-morrow professing to lead the saints into the holy place of spiritual communion! It will truly be an evil day for us when the world can say, "Such be thy leading men, O Israel!" We believe that day is distant. We pray God it may never come. But, if it is to be kept in the remote domain of the future, there is one thing that we must do,—*we must see to the character of our leading men.* We

must apply the tests of Scripture. We must bring forth the measuring line of 1 Tim. iii., and lay it to the lives and practices of those who profess to be the guides of the flock. We are aware that some contend that the saints have no right to judge in these matters, and that 1 Tim. iii. was never given for such a purpose. But we make bold to say that the saints *have* a right to judge. No doubt 1 Tim. iii. was given *especially* that any one stretching forward to oversight work might see what his character must be. But the chapter in question was not given *exclusively* for that purpose. We, the saints, are to *know* them that are over us in the Lord. But how shall we recognise them except it be by the marks which Scripture says shall distinguish them? We therefore hold that the saints are perfectly entitled to judge. Certainly the saints of Ephesus concluded that they were entitled to judge in such matters. They *tried* those who said they were apostles; and they found them to be liars (Rev. ii. 2); and that church earned the divine commendation for so doing. Yet some will tell us we have no right to judge! It is a very easy thing for some would-be overseer to stand up, claiming to be a ruler, and then say to the saints, "Now, you have no right to apply 1 Tim. iii. to me: it was not given for such a purpose." That would simply place us at the mercy of any one who wanted to be great in the church. But we have not so learned Christ. The saints are not only entitled to judge, but it is their *responsibility* to

judge; and if we have not been awake to this responsibility, the sooner we are awake to it the better. Be it far from us to encourage a spirit of fault-finding that makes a man an offender for a word and insists upon absolute perfection in every point. We must watch against such a spirit; for overseers are men—not angels. We simply mean that we should see we have the heaven-equipped men standing before us in the Lord. We shall know them by their marks, and we shall know them by their works. If these two “signs” accompany their testimony, then let us strengthen their hands and encourage their hearts. But if it is manifest that they are not overseers according to Scripture, how dare we acknowledge them as heaven-sent men? By so doing, we would be simply strengthening the hands of mere assumption, and establishing the reign of formalism.

### THE ONLY WAY.

**T**HE measure of our deliverance from the power of sin, is the measure of our surrender to God. It is vain to expect a deliverance that will be in advance of our surrender. The *only way* to the *overcoming* life is the *surrendered* life. Where Christ is *all*, there can be no room for self. Where *He* reigns, there is death to all that is not of Him.

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 WAIT not for a better time to seek a closer walk. The reality of a resolution is proved by its taking practical shape.

### IT WAS ALL THAT HE DID.

**W**HATEVER you are in the Church, do not be an *Eliab* (See 1 Sam. xvii. 28). Very little is recorded about him; and that little is not to his credit. You ask what he did. Well, all that we read about him is, that he tried to weaken the hands of the Lord's anointed. He was a murmurer. We do not read of any great mistakes that he made. But we fail to discover any good that he accomplished. He pretended to have great discernment of the motives of others, and professed to read David's pride of heart at a glance. But in reality he was afraid lest his youngest brother should succeed in doing a work which he himself could not do.

### ENVIETH NOT.

**I**N 1 Cor. xiii. 4, we read that love envieth not. We have here a simple, but all-powerful, test of love. You cannot envy one you love! If I find the unholy fire of envy rising in my heart concerning my brother whose “gift” is so highly accepted among the saints, I had better be asking, “Where is my love?” If I make diligent search I shall assuredly find that it was consumed in the flame of jealousy. This may be a humiliating experience; but it is a thousand times better to come honestly to that conclusion than to profess a love to which I am a stranger.

## THE ABSALOM REBELLION.

*Eighth Paper.*

**I**F Absalom had quietly remained in Jerusalem, content with the apparent success of his conspiracy, he might have enjoyed a much longer lease of the throne. But, intoxicated with the sweets of kingly power, he determines at once to follow up his victory, and strike such a decisive blow that not a single foe shall be left to resist his authority. We see here the self-confidence of the man who has seized a position to which the Lord had never called him. None are so prone to act beyond their ability as those who rule apart from the call of God. Such men will generally be found ruling with a high hand,—demanding subjection to their authority by the sword of fleshly might, instead of persuading to submission by the arm of spiritual power. Such men, having mistaken their place, are sure to mistake their measure. Having thrust themselves into a position which they are not fitted of God to fill, they cannot fail to see that they hold the position by a very feeble tenure. They therefore declare war against everything opposed to their rule. Their energies are directed to this one object. Instead of feeding Israel with the finest of the wheat, they are engrossed with the work of making their own position secure. They are more intent on watching “the other side” than watching for souls. Thus the true work of the Church has to stand still while Absalom’s sword goes

forth to devour the opposers—“valiant men” though they be. But the successors of Absalom, like Absalom himself, will sooner or later be found mistaking their own strength, and underestimating the power that refuses to bow to their authority. This came true in Absalom’s case. He resolved to put his authority to the test. He would soon make it clear whether the house of David or the house of Absalom was the stronger party in Israel. He staked all, and lost all. He appealed to the sword; and we know the result,—he perished by the sword. His sun set in obscurity as suddenly as it had risen in kingly splendour. His end was not the end of the righteous; and the history of his transient reign is a beacon of warning to all who would be rulers among the people of God to-day.

Absalom was bent upon seeking *a place of honour for himself*, although he attempted to conceal that desire by declaring that he simply longed to see the reign of righteousness and judgment. We question if, among all his successors, a single man has been found to make the candid admission: “Yes, I am longing for a good position in the Church.” This is always emphatically denied. But, although Absalom may deny his name, he cannot conceal his character. *That* is apparent to every true lover of the Lord’s Anointed; while Absalom’s *works* must, in the end, be manifest to all.

We find from the sacred narrative that “in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his

beauty" (2 Sam. xiv. 25). But his beauty was solely of that kind which draws the carnal eye. In this he may be taken as a type of those in the Church who are only known as "great speakers." Whole chapters might be written on what we may call "the idolising of gift." In the present day we see "gift" extolled to the skies, while the beauty of holiness must put up with a second place. If men have got the needful gift as orators, the whisper goes round: "What a remarkable man!—what a wonderful preacher!" The preacher in question may simply be endowed with great reasoning power and a fair command of language, while he is painfully deficient in the elements of true godliness. Yet he is hailed, by many at least, as an undoubted ambassador of Heaven! But mere gift, apart from the holy anointing oil of our God, will never have a hallowing influence upon the destinies of His people. It may seem for a time to carry all before it. But the spiritual will refuse to acknowledge mere glibness of tongue as a special gift of the ascended Lord. Israel, as a whole, may be loud in the praises of what might be called "graceless gift." But the spiritual shall discern that which is not of God, and see no beauty in the gifts of an Absalom, that these should be desired. We only want the eyesalve of heavenly discernment; and then no Absalom would reign for a single day in Hebron!

Absalom stands forth as a representative of those who use their gifts for the purposes of their own personal ambition.

This is ever the case when gift is divorced from grace. He who is largely endowed with what is known as "gift," will assuredly work for his own ends, unless his grace be in proportion to his gift. It is to be feared that the cultivation of gift gets far more attention than the acquiring of that meek and quiet spirit which is in God's sight of great price. Where gift and grace are found in due proportion, the Lord alone shall be exalted,—the saints shall be duly cared for; and of them it shall truly be said, "Happy is that people that is in such a case!" (Ps. cxliv. 15).

But the life of Absalom abounds with lessons to "the obscure believer" as well as to rulers and teachers in the Church. To every saint of God the fate of Absalom says: "Seekest thou great things for thyself?—seek them not" (Jer. xlv. 5). In Absalom's history we see how plotting and scheming will never work the righteousness of God. Carnal weapons cannot avail to fight the battles of the Lord. We must not judge new movements in the Church by a seeming success or a transient victory. It is safer far to be on the side of truth, than merely on the side of victory. It takes faith to enable us to wait until God makes manifest what is of Him. But faith can wait, as David waited; and in due time his righteousness was brought forth as the light.

(Concluded).

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 "HIRELING service ever cares for self more than for the sheep. Mere contract work is always contracted work."

## UNHOLY ZEAL.

**B**EWARE of an unholy zeal in the things of the Lord. We refer to the zeal that professes to be entirely for the glory of God, while it owes its chief inspiration to the working of the flesh. There is a zeal that will hunt from Dan to Beer-sheba for evidence against a certain brother to whom it owes a grudge, while it refuses to move its little finger if the "case" is against brother So-and-so! There is a zeal—or, to speak more correctly, there are men, who are never on fire with zeal, unless it be in their own defence. If you deal with them about their inconsistencies,—if you question their position in the church,—you are a marked man. Their zeal then knows no bounds; but it is to *oppose you* and everything that would strengthen your hands. Yet the very vehemence of their zeal betrays the source from whence it came,—which was not from above. They were never known to get into a state of "righteous indignation" against the sins of the day, or to advocate, with impassioned eloquence, the beauties of holiness or the importance of a Christ-like life. Such momentous themes never inspired their zeal. But no sooner does "self" feel itself injured than zeal rises to its highest pitch. It may profess to be acting simply for the glory of God. But we cannot believe it. By its fruits it is known. The man who is acting only for God's glory will act *evenly*. His zeal will not be at furnace-heat in his own

cause, while it is at freezing-point in advocating the claims of vital godliness. He will also act *impartially*. The claims of flesh-and-blood will not blind him. The rich man's favour will not buy him up. The zeal that comes from above thus approves its heavenly origin by acting *evenly* and *impartially*,—showing itself free from the influence of clique and party, and every side-wind that may blow in the church.

## THE MASTER ON BOARD.

**T**HE disciples kept on "toiling in rowing" to reach the other shore (Mark vi. 48). But the sea was rough, and the wind was contrary. Everything seemed to be against them; and very little progress was made. But soon all this was changed. The Master drew near, and entered the boat. The words, "It is I; be not afraid" (Jno. vi. 20), spoke peace to every heart. Then mark what followed: "And immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." What remarkable progress was made whenever the Master was received on board! So it is with us in crossing life's stormy sea. How oft we "toil," and strive to overcome! Yet everything seems against us. Why is this? Because we seek to overcome rather by the energy of self, than through faith in the risen One. But let Him be enthroned as the supreme Ruler of the heart's affections, and how soon we reach the desired haven!

## EFFECT OF A GODLY EXAMPLE.

AND Joash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest" (2 Chron. xxiv. 2). We have here a remarkable testimony to the power of a godly life. Every man exercises an influence upon his fellows,—whether that influence be for good or for evil. You may think you have no "influence" as it is called. But you are exercising an influence every day. You cannot divest yourself of that "power" by which you are affecting, for better or for worse, the people with whom you come into contact from day to day. You have a *personality*—simply because you are a person; and having a personality, that personality has a certain effect upon others. As to *what kind* of effect we thus exercise, *that* depends upon our condition as saints of God. If we are rejoicing in Christ Jesus—mortifying the deeds of the body—and hating even the garment spotted by the flesh, our influence shall be for good. But if there be a careless walk—a tampering with sin—a setting of the face towards the Egypt world, our influence shall be *according to the tenor of our ways*. It cannot be otherwise. The life must *tell*; but in what direction is it telling? This is a far more serious consideration than many seem to think. "I am not a very prominent brother in the church," says one, "it is no matter about me." But it is just there, my dear brother, that you make a great mistake. Your "manner

of life" is leaving a certain impression all around you. The "spirit you are of" is giving a certain *tone* to the atmosphere through which you move. You cannot be neutral. It is out of your power to stand aside and say, "I'll be nobody." By word—by look—by action—you are helping to mould the lives of others, whether you wish to do so or not. How important, then, to see that our influence is for good—and only for good! How needful to have our loins girt about and our lights burning, so that we may be ever *alluring* to that which is pure and lovely and of good report!

The powerful influence of Jehoiada's life upon Joash the king, is no doubt placed on record for our learning. We learn from it that great things may be accomplished by a devoted life. In giving heed to divine counsel, there is such a thing as delivering others as well as ourselves (See 1 Tim. iv. 16). Yet there are believers who, if they had lived in the days of Joash, would have said he was "a follower of man." They would have set him down as simply under Jehoiada's influence. Be it so,—he was a follower (that is, an imitator) of a good man. And are we not told to be imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises? (Heb. vi. 12). Joash was under influence, certainly; but it was *godly* influence; and we truly wish there were more of it in the church. Jehoiada did a great work. He was a true witness; and he delivered souls. Would that his name were "legion" among the saints to-day!

## JEHOIADA.

**I**T may be interesting for us to trace up a few things concerning Jehoiada, whose example, as we have seen, had such a remarkable effect. We find, from 2 Chron. xxiii., that Jehoiada came clearly out for God during a time of great weakness. Vital godliness was at the lowest ebb; and he whose right it was to reign was not on the throne (ver. 3). Lawlessness prevailed; and there was no encouragement whatever to follow the paths of truth. But in spite of all this, Jehoiada proceeds to strengthen himself (ver. 1). In this he shows himself a man who drinks at the hidden streams of our God—one who had meat to eat that Israel knew not of, and who was therefore prepared to stand boldly on the side of God and truth, no matter how dimly the lamp of general testimony might be burning. Having been strengthened *from on high* he could rise clear above all hostile influences *from beneath*.

We find that Jehoiada was a man who had decided convictions as to what ought to be done. But he had more,—he had the courage to *make his convictions known*, and to seek to have them *carried out*. He at once sets himself to re-establishing the true order of worship in Jerusalem. This was a bold thing to do, considering the lawless state of things at that time. But the people that know their God shall be strong, and do exploits (Dan. xi. 32). An undecided man would have been of no use in such a crisis. A policy of

“accommodating all parties” would have failed to deliver the people of God, and to establish a reign of righteousness. But Jehoiada was cast in another mould. He had received his “opinions” *from above*; and so long as he cleaved to his God, these opinions remained unaltered. Many in the present day are ready to change their opinions with a facility that is simply astounding. But if they had got their opinions *from God*, they would not hold them so lightly, nor surrender them so easily. No doubt there are those who hold most tenaciously to opinions that never came from above. But mere fixity of mind is no proof that we have the mind of God. To be “stedfast” in a wrong path is only the stubbornness of fleshly determination, not the stedfastness of heavenly purpose.

We are told (2 Chron. xxiii. 16, 17) that “Jehoiada made a covenant between him, and between all the people, and between the king, that they should be the Lord’s people. Then all the people went to the house of Baal, and brake it down, and brake his alars and his images in pieces, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars.” We thus see that Jehoiada was the means of convening a great “dedication meeting” as it might be called. He was determined that business should be done for God. Therefore both king and people were confronted with the great question, “Are you going to be the Lord’s people?” In others words, were they going to be clear out for God? Jehoiada brought them to a point. A deliberate choice

must be made. The meeting was not called to exchange with each other the language of flattery, and compliment themselves on the tokens of returning prosperity. Definite business had to be done for God; and definite business *was* done. The people covenanted to be for Jehovah, and paid their vows to the God of Jacob. Nor were these empty vows. The dedication meeting was followed by remarkable results—results far more remarkable than those that usually accompany the general run of special conventions in the present day. The house of Baal was thrown down, and his altars and images broken in pieces. In this case we do not hear a great deal about the blessing received. But (which is of more importance) we *see the effects* of that blessing. The altars and images were broken down, and a clear line of separation was drawn. The fruits and evidences of revival were apparent. You may refuse to believe one's testimony that he has got "a blessing." But, when you see the groves and the altars coming down, you cannot resist such tangible proof that there has been an undoubted meeting with God. This is the "blessing" for which we pray—the revival for which we long,—a revival in which the groves and altars and images shall pass under a common sentence, and find a common burial-place.

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IF, in certain cases, the prayer "O for a closer walk," were answered, perhaps none would be more surprised than the one who presented the petition; while the change effected would often be nothing less than the revolutionising of a life.

## WISDOM WITH THE LOWLY.

**W**ITH the lowly is wisdom (Prov. xi. 2). If the heart is lifted up with pride, you need not expect a believer to act wisely. These are difficult times in which we live. If we have not heavenly wisdom to guide us, we shall make many and serious mistakes. But how are we to find that wisdom? It is found in the path of *self-humiliation*. They that are of the lowly spirit are never wanting in the heavenly wisdom. This is being largely lost sight of in this day of hurry and bustle. We pray for wisdom. We cry out, "O Lord, guide us, so that we may do the right thing at this time." But are we careful, first of all, to see that we are animated by the *right spirit*? In vain do we pray to God for wisdom, if we fail to humble ourselves under His mighty hand. Many seek the help of the Lord,—only however, that they may the more effectively carry out their own will! If the right thing is to be done, we must have the right spirit before we can *perceive* what the right thing is; and we must still have the right spirit in order to do the right thing *in the right way*. Then, is the lowly spirit everything? you ask. No, we reply. But if you are without the lowly spirit, you cannot claim that heavenly wisdom is with *you*.

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HE who waits on the multitude to move before he comes clear out for God, thereby declares that he is content to remain in his present condition.

## THROWING OFF THE DISEASE.



CERTAIN writer has said that "the church in the present day needs a more nourishing diet. She is suffering from thinness of blood, so to speak; and no sooner will she be invigorated than she shall free herself from the blotches and diseases by which she is now disfigured." We are simply quoting the words of another; and, whatever general application they may have in the present day, we hold that they have a most vital bearing on the condition of the individual believer. In the case of the human body, certain diseases defy every effort made to dislodge them. Ointments and medicines are found alike useless. At last a skilled physician is brought in, and sees at a glance what is needed. "Give the patient nourishing diet," he says, "and whenever the system is brought into its proper condition it will, of its own accord, throw off the disease." Now, apply this to the case of many professed believers. They indulge in things that are not convenient. You go to them; you warn them; you exhort them. But it is of no use. You take them to a Conference; you treat them with the medicine of chapter and verse; you apply the ointment of believers' addresses. But all your efforts seem to be unavailing. The believers in question will praise the addresses, and declare that they had never been at such a splendid Conference. Yet the disease continues,—the blotches remain. You are at your wits' end.

The case passes your comprehension. But at last you find a key to the mystery. These believers are simply away in heart from God. That is the root of the matter. They must be brought again into the Master's presence,—to drink anew at the ocean of His love, and feast upon the hidden manna of Communion. Then, when their "spiritual system," so to speak, is in its proper condition, the blotches and diseases shall be at once thrown off. Get the heart right with God, and how soon shall mighty results be seen,—results that years of medicine and ointment could not have effected.

We joyfully admit that Conferences and special meetings of the saints are undoubted "means of grace," and fruitful in stimulating the people of God to a closer walk and a brighter testimony. Yet it is only true seekers after God that carry away the spoil from such meetings. We have heard believers enthusiastic in their praises of some particular Conference—declaring themselves positively delighted with the proceedings. Yet, when they reached home, the idols were not destroyed;—the altars to forbidden things were not broken down! It is mere sentimentality to extol a Conference as "a blessed meeting," if we do not go home and hew down the idols that are known to exist. There must be "fruits meet for repentance." It will not do any good to extol a special gathering of saints as "a blessed meeting," if it result not in our separating ourselves from that which we know to be opposed to the will of God. If we find ourselves thus

assenting that the truth is good, while we refuse to follow its teaching, we are safe in coming to the conclusion that we have departed in soul from God. We may talk of blessed meetings and blessed truth; but our highest testimony to the truth is to obey it. "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke vi. 46).

### IS IT SIN?

**W**E must never allow sin in heart or life, by giving it another name, such as "a weakness," or "a peculiarity," or "an indulgence that is excusable, because there is no use fighting against it." Certain forms of fleshly indulgence are known to exist,—yea, and to strengthen their stakes, for the simple reason that the question had not been asked, "Is this dishonouring to Christ?—is it sin against God?"

Now, it is entirely misleading to take a certain form of fleshly indulgence and write over it: "This is not *sinto* me, because it is too strong for me to resist." Fleshly indulgence will never be successfully resisted unless we call it by its right name, and treat it as the abominable thing which God hates. Bring it into the light. Examine it in the presence of the Holy One, apart altogether from the consideration, "Can it be overcome?" I have simply to discover if it is *sin*. If, in the presence of God, I find that it *is* sin, then I may rest assured of this, that it can be

resisted; for it is no part of the counsels of infinite love that a child of God must remain under the dominion of sin. The fullest provision has been made that we may be more than conquerors through Him that loves us. Having discovered that a certain indulgence is *sin*, I must pass judgment accordingly; and, in the passing of that judgment, I virtually place a barrier between myself and that sin; for, if I am honestly seeking to please God, I must of necessity *recoil* from that which I acknowledge to be wrong. Having, then, passed sentence upon the sin in question, I may be perfectly assured of all the aids of heavenly power to deliver me "in the evil hour." I may discover that I have no might. But that must not discourage me; for it is written: To them that have no might the Lord increaseth strength (Isa. xl. 29). Salvation is of the Lord, whether it be salvation from wrath to come, or salvation from some subtle form of fleshly indulgence. The question is not, "What can I resist?" but, "What can the power of Christ enable me to resist?" It is not, "What can I do?" but, "What can Christ do in me and through me, if I am simply yielded up to Him?" Therefore, let the hidden works of darkness be dragged into the light, in which their heinousness shall be clearly seen. We believe there are many idols hidden away beneath a flourishing profession of Christianity, and it only needs that these idols be brought into the holy presence of God, and "Dagon" shall be heard falling on all sides.

## CHRIST IS ALL.

(Being Extracts from a Letter from a young brother in one of the Colonies. The Letter has so much to say about Christ, that we think we cannot do better than transfer a goodly portion of it to these columns.)

**T**HERE is often in the hearts of God's children a yearning towards each other, that worldly relationships never approach to,—a yearning implanted, I believe, by the Holy Spirit. O how I long for the day when we shall make the acquaintance of them all, amid the splendours of the Father's home! But words fail to describe the yearning to see, with my own eyes, Him who is the centre of that glorious company! You may talk to me of the raptures of the redeemed, and the soul-stirring song they will sing;—of the joys of the many mansions;—the harps and crowns of gold;—and of the rewards awaiting faithful service. But it is not these I am longing for,—it is *Himself!* Ah! "Himself." I am wanting to see that One who emptied Himself of all the glory He had with the Father, to come down to Calvary's depth of woe for *me*. O for the ravishing sight of that face marred more than any man's, on *my* account! Lord, *Thou knowest* how I can say with Paul: "To depart, and be with Thee, is far better." O how far better! And I am to be with Him for ever! It is wonderful—wonderful! With the Man of Sychar,—with the Man of the eighth of John,—with the Man of the gate of the city of Nain,—with the Man who hung upon the Cross,—with the Man who died!

I like these words, "A little while." Nearly 1900 years have gone by since they were spoken by the Master; but He was thinking of "the joy that was set before Him"—of an eternity with His Bride; and the hundreds of

years that lay between seemed indeed to Him a *very* "little while." When feeling a little sorrowful of heart at His long delay, I just look up and think of the eternal life; and O how short appears this little span of time! Then the Lord Himself cheers me up, and says: "A little more patience, my child, and then cometh sweet rest in Heaven."

I love to talk to you of Jesus; and when once started on this theme of themes I scarcely know where to stop.

You will be rejoiced to know that in this far-distant town there is a little company who gather on Lord's-day morning to show forth the Lord's death. We have a Bible-reading, and a Prayer Meeting, and every Lord's-day evening the Gospel is preached in the Hall. Through attending the meetings, souls have passed from death unto life, and we have had the great pleasure of witnessing the baptism of six. The Lord be praised for thus blessing His word. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few." There are many villages and settlements where the Gospel is rarely, or not at all, preached; and where the people will eagerly come and listen to one filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now there is something else I must tell you. A few months ago I was reading the early chapters of Acts, where Peter and John healed the lame man at the gate of the temple, and afterwards through their preaching 5000 men were saved, to say nothing of women and children! Then we are told that Peter and John "were unlearned and ignorant men"! Yet what *mighty* deeds were done through them! This led me to search for the cause, when I saw that "*they had been with Jesus.*" Ah! here lay the grand secret. And further, "They were *filled* with the Holy Spirit."

Well, it all came to my mind, that, through the Lord, there was the same power *now* to save 5000 souls, as then,—that He is “the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever”; and why should we not ask Him to save twenty souls in our midst? I mentioned the matter to two brethren in the meeting (young men like myself—the youngest in the gathering—each about 23 or 24), that we should come together every Monday evening to ask and wait upon God as to this. We needed not a college training, &c. ; but three things were essential: to have “been with Jesus”—“to sit at Jesus’ feet, and hear His word”—and to be “filled with the Holy Spirit.”

After waiting upon the Lord, we met at 7.30 p.m. in a brother’s tent, down a gully, away from houses and human sounds. There we met with the Lord, and spread before Him our petitions, and in faith asked to receive them. Ah! that night I shall never forget! What a royal feast we had in His presence! We have changed our meeting-place to a brother’s shanty. Now there are five of us (the youngest fellows in the meeting) and one night each week we have two hours in the presence of the King. Words cannot describe our joy. The Lord never does things by halves. We told Him so, and therefore asked that every one of the twenty to be saved, should also be gathered out to His name. . . .

Yours, &c.

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THE

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Vol. V.

## THE WAY—THE TRUTH—THE LIFE.

**W**E all know that these three titles were applied by our Lord to Himself (John xiv. 6), and that they are for the most part used as a Gospel text. But we propose to make a wider application of the words, and apply them to the present condition of things within our borders to-day. The passage before us divides itself naturally into three "heads," each of which we shall proceed to take up in its order—the exact order given in Scripture. This, of itself, is significant. Indeed, the passage in question yields itself so readily to our purpose that we are compelled to stand still and wonder at the fulness of Scripture, and its adaptation to the need of God's people in all time. First, then, as to

### CHRIST THE WAY.

Battles have been fought, and the foundation of kingdoms has been shaken, as to the *Way of Salvation*. What is known as "The Reformation" was simply the conflict of Gospel light with Popish darkness, over the great question: "What is God's way of salvation?" But, to come within the domain of experience, we all remember when our

great and only concern was how to find God's way of peace. And when, through faith in the Son of God, we passed out of death into life, what a hosanna of praise ascended to God for having revealed unto us His *way* of salvation! At that time we only knew Christ the Way,—and that was all that thousands knew. We were happy in the new-born joy of a Saviour's love; and, for a time at least, we fancied that we should never need to know anything more than Christ the Way. But we soon discovered that something more was needed. We were like ships without chart or compass, drifted hither and thither by every changing current. We found we were scattered and helpless units, instead of becoming a compact and beautiful whole, as a certain spiritual instinct taught us we should seek to be. But what were we to do? How were we to proceed? Opinion was divided. Some said, "Do whatever you think right." Others said, "Do what most people do;" while others again said, "It doesn't matter, seeing your soul is saved—that is the great thing." We were perplexed. But deliverance was at hand. We had found Christ *the Way*. We discovered that what we wanted now was

## CHRIST THE TRUTH.

We accordingly searched the pages of Truth, and found the most complete answer to our questionings as to what we were to do, now that we were in the Way of Peace. There we discovered wonderful things concerning the Name and Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. The truth of Separation unto God came upon us with the power of a new revelation. In obedience to the call of God in the Scriptures of truth, we went forth to the rejected Jesus, "outside the camp," bearing His reproach. We acknowledged the gathering power of His name,—refusing all names of division,—and seeking to carry out the order of God's house, according to that which is written in the Word, as opposed to that which is popular in the world. We at once passed into a new experience. As worshippers we found that we had liberty to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. There was opportunity for the exercise of the gifts of the body. The leading of the Spirit was recognised. Christ was acknowledged as Lord in the midst. We rejoiced, as those that find great spoil. We thought we had everything when we had found *the Way*. But something more was needed. We found it written, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jno. viii. 32). Many souls were thus set free, and made to rejoice in the *Truth* as well as in the *Way*; for we must ever remember that our God will have all to be saved, and to "come unto the *knowledge of the Truth*" (1 Tim. ii. 4).

The revival of *Truth* has marked a new era in the lives of many believers. And the revival of Truth, like the revival concerning the *Way*, is still going on. May it continue to spread on every hand, to the praise and glory of our God. Having found Christ the *Way*, and Christ the *Truth*, the tendency has been to settle down, as if we had everything needful for testimony and fruit-bearing here below. But something more is needed still; and that is

## CHRIST THE LIFE.

There are those who have discovered this, and are adorning the doctrine; others have discovered it and forgotten it; while it is to be feared there are many in whose case the great doctrine of *Christ the Life* seems never to have been carried home in power to the soul. The purity of the Gospel has been maintained. The Truth (especially what is known as Separation Truth) has been contended for in all its entirety. But, in these later years, Christ the Life has been, to a considerable extent, the missing link in the chain of testimony. The *Gospel* might satisfy us at the outset of our Christian experience; and, later on, when the *Truth* came upon us in all its emancipating power, we might be tempted to think that nothing was left to desire. But the truth must be held in Communion. Its doctrines must be *adorned* by a holy life. It is the great purpose of our God to conform us to the image of Christ, that "the *life also of Jesus* might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. iv. 11). The

great question before us now is this: Is *the life of the Son of God* being manifested in us who have found *the Way*, and profess to hold *the Truth*? That there is a measure of manifestation we rejoice to know. But we wish solemnly to point out that the *manifestation* of Christ the Life is lamentably out of proportion to testimony in the Gospel, and testimony for the Truth. We have no wish to lose anything of all that God has given us through the Revival of Truth with which He has visited us in these last days. But what we want now, and what many godly souls are longing for, is a revival in which the Truth concerning *Christ the Life* shall have its due prominence. If the life of the Son of God be not manifest in us who profess to bear witness to the Truth, our testimony shall move neither a sleeping church nor an unbelieving world. Yea, if *Christ the Life* be not the power of our testimony, the Truth shall fail to keep ourselves. Why the increasing worldly-conformity? Why the abounding ease in Zion? Why those mutterings of division that fall on the ear like distant thunder portending the coming storm? We believe the answer is found in this, that *Christ the Life* has not had a due place in the things most surely believed among us. A low tide of spiritual life begets such an insensibility to pain that an arm can be severed, and a rent made, without even a spasm of suffering! Could this be so if the tide of spiritual life were at its flood? Never. Then let the great Truth of *Christ the Life* have the place

that Scripture has assigned to it. That is no obscure place; for we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son, and are left down here for this great purpose, that we should show forth the virtues of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. Of the Master it is written, "The life was the light" (Jno. i. 4). And so must it be with us if we are to be faithful and true witnesses. *Christ the Life* must be the chief corner stone in our testimony. Then shall the truth burn and shine with a lustre unknown in lukewarm days. Many shall see it, and fear, and trust in the Lord. Where Christ is the Life, He is also the power, and the glory in the midst. It is blessed to know the Way, and blessed to yield obedience to the truth. But do not let us forget that there is a third strand to the rope,—Christ manifest in the life of the believer. Such is the three-fold cord which we bring before the saints at this time; and we know that "a three-fold cord is not quickly broken."

It is one thing to *submit* to God's will, and it is quite another thing to submit *cheerfully*. There is many a submission that is simply a bowing to the inevitable—a yielding to something from which there is no escape. On the other hand, the submission that honours God is a hearty *acquiescence* in the Father's will, as the very best arrangement for our present peace and our eternal good.

"HE gives twice who gives quickly."

## DELIVERANCE FROM THE POWER OF SIN.

**S**ALVATION is far more than deliverance from the penalty of sin, although a great many seem to think that to be "saved from the wrath to come" is almost everything that Christ came to do. But there never was a greater delusion; and perhaps that very delusion is the cause of much of the lukewarmness that prevails. With many professed believers their "chief end" seems to be, "How can I get to Heaven at the least possible cost? and with how little mortification of the deeds of the body can the journey be accomplished?" It is true, they have something to say concerning the things of the Kingdom. But they dwell almost entirely on one side of salvation truth—that side which speaks of deliverance from the lake of fire. They can sing, with the greatest enthusiasm, "Death and judgment are behind me; grace and glory are before." But they have nothing whatever to say as to *present experience* of Christ as the *Deliverer from the power of sin*. They can say, with the most perfect assurance, "The torment and the fire, mine eyes shall never see." We trust it may be the case. But we must have more evidence than mere profession. It will do little good to boast of deliverance from future judgment, if there be not a *present* deliverance from the torment of unholy desires and the fire of fleshly abominations. Then, do we not believe in testimony? it may be asked.

Certainly, we believe in testimony; but let it be testimony to which the life of the professor gives an emphatic *Amen*. The holy cause of Christ can never be served by unholy lips declaring, "There is no Hell for *me*." If a professor fails to manifest a Christ-like spirit, and yet boasts of his eternal security, he is simply laying a stumbling-block in the way of enquiring souls. On the other hand, if the virtues of Christ are manifest in a believer's life, then testimony is with power, simply because the testimony of the life and the testimony of the lip are in agreement. This will ever be the case where due heed is given to *both* aspects of salvation, that is (1) salvation from the *penalty* of sin, and (2) salvation from the *power* of sin. It is one thing to say, "I am saved from coming wrath;" and it is quite another thing to say, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul."

We must give no encouragement whatever to carnal professors who seize the doctrine of salvation from coming judgment, and roll it as a sweet morsel under their tongue, while they fulfil the desires of the flesh, as if they were delivered to do all these things! Christ *the present Deliverer*, must have His true place in our ministry. If we confine ourselves merely to Christ the Deliverer from coming wrath, we shall simply seal the eyes of those who are already asleep to the eternal realities. Under such ministry the tamperer with sin will heave a sigh of relief that he has been

left untouched; while he will likely be found declaring that it was a very comforting address! What is the remedy for all this? Well, so far as ministry is concerned, it requires that *both* sides of the truth be told out,—(1) our standing in Christ in the heavenly places, and (2) a Christ-like walk in the earthly places.

### OBJECTING TO CHANNELS.

**S**OME well-meaning persons object to receive the Lord's message "from man" as they term it. They must get everything direct from the Lord Himself. But in this they are at fault. We, too, object to receive the teaching of man (that is, what man says by his own authority). But we do not object to the message of God although it comes *through* man. The Lord has in all ages spoken to men through men—chosen vessels whom He has taken up as *chanstels* by which to deliver His message. And if to-day we are refreshed by the ministry of a man of God, we dare not object to be refreshed because the message reaches us through man. To take up such ground would simply manifest the unreal character of our professed spirituality. If it has pleased God to put the treasure into earthen vessels, why should we be found cavillers? It is certainly blessed to have direct communication with the Lord Himself. But if we reject all that comes through godly channels, we shall be found despising our own mercies. (See 1 Thess. iv. 8.)

### ALL LIFE AND ENERGY.

**I**T is wonderful what energy some professed believers can display in carrying out an earthly project; while, in heavenly business, their interest is of the most languid description. In the affairs of Heaven they take things so easy that you conclude they are naturally of a dull and unimpassioned cast of mind. But change the theme—strike some worldly key-note, and at once they are all life and energy! What does it mean? It means that these professed believers are so drinking in of the spirit of the world, that they have but little heart for the things of God, while they are ready to become enthusiastic whenever you introduce a subject congenial to the state of their heart. It is a case of "heart-disease" in a spiritual sense—a disease which, both spiritually and physically, is of a very deceptive character. It does not always manifest itself outwardly, and is often unsuspected, even by its victim! Get the heart right, and then there will be a readiness to respond to the Master's call, "Rejoice with Me." "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. iv. 23).

THERE cannot be solid and scriptural happiness, even for the believer, apart from scriptural obedience to the revealed will of God. Without such obedience, happiness may be talked about; but it cannot be enjoyed. Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

## A FALSE STANDARD.

**H**OW does it come that some men can talk fluently on the subject of personal holiness, and profess to be fully surrendered, while in their life there is scarcely any evidence of vital godliness? Such men are to be found. If a holiness movement is on foot, you are sure to see them in the front,—extolling the blessedness of the consecrated life, and urging every one to a complete surrender. If “the fulness of the blessing” is the great theme of conversation, they are sure to have “got it.” Yet their every-day life declares that they have *not* got anything special at all in the way of “blessing.” Although loudest in profession, they are weakest in moral power. In short, they are simply a dead weight to any movement that makes for vital godliness. The louder their profession, the deeper is the sigh of the man of God, who feels that such testimony will never commend the truth it professes to proclaim. As for the man of the world, who is looking on, he simply smiles as much as to say: “But I know better.”

But to our question: How is it that men are found professing the highest communion, while *the life* declares the profession to be unreal? We believe this to be the explanation. These professed believers make *their own conscience* the standard of holiness, instead of taking that standard from the Scriptures. And their standard of holiness is such a low one, that they

*walk-up-to* it with no difficulty whatever! They can talk of the blessedness of the holy life, and say, like Saul of old, “I have performed the commandment of the Lord” (1 Sam. xv. 13). The many may be deceived; but no true Samuel will be deceived. Happy for such professors if some man of God go up to them, like the prophet of old, and say, “What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears?” (1 Sam. xv. 14).

Certain philosophers speak of some men being high in “conscientiousness,” and others low in that quality; while they tell us of some who seem scarcely to be troubled with a conscience at all. Well, if one of this class,—scarcely troubled with a conscience at all,—is found making a profession of religion, you may fully expect a very high profession and a very inconsistent walk,—unless almighty grace has wrought a manifest revolution. The professor who is weak in the matter of conscience will very likely seem to be about the most enthusiastic man in the meeting. According to his own showing he has hewn Agag in pieces, and applied the sword mercilessly to the spoil of Amalek. He can talk with you on the momentous subject of personal sanctification, and seems to enjoy the conversation immensely. He is in nowise backward to give his testimony as to what the Lord has done for his soul, although the public at large may have quite a different opinion upon that point. Yesterday he was prominent in public service for God; and to-day the world is stumbling over

his inconsistencies! Some believers try to shut their eyes to these matters, and cultivate the charity that thinketh no evil and hopeth all things. But they find it is a hard task. Young converts are stumbled; discerning believers are grieved beyond measure. Some say they cannot understand it; but, strange to tell, the outside world seems to understand it only too well!

One who is almost devoid of a conscience cannot be anything else than a religious hypocrite, if he makes any profession of religion at all. Let this "principle of interpretation" be applied to profession in the present day, and it will explain much that is now mysterious. We only want a little larger endowment with the gift of "discerning of spirits," and we should certainly find that a weakly-pulsating conscience is the prolific cause of a vast amount of mere formalism among professed believers. With the needful "discerning power" we should perhaps cease to wonder at the facility with which some men can take part in meetings,—at their vehemence in preaching,—and their seeming unction in prayer. Such things have often been a mystery to Godly onlookers, who felt that something serious was wrong, while they could not exactly say what that "something" was. We think we have supplied the key to unlock the mystery. It is some time since we arrived at the conclusions set forth in this article; and we have thus ceased to wonder at many things that formerly perplexed us.

## ATTRACTING TO CHRIST.

T is one of the strange properties of magnetism that a piece of common iron "stroked down" with a piece of magnetised iron, will itself become a magnet (or loadstone, as it is popularly called), and at once begin to attract any pieces of iron that may be near. We have seen an ordinary steel pen thus magnetised, that within a single minute it would "attract" and lift up a pen as large as itself. All this finds its beautiful counterpart in the kingdom of grace. Christ is the great Attractive Power. Scripture tells us how He *draws* to Himself. Every new-born soul is but another testimony to the drawing power of the Son of God. But while He is the great Magnet, if we may so speak, there are many smaller magnets. Every believer, brought into living contact with the great Attractive Power, becomes at once a magnet himself. The believer thus endued with heavenly magnetism, is found attracting others to the great Source of life and joy. Even unconsciously he attracts to Christ, in virtue of that law of the kingdom by which *Christ lifted up* is ever drawing to Himself. Therefore, let it be our care so to abide in Christ that our whole manner of life shall be ever attracting others to Him.

—♦—

ONE real, living Christian, by his daily shining, gives more light than any amount of what is known as popular preaching. Such preaching may tickle the ear; but it is the living epistle that appeals to the heart.

### ONLY IN RARE CASES.

**I**T is only in rare cases that backsliders admit they have themselves alone to blame for being in a bad state of soul. In the great majority of cases there are excuses without number. Then comparisons are made. "I am no worse than So-and-so, at any rate; and quite as good as many whose backsliding is not so easily seen as mine is." In other cases the backslider, not content with standing on the defensive, takes up the sword to hew those he thinks chiefly to blame in the matter. "If I had been properly looked after," he says, "I would not have come to this pass;" or, "If believers had set me a better example, it might have been different with me to-day." Very likely there is a grain of truth in all this; and many a watcher for souls has learned something even from the rebuke of a backslider. But we question if you will ever hear such rebukes from one who is really humbled on account of his condition. Just as the truly awakened sinner looks upon himself as the biggest of all sinners, so does the truly repentant backslider view his transgression as heinous beyond degree.

If you join affinity with the world, you make a clear *descent* to Egypt. You cannot raise the worldling to the level of Christianity. That can only be done through death and resurrection with Christ. The world refuses to move. Those, therefore, who will have its unhallowed fellowship, must subscribe to the world's terms, and *go down* to the world's level.

### DELICACY OF TOUCH REQUIRED.

**W**HEN speaking of backsliding, it is only right to say that true repentance may have commenced, although it may not manifest itself to *every one* who chooses to look into the case. To deal with one in departure from God, requires a delicacy of spiritual touch which every one does not possess. A backslider, aroused by the Spirit to see his true condition, will not care to unbosom himself to all and sundry who may wish to satisfy themselves as to the state of his soul. His returning spiritual discernment enables him in measure to recognise that which is of God. To the enquiries of the mere busybody he may have little to say; and, examined by the cool matter-of-fact eye, he may manifest but little appearance of a returning wanderer. Yet he may present altogether a different look to the loving eye of a true shepherd of souls. Reserve thaws under a sympathetic voice. Symptoms of true repentance become soon apparent to those who understand their work and are in fellowship with the great Seeker of souls. We are prone to forget the Scripture which says, "To every man his work." It is not every ear that is attuned to catch the sigh of a broken heart!

CALMNESS under trying circumstances may arise from different causes. It may be due to indifference; or it may spring from confidence in God. *Faith* and *easymindedness* are two different things.

## NOT FOOLISH PREACHING.

“ pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. i. 21). In commenting on this passage, a dear brother, now gone to his rest, used to point out that it was “the foolishness of preaching,” and not “foolish preaching,” that God used. This is a little point to be remembered in these times when preachers are being multiplied, and when *anything* in the shape of testimony is supposed to be good enough for the service of God. We have heard brethren dwell with evident delight on the passage which speaks of God choosing the weak things and the foolish things (ver. 27). These brethren seemed to think that the more *unfitted* a man was for preaching, the more likely was the Lord to use him! But there could not be a grosser misapplication of Scripture. Our God gives no encouragement to ignorance; and, in the matter of service we ever find that He *fits* all whom He *sends*. It is true that He makes choice of the weak; but it is the weak in their own eyes. It is true that He takes up the foolish things. But that is altogether different from foolish preaching, and foolish preachers. Things which the world despises are the very things that God hath chosen to confound the world. Yea, the plan of Salvation itself, though reckoned foolishness by the world, is the wisdom of God. “The preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God”

(ver. 18). This is the burden of 1 Cor. i. It gives no countenance whatever to the thought that a would-be preacher, ill-fitted by divine grace, and ill-instructed in the Word of Truth, is in any way chosen of God as a witness for Christ. Such preachers may apply 1 Cor. i. to their own case. But they are simply running away with a passage to which they have not the vestige of a title. It does not apply to them. The man who was inspired of God to write the passage in question, was certainly neither weak nor foolish as an ambassador of Christ. Paul might be weak in his own eyes, and willing to be a fool for Christ. Yet he had all the equipment of a *chosen vessel*. When writing to Timothy, his own son in the faith, we find him giving no encouragement to the idea that “anything” will do for the Lord, no matter how weak and foolish it is. “Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee,” he says (2 Tim. i. 6). “Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1 Tim. iv. 13). “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. ii. 15). The thing preached may seem foolishness in the eyes of the world. But God hath chosen it; and it becomes His power unto salvation to every one that believeth. Foolish preaching is never commended. On the contrary, the preacher should be a workman that *needeth not to be ashamed*.

As the merry of heart hath a continual feast,  
so the murmurer hath a continual fast.

## POPULAR SUBJECTS.

**I**F we confine ourselves to "popular" subjects, we shall scarce have anything left to preach about, so far as Bible subjects are concerned. Take, for example, the doctrine of the "Universal Depravity of human nature," as clearly taught in Romans iii., and other Scriptures. Does the world believe that doctrine? No. The world is not going to say "Amen" to its own condemnation. The world may put its Bible below its arm, and go up to "public worship" one day in seven. But the world simply *does not believe* what God says in that Bible. It is plainly written by the pen of inspiration that "the carnal mind is enmity against God." Yet the unconverted professor of religion denies it with all his might, although the very Bible below his arm assures him that it is the case. "*My heart enmity against God! Never!*" he exclaims. And although his carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, he yet goes up to pay his vows of allegiance, and perchance to sing:

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

So much for the doctrine of the Universal Depravity as taught in the Scriptures. It is thoroughly *unpopular*. Let us now look at a doctrine that is immensely popular in the religious world. What is more popular than the "doctrine" of Infant-sprinkling? To the devout mind it must certainly be significant that the enemies of Christ are so delighted with the practice of sprink-

ling infants. If such a thing were found in the Scriptures we might well wonder why it is so popular. But it is not to be found in the Scriptures. We are therefore not surprised to see that it commends itself to the world. It is strange that many of the Lord's dear people never ask themselves the question: "How does it come that Infant-sprinkling is so popular with the unconverted, *if it is a doctrine of Scripture?*" No such difficulty presents itself to our mind, simply because we have learned that Infant-sprinkling is *not in the Book!*

While Infant-sprinkling is popular, we find that *Baptism* (that is, *Believers' immersion*) is *not* popular. Why is this? Simply because Believers' Baptism is in accordance with Scripture. We cannot expect the world to give its approval to that which is of God. Scriptural Baptism pours contempt upon Infant-sprinkling, and plainly declares that there is no door into the church through the baptismal font, and no privileges whatever conferred by the symbolic water. Hence scriptural Baptism is opposed, and Infant-sprinkling is approved, by the popular voice. In short, in the religious world, scriptural Baptism is just as unpopular as the doctrine of the Universal Depravity of human nature. The world has ever been opposed to that which is of God; and its character is in nowise changed to-day. To us the sad thing is, that undoubted children of God are found encouraging the world in two delusions—(1) in the delusion that the dead can praise God; and (2) in the

delusion that Infant-sprinkling came from above.

### THE DOUBLE HEART.

**T**HE twelfth Psalm seems to have a very direct bearing on the present day. We hear David crying, "Help, Lord ; for the godly man ceaseth ; for the faithful fail from among the children of men " (ver. 1). Then come a few marks of the apostate time, one of which is, " With a double heart do they speak " (ver. 2) ; or, as it is in the margin, " an heart and an heart." With the decline of vital godliness there ever comes a remarkable development of the double heart. In such times you will find men with a seeming heart for Christ when they are in the company of the godly. But, when they are in the company of the ungodly, they appear to have a heart for the things of the world as well. In some cases, alas, it is the songs of the Kingdom to-day, and the songs of the world to-morrow. These professors manifest a wonderful power of adaptation. They can suit themselves to any company, and seem to enjoy themselves equally in them all. But the close observer will perceive that their seeming joy in the things of God is only assumed for the occasion. They feel that they must keep up appearances. But when they turn round to the world, their smile is no counterfeited smile. They do not need to put on appearances *then*. They have a heart—a whole heart, for the

things of the world. The only mystery is, that they do not throw off the mask, and come boldly out as men of the world. It is entirely different with one who truly longs for the courts of holy fellowship. He is *at home* in godly company ; for his citizenship is experimentally in Heaven ; and for him the giddy, pleasure-loving world has no beauty that he should desire it.

### THE SUBJECTED WILL.

**I**T would not be for your child's welfare if he were left to follow the bent of his own will. It is for his good that his will must be subject to a higher will, namely, the will of an earthly father. In the same way, and for the same reason, it is our highest blessing to have our will subjected to a higher will,—even the will of God. " Not I, but Christ," is the great characteristic of Christianity. Self-will is simply self-worship, and nothing short of rebellion against God. When the will is surrendered, there is heaven-begotten rest, although the strife of tongues may be raging around. He whose will is surrendered up to God is ever finding his rest in God. Men speak of " the sweets of liberty." But they alone are free whose will is brought into subjection to the will of infinite wisdom and everlasting love. Our highest rest is to rest from our own will ; and our highest freedom is to be the willing bond-slaves of our Father, God.

## BY THE WILL OF GOD.

**W**HEN David had served his own generation by *the will of God*, he fell on sleep (Acts xiii. 36). He did not accomplish everything that he intended to accomplish. He did not see the temple built; and perhaps there were other things which he found had been reserved for others to do. But "in his own generation," as the Revised Version reads, "he served the counsel of God;" and, like a labouring man who had filled up his day in carrying out his master's will, David fell on sleep. Thus let it be with us. We may not see many signs and wonders following upon our testimony. But let us not be impatient. If we are conscious that we are doing *the will of God*, we can afford to be calm; for God shall be glorified if His will is done.

## I AM LONELY FOR THEE.

**I**'M lonely for Thee, Lord; my heart now is longing  
To rest in Thy love, and from self to be free,—  
To rise far above earthly pleasure and sorrow:  
In the midst of them both, I am lonely for Thee.

I'm lonely for Thee, Lord, when loved ones are slight—  
And for my love giving but coldness to me: [ing,  
With heart crushed and broken I turn away from them,  
And cry out in sorrow, "I'm lonely for Thee."

I'm lonely for Thee, when my cup runneth over—  
When not one dark cloud on my sky can I see;  
And loved ones all lavishing kindness upon me,—  
Ev'n then, blessèd Master, I'm lonely for Thee.

I'm lonely for Thee, Lord, and still will be lonely,  
Until safe at home with Thyself I shall be:  
Then raised far above earthly pleasure and sorrow,  
I'll rest in Thy love,—no more lonely for Thee.

E. J. I.

## THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE.

**T**HE world has a saying that "the voice of the people is the voice of God." But in this, as in many things, the world is declaring the very opposite of the truth. Never did the world give forth its voice more clearly than when it cried, "Away with Him!—crucify Him!" and never was it more completely out of unison with Heaven. The voice of the people crucified Christ. The voice of the people will enthrone the Antichrist. The voice of the people is against God, and will be against God, until He come whose right it is to reign.

## A REJECTED MESSIAH.

**H**E came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (Jno. i. 11). "A rejected Messiah" is thus stamped upon the first chapter of this Gospel; and the key-note, thus early struck, is maintained throughout. Rejection marked His whole path below, until it culminated in Calvary's Cross and Joseph's tomb. The Jesus we know, is a rejected Jesus. The world hated Him—cast Him out—crucified Him. They had no room for Him. They did not want Him. He is still getting the same reception at the hands of the world; and this is the Jesus with whom we are identified—a rejected, unpopular, sin-hating Jesus. Do we gladly follow Him in rejection—rejoicing if counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name?

## THE BEAUTY OF HIS CHARACTER.

**I**N the fine flour of the Meat-offering (Lev. ii. 1), we have the Lord Jesus specially brought before us in the *evenness* of His character. In Him no one trait stood out more prominently than another. Everything was in divine harmony, because everything was in divine perfection. Unevenness had no part in Him. He was "altogether lovely." No matter from what point of view you behold Him, you see the perfection of Heaven. Among His followers you will find one great in this virtue, and another great in that other virtue. But in Christ you search in vain for any such *special* mark. In the Son of God no one virtue stood out in bold relief from the rest, for all that was pure and lovely had its highest manifestation in the altogether lovely One. In *zeal* we behold Him pre-eminent; for did they not say of Him, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up"? (Jno. ii. 17). In *love* He is beyond compare. The floods of persecution could not drown it—the anguish of Calvary could not drive it back. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (Jno. xiii. 1). In *patience* we see Him enduring the contradiction of sinners without a murmur; and gently leading the outcast to Himself, when the impatience of His own disciples would have driven her away (Mark vii. 24-30). As the *Faithful Witness* to the truth we find Him declaring the message of God, although that message entailed His own

immediate rejection (Luke iv. 24-29). In *steadfastness* we see Him setting His face like a flint to go to Jerusalem. In *testimony against sin* we hear Him delivering the most withering denunciations against the hypocrisies of that evil day. As the *compassionate One* we behold Him mourning the fate of an unrepentant Jerusalem; and as the *sympathising Friend* we see Him standing weeping by that grave where Lazarus sleeps. As the *unwearied Worker* we find Him forgetting His hunger in the joy of revealing Himself to the outcast sinner of Sychar; while, as the *Man of Prayer*, we find Him spending a whole night alone with His Father!

## REMEMBERING WHAT WE ARE.

**I**F we remembered our *dignity* as children of God, we would seldom be found acting out of keeping with our true character. A king's son is, to a great extent, kept from unseemly companionships by the simple reflection that such conduct would be utterly out of the question *for him*. He remembers his dignity, and seeks to act in keeping with the same. So it is with the children of the heavenly family, so long as they *remember* their heavenly calling and their heavenly relationships. To remember what *we are* is the first great step in learning what *we ought to be*.

—♦♦—  
It is often easier to fight than to wait. But patience must have her perfect work.

## NOT A BAPTIST.

**A** RELIGIOUS paper recently announced the discovery that a certain foreign missionary is a *Baptist*. This is not the first time that prominent labourers have been claimed as Baptists—evidently for the reason that they are *baptised believers*. But to be a baptised believer is *one* thing, and to be a “Baptist” is quite *another* thing. The missionary at present in question—known to us personally—is *not* a Baptist. He rejoices to be known simply as a Christian, and refuses all sectarian names—“Baptist” included. It is true that he has been immersed since he believed. But the same can be said of thousands of believers who refuse to own the name “Baptist,” just in the same way as they refuse to own the name “Independent,” “Methodist,” “Presbyterian,” or any other denominational name. If a brother has been scripturally baptised, that gives you no warrant whatever to call him a *Baptist*; and if he refuses the name “Baptist,” it is simply reprehensible to fasten it upon him against his will.

In this connection we may as well give our reasons for refusing the name “Baptist.” We refuse it because the Lord has *never called us by such a name*. His *own name* has been called upon us,—not the name of His forerunner. It is neither a Moses, nor an Aaron, nor a Paul, nor a John-the-Baptist, after whom we have been called. We do not find it written, “If any man suffer as a *Baptist*, let him not be ashamed.” But we do

find it written, “If any man suffer as a *Christian*, let him not be ashamed” (1 Pet. iv. 16). And what follows? “But let him glorify God *in this Name*” (ver. 17, Revised Version). This makes the whole matter perfectly clear. We are Christians—Christ’s ones. We have been called by His own name, and not by the name of any of His servants.

Again, we have no right to take a single act of obedience, such as Baptism, and out of it *manufacture* a religious name, which after all is a name of division; for the term “Baptist” includes only *a section* of God’s people. This is not the case with divinely-given names, such as “Christians,” “Saints,” “Brethren,” &c. Any one of these takes in the whole family. Moreover, “Baptist” is a wrong word even to convey the meaning it is intended to convey. John the Baptist was so called, not because he was baptised, but because he *baptised others*. Looked at, therefore, from any point of view, the name Baptist is altogether wrong.

Some may say to us at this point, “But what’s in a name?” To this we reply, that if there is nothing in a name why dishonour God by taking it? But indeed there is something in a name. The name of Christ is as ointment poured forth, to all who esteem that Name to be above every name. And sectarian names are probably held as dear as they are held fast, by those who cling to them. We remember being told of a Baptist minister, who had got light from the Scriptures on the very subject before us.

He thereupon told the Baptist authorities that he could no longer take the name "Baptist," as he had learned from the Word that God had already given him another name—*Christian*. There was evidently much in a name; for he was told that it was as a Baptist minister, and only as such, that he was paid. He had therefore either to acknowledge the name or go! We need scarcely say that he elected to go.

In Jas. ii. 7 a reference is made to "that *worthy* name by which ye are called." In the Revised Version the reading is, "that *honourable* name." But, if translated literally, the rendering would be, "that *beautiful* name by which ye are called." The Lord never speaks thus of sectarian names. Strange that the name which God calls "that beautiful name" should not be sufficient for His people!

ONE who has "learned of Christ," who "walks with God," will not be an *artificial* man; not one playing a part or sustaining a character. He will be thoroughly *natural* in manners, words, looks, tones, and habits. He will be like that most natural of all creatures, a little child.

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Vol. V.

## TRUTH AS TO OUR POSITION, AND TRUTH AS TO OUR CONDITION.

**E**ACH of these lines of truth seems to have its special advocates; and we do not see that there can be any well-grounded objection to this. One ministering brother may feel a special call to the expounding of truth concerning the church; while another feels a special responsibility to declare the truth that shall bear upon our present spiritual condition. To each class of preachers we give our hearty "God-speed." We have no sympathy with those who seek to exalt "practical" truth by making light of church truth; and we have just as little sympathy with those who would exalt truth concerning the church at the expense of truth concerning the walk of the individual believer. Of these two lines of truth it may truly be said, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." The advocates of the one line of truth must see that they do not make light, or seem to make light, of the other line of truth. *Position* truth and *condition* truth are both included in the one short but significant sentence, "I have given them Thy Word" (Jno.

xvii. 14). To contend for one of these sides of truth by despising the other would be as mischievous as for a man to bind up his left arm, on the plea that he would then be better served by his right. We need all that God has given us. We cannot afford to despise our own mercies; and it will simply be to our own loss and confusion if we seek to divorce two departments of truth which it is the will of our God should dwell together in unity and be the most powerful helps-meets the one of the other.

There may be certain local circumstances in which a particular line of truth is specially demanded. Yea, there may be times, in the general history of the churches, in which God's people as a whole may need to be aroused to the claims of some forgotten or neglected truth. The *message* of God may *vary* according to the condition of a particular assembly, the need of a district, or the general tone of things among the saints at large. In this matter each ministering brother who believes he is "a man sent from God," must wait upon the Lord as to His message. If *we* feel at the present time a special burden concerning the great truth of Christ manifest in the life of the believer, *that* is no reason why

we should lightly value the service of brethren who are strong in church truth. They may be no less strong in practical conformity to the mind of Christ, while they believe that their special call at this time is truth *for the Assembly*. Therefore, let there be no despising of truth because it happens to be in a certain line. If it is not exactly in *our* line, there may be a *need* for it that we do not see. If it proceeds from one whose manner of life bespeaks him a man of God, let us take heed lest we be found rejecting the message of God.

On one occasion it was our lot to be at a meeting of saints who were seeking help of God in a time of great difficulty — a difficulty entirely connected with church truth. The gathered company had been a powerful testimony for God in that region. But it now seemed as if the testimony was about to disappear. Of the brethren who came in to help, one at least was strong in church truth. His help in the trying circumstances was simply invaluable. Foundation church truth was the very truth that was needed there; and we could not help saying to ourselves: "One of those well-meaning brethren who *don't concern themselves about church truth*, would be the most helpless person in the world here." We cannot say that the believers in that place owed their difficulties to a low spiritual condition generally. On the contrary, we believe that a robust spiritual condition enabled them at once to respond to the teachings of the Word. The helm, so to speak, simply needed to

be turned in the right direction. The entrance of the Word gave light; and the Lord wrought a great deliverance in that place.

Therefore, we would say, Let us seek to honour the Scriptures in their entirety. Grace and truth came together: let them abide together. Indeed, it is only as they abide together that they can be said to have an existence at all. They are so knit in one, that any attempt to sever them would be fatal to them both. Grace apart from truth would be lawlessness: truth apart from grace would be hypocrisy.

So far as we are concerned we may say that we hold ourselves free to proclaim "church truth" or "practical truth," according as *present need* may seem to require. Our *line of things* is the *whole truth of God*. At the present time there may be special need for special truth in certain cases. But, as we have indicated in the last two numbers of this Paper, we believe there is room for a mighty *Revival of Power* over the assemblies of God's people. We are not alone in this conviction. There are many who are longing for such a time. We undervalue the ministry of no one who, in singleness of eye, is contending for other lines of truth, while we send up the cry, "Wilt Thou not revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?"

*Church* truth, though sometimes contrasted with *practical* truth, is really intensely practical. It demands obedience; and this is one reason why it is opposed.

## WELL-BALANCED CHRISTIANS.

N our last number (page 45) we were speaking of Christ in the evenness of His character. In this, as in everything that is pure and lovely, He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps. There is in us naturally a strong tendency to be *one-sided*. We are prone to have our convictions formed rather by the current of circumstances than by the unchanging mould of divine truth. Unevenness of character abounds. Some believers can scarcely find words to express their horror of certain kinds of evil, while other evils, equally heinous, do not seem to rouse their indignation in the slightest degree. Some believers become enthusiastic over a particular line of truth, while utterly indifferent to some other line equally inspired,—but which *circumstances* render it inconvenient to follow. Some believers, if they take a fancy to a ministering brother, will stand up for him, no matter what questionable doctrines he may propound. Others, again, if they take a dislike to you, will keep up the grudge to the end of their natural lives, no matter how you may commend yourself as a man of God! Such believers seem to forget that one-sidedness is a distinct deformity of the Christian character. The human body may have certain features so unnaturally prominent as to amount to deformity. And so it is with the Christian character. It is important to manifest what is called “the Christian graces.” But these must

be developed *evenly*; and they *will* be developed evenly if we are truly learning of Him in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. The more even we are in our Christian character the more faithfully shall we represent Christ on earth. If, for example, our public service for God be in excess of our private communion with God, there will be unevenness—an unevenness that must sooner or later become manifest, however well it may be concealed for a time. Again, we may have great zeal in service; but if, in our daily walk, our *manner of life* does not commend the Saviour, there will be such unevenness that the spoken testimony will be in large measure rejected. We may contend for obedience to the words of Christ, and yet manifest so little of the spirit of Christ, that our words shall be nothing better than sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. Again, there may be a devoted walk, and an earnest seeking after God, with much that might adorn the Christian character. Yet, like dead flies in the apothecary's ointment, everything is perhaps spoiled by spiritual pride! All this shows us the importance of being *well-balanced* Christians. And to be well-balanced Christians, we have simply to learn of Christ. There were no “angularities” in Him—nothing out of divine proportion. In sitting at His feet our character as children of God shall have a true development in all its parts.

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THE Christian's joy is his strength. A joyless believer is a powerless believer.

## MUST BE OUTSIDE OF IT.

“GIVE me whereon to stand,” said one of the old philosophers, “and I will move the world.”

He was stating a scientific truth, showing that even the earth itself could be moved, provided he had some place, *outside* of the earth, whereon to rest his lever. In order to move the earth he knew that he must be outside of it. This “doctrine of science” corresponds to a great truth in the spiritual world. It is this: If we who are God’s people are to move the world, we must be *outside of it*. The believer who mixes up with the world can never be a power in moving that world for Christ. *In* the world we are; but *of it* we must not be, if we would have any effect upon that world, as witnesses for an absent Lord. If any of God’s people have influence with the world it is those who are separate from the world. Some believers, however, seem to go upon an entirely different process of reasoning. They join affinity with the world, and justify their conduct by saying that they will thus “extend the sphere of their influence.” But they could not take a surer way of quenching the light of their testimony. Experience has made this clear, times without number. See the many who, once upon a time, were bold witnesses for Christ; but have buried themselves in the world. Their harps are silent now, or (which is worse) they are tuned to other than heavenly themes. Their influence as witnesses has de-

parted; and the world has so brought *its* influence to bear on them that they are rapidly being conformed to the image of the worldling! It cannot be otherwise. You cannot expect to set the precepts of Scripture aside, and yet enjoy the blessings of Heaven. If the biographies of Scripture have any voice for us, they certainly tell us that worldly affinities bring no *heavenly* influence, whatever other influence they may create. Take, for example, the case of Lot. Will any one, with the record of Scripture before him, contend for a moment that Lot’s worldly alliance extended his sphere of influence, or brought a single particle of spiritual gain, either to himself or any of the dwellers in Sodom? When he buried himself in the world, he buried his testimony at the same time; and this, alas! is true of many to-day. He was not the means of delivering a single soul in Sodom; and as for himself we know how narrowly he escaped Sodom’s doom—a startling illustration of those who are “saved so as by fire.”

If you take the case of Jehoshaphat and his worldly alliance with Ahab, you find the same “signs” following. Ramoth-gilead was not taken. Jehoshaphat was powerless to turn the tide of battle. Indeed, had it not been for the divine intervention, he would have suffered death as well as defeat at the hand of the Syrians (2 Chron. xviii. 31, 32). His worldly alliance, instead of increasing his influence, simply bereft him of every vestige of influence. Has his history been written in vain? Has it no voice

for us upon whom the ends of the age are come? It *has* a voice. Its lesson is plain. You must stand out in clear separation from the world, if you would influence it for God. Take your stand clear outside of worldly associations, and apply the great lever of the Gospel of Christ, and the world shall be moved. Your eyes may not be permitted to see much of the "moving." But the Day that shall declare all things will make it plain what God hath wrought through those who have sought simply to please Him, and to walk in the light of His testimonies. It is only *true* witnesses that deliver souls.

### AFRAID TO APPEAL.

**I**F, in any question as to our ways or actions, we are afraid of an appeal to the Word, it is a sign that we fear the Word will be against us. He that doeth truth is never afraid to come to the light. But if we are not doing truth,—if there be a lurking suspicion in our mind that we are *not* treading the path of righteousness,—there is a corresponding suspicion that the Word would give its verdict against us. Hence we excuse ourselves from *testing* the question by an appeal to that which is written. Let this, however, be clearly understood, that if we shrink from the light of revealed truth, there could not be a surer "sign" that we need to *cleanse our way* by taking heed thereto *according to the Word* (Ps. cxix. 9).

### DOES NOT MEAN THIS.

**I**N speaking of a well-balanced Christian, we must not be supposed to mean one who shapes his conduct so as to please everybody. There are believers who seem to have no convictions, unless it be the convictions of the person they happen to be talking to. They have not the courage to differ with you. They believe in even making a sacrifice for the sake of peace,—it is more comfortable for themselves, and more agreeable to those they come in contact with. But do not think that a believer of that kind is a well-balanced Christian. He is simply an *un*-balanced Christian. He has no balance at all. Or, if he has any, he is quite prepared to change it to suit the company he is in. We must not forget that among the things that go to make up a well-balanced Christian, there are *faithfulness* and *steadfastness*. God's truth will not change its character although you bring it into the presence of kings. The first thing we have to seek, is to *please God*. You may make sacrifices for the sake of peace, in order to please *man*. But there are other sacrifices that must come first, as it is written, "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord." It is only when righteousness and peace kiss each other, that the peace is a righteous peace.

PILATE has a place in the record of Scripture; but it is that of a beacon, warning against the folly of trying to please man and yet be the friend of Christ.

## PROFESSION, AND MANIFESTATION.

**A** BROTHER recently made the remark concerning the condition of things among professed believers to-day: "Never was there a time when profession of Christianity counted for so little; and never was there a time when *the manifested life* counted for so much." We need not say that we entirely agree with that statement. Profession has become an easy thing now,—at least in many quarters. The world has become accustomed to the constant increase in the roll of professors. In our young days the world was startled when the report went round that James So-and-so was converted. But now-a-days the world is not moved to anything like the same extent by reports of that kind. It is clear that profession does not count for so much now as it once did. What is the cause of this? for cause there must be. Profession is counting for less and less, until now it is quite common to hear the remark made, "Anybody can profess now-a-days"! The cause we believe is to be found in this, that the standard of holiness among professed born-again people has come down to such an extent that the most undoubted worldlings can bring themselves up to the popular standard, and pass themselves off as children of the heavenly country! In former times it was considered a much more *serious* thing to make a profession, simply because a profession involved a clear separation from the world and the things of the world. A "great gulf" was fixed

between the children of light and the children of darkness; and no one but the most consummate hypocrite attempted to cross from darkness to light, save by the door of conversion unto God. But, in quarters where everything must be "popular," the dividing gulf has been made so narrow that the worldling can *leap it* with ease, and count himself "quite as good a Christian as what is going." The result is, that a great "mixed multitude" are professedly going up from Egypt to the heavenly Canaan, shouting with all their might, "Christ for me!" This must ever be the case where the great aim is to make converts, and where the standard of holiness is regulated to suit the public taste. But let the scene be changed—let the atmosphere surrounding the Lord's people be the true revival atmosphere of holiness to the Lord—and the worldling shall find that it is not a very easy thing to "profess." He views the Christian workers with a critical eye, and comes to the conclusion that the atmosphere would be too "trying." In other words, the atmosphere would be so withering to the flesh that the worldling would find it impossible to pass himself off *there* as a child of God. After making a mental inventory of the things he would have to "give up," he then turns away, abandoning all intention of making a profession, unless in some other company he fall in with a *Gospel without a Cross!* Let the standard of vital godliness be maintained, and you have some warrant to expect that awakened souls have been awakened

from above, and that professed converts have truly turned to God from idols.

But if profession, in many cases, counts for little, "the manifested life" (Christ manifest in the believer) is counting for more than ever it did, on the simple principle that light is always brighter in the midst of surrounding darkness. The greater the darkness, the greater is the need for light. The greater the abounding worldliness, the greater the need for those who shall manifest that they are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world. The manifested life never fails of its effect. Profession may become a byword; and preaching may, for certain reasons, be powerless to move the heart. But the manifested life makes its power felt at all times and in all circumstances,—raising its silent but impressive voice against all the hollow profession that abounds in this evil day.

### FALSE FREEDOM.

**I**N these days of boasted freedom we must see that, in the things of God, we do not seek freedom at the expense of truth. Even in the government of this world's kingdoms the highest freedom is ever found associated with strict *subjection to law*. The country in which every man can do as he pleases is a lawless country. And this holds good in heavenly relationships. The greatest and truest freedom will always be found where there is the greatest subjection to the revealed will of God.

### "MY HEART LONGETH."



WHEN shall we Thy beauty see—  
Behold Thee face to face—  
Gaze on that brow, all radiant now,  
Within the Holy Place?

*Once* crowned with thorn, on that dread morn,  
In Pilate's judgment hall;  
*Now* crowned above, 'midst light and love,—  
*Soon* to be Lord of all.

We seek not death, we hold our breath,—  
Cold grave, we own thee not;  
Our Lord doth come to take us home—  
We need no burial lot.

*He* cometh out! Hark, hark the shout—  
The shout of victory!  
We strain our ear—'tis coming near;  
His face we almost see!

O Lord, we long to sing that song,  
And Thou dost long to hear  
The song of those who, *once* Thy foes,  
Now love to please Thine ear.

Come quickly, Lord; fulfil Thy word--  
Thy bride doth look for Thee;  
Our souls they yearn, our hearts they burn,  
Until Thyself we see.

March 6th, 1890.

B. C.

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THERE can never be any justification for doing evil that good may come, although to our shortsightedness such a course might almost seem commendable. God, who sees the end from the beginning, has given positive warning against doing that which is wrong in order to attain that which is right. The Lord's "cause" can never suffer by righteousness,—that is, by *the right thing* being done. His work may *seem* to suffer. Yet in the end it shall be found that the work of righteousness has been peace.

## NOT WITHOUT A CAUSE.

**G**OD'S people Israel were not under the yoke of Midian without a cause (Jud. vi. 1). They had departed from the Lord. *Therefore* the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian. Thus it is with the believer who begins to follow Christ afar off. He thinks he can keep up his profession and yet indulge in certain things that are questionable. He does not see the need for walking by the strict line of Scripture. Thus, by degrees, *self* is indulged. Departure from God has set in; and the professed believer is committing certain evils—none of which, however, are of such a nature as to hinder him from keeping up the usual profession. If he could just go on in this way he would be wonderfully content. But lo! at this point he is led captive by evils entirely different from those he had been indulging. The new class of evils that have thus suddenly swooped down upon him are very likely evils which in his heart he abhors. But, willingly or unwillingly, he finds himself under their dominion. He may detest them, as Israel detested Midian of old. Yet he is in their power. They hold him fast. He cannot understand very well what has happened. But if he reads Judges vi. he will find the explanation. If we are harbouring sin, in whatever shape it may be, and yet seeking to keep up the usual profession, we may depend that God will hand us over to the Midianites in some form or other. We need not

expect the God of holiness to make a bargain with us that we shall indulge the flesh in certain things, and yet enjoy His delivering power in everything else! The throne of iniquity shall have no fellowship with God. We need not go to Him for a partial deliverance. It is utterly vain for us to pray, "O Lord, deliver us from all iniquity," while iniquity of a certain kind is being rolled as a sweet morsel under the tongue. By so acting we are virtually inviting the Midianites to come and take possession. And the Midianites—whatever class of evils they may typify—will be neither few nor feeble. They were like grasshoppers for multitude, and their camels could not be counted for number. If Israel up to that time did not understand that they had departed from God, they would understand it now. If they had not hitherto cried to God for deliverance, that cry would now be wrung from them by the cruel bondage of the children of the east. How often has this been the case with the believer. He is indulging in forbidden things to a "small extent," and yet persuades himself that by careful watching he can preserve his reputation as a Christian. All goes well for a time; when suddenly a Midianitish host of evil makes its appearance; and the believer is overwhelmed by the fierce rush of new and unexpected enemies. He had not counted on this. He is amazed. But he is simply reaping what he had been sowing; for it is a principle of the economy of grace that the God of salvation will be no *partial* Deliverer.

The lesson conveyed by all this is plain. One sin indulged will assuredly invite others to come in. If we cry not for deliverance from "small" evils, we shall soon be constrained to cry for deliverance from the Midianitish host.

### THE MANNER OF GOD'S DELIVERANCE.

**A**<sup>FTER</sup> suffering many things at the hands of the Midianites, the children of Israel cry out to the Lord for deliverance. We have seen how this cry was wrung from them; and now, in their extremity, they seek Him in whose sight they had committed many evils. Yet He is ready to hear, and waits to be gracious. He had longed to hear that cry; and now He comes on the wings of the wind to the help of His people. Such is our God,—a very present help in trouble. Even although, as in the case of Israel, the trouble is the fruit of our own sowing, yet the ear of the Lord is open to our cry. He may not come to our help in the way *we* would like; and He may cause us to eat of the fruit of our doings. Yet we may depend that His deliverance shall be in strictest harmony with infinite wisdom and perfect love.

When Israel cried to the Lord to be freed from Midianitish bondage, it is most instructive to observe *the manner* in which Jehovah answered their cry. He did not answer their cry by at once smiting Midian. *Another work* had first

to be done, without which the smiting of Midian would have had no meaning, as it would certainly have conferred no blessing. Israel must first be convinced of the *departure from God* which led up to the Midianitish bondage, and was *the cause* of all their troubles. The axe must be laid to the root of the tree. To this end the Lord sends a prophet (Jud. vi. 8) to His people, testifying what He had done for them in bygone days. Then follow the few yet significant words: "*But ye have not obeyed My voice*" (ver. 10). This prophet has no message of grace—no promise of deliverance. He seems to be sent for no other purpose than to *convince of sin*. Having delivered his testimony of judgment he retires; and we see him no more. What does all this teach us? It teaches us that there must be judgment before there can be deliverance. The saint who has departed from the Lord, must be convinced of the heinousness of the *first stages* of backsliding. He must be made to know the *causes* that led to the bondage under which he is groaning. In every case of *real* restoration it will be found that the Lord has probed the wound *to the bottom*. Why are there so many superficial restorations? It is because *conviction* has been mere surface work. There may have been real groaning under Midian; but there has been no mourning for that which *led up to Midian!* The prophet must come before the deliverer. If there is to be a restoring of the joy of salvation, then a John-the-Baptist of heaven-wrought con-

viction must prepare the way of the Lord in the heart of the backslider.

No sooner had the prophet of judgment delivered his message than the angel of deliverance comes upon the scene. "And there came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abi-ezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour" (ver. 11, 12). This angel has no word of judgment. There is no reference to Israel's failure in the past. His testimony bears only upon the great deliverance that is at hand. The prophet — representing conviction of sin — had done his work; and now the angel of grace comes in with a mighty arm to deliver. What a wonderful manifestation of God's character comes out in all this! He will not come in restoring grace until He has manifested Himself in convicting power. But no sooner does He make us to understand wherein we have forsaken Him, than He comes with the balm of consolation. His lovingkindness only waits until judgment has done its work. And then His grace *abounds*. Gideon wondered at the "gracious words" of the heavenly messenger. The news seemed too good to be true. Yet, by token after token, his faith is strengthened, until he goes forth in the blessed assurance that the Lord will perform all His promises of grace. And Gideon is not disappointed. Midian is overthrown.

Israel is delivered. Faith is rewarded. Jehovah's name is magnified. Thus we fain would dwell on the mighty victory wrought by the great Deliverer at that time. We are prone to linger by the angel of deliverance, and consider his message of grace. But let us not forget that if there had been no prophet of judgment there could have been no angel of deliverance. In the experience of the believer this is ever the manner of God's dealing. *Partial* restorations are painfully common. You find the sudden burst of repentance; and the vow is taken that "by God's grace it will be a new life for the time to come." But the new life does not make itself manifest. For a short time, it may be, there is a change. Then comes departure,—as deep as ever. How does this come about? It is because the *prophet of judgment* has not been allowed to do his work. The believer in question may have grieved for the *result* of his backsliding; but he has not mourned over the *cause* of his backsliding. He is seeking a "short-cut" into fellowship with God. He is making for the Mount of Communion, without going round by the Valley of Humiliation; and he finds, to his sorrow, that such a journey is simply an impossibility. Let the ploughshare of conviction do its work,—let us go to the *root* of our departure from the Lord, and lay the plumb-line of judgment *there*; and we shall find, as Israel found, the angel of deliverance waiting to work such a victory as shall make our hearts sing for joy.

## GETTING UP MONEY BY "SACRED CONCERTS."

**I**T does not lie in our line to take notice of the world's "sacred concerts." The world loves its own; and it knows how to put a little flavour of religion into its attractions, so as to come as nearly as possible to pleasing everybody. But when we see some whom we believe to be God's children carried away with the "Sacred Concert" idea, it may be well to call some little attention to this subject. If the thing is right, then it cannot fear the light. If it is wrong, then the sooner it is exposed the better.

We hold that it is dishonouring to God for His people to have anything to do with sacred concerts. But we will give our reasons.

A sacred concert is simply one of the world's modern inventions for getting up money for religious purposes—money which the world finds it impossible to get up by any other means. Some of God's people seem to think the idea is worthy of imitation. Hence the spectacle of worldlings and professed believers in Jesus mixed up together in this sacred-concert business. Among the "performers" you will generally find unconverted sinners—undoubted servants of the Devil, chosen for the "sacred" service because of their fine voice, and not for their decided Christian character, for they have none of *that*. Thus it comes that servants of the Devil are found singing the praises of the holy

God!—profane lips sounding forth sacred themes!—enemies of Christ declaring the praises of Christ!—as if the great Searcher of hearts could be deceived by such hypocrisy! And we are told that it is all professedly to help on the cause of God! How any child of Heaven can be for a moment deceived by such a performance we are entirely at a loss to understand!

But, supposing that the "performers" are God's children, the thing is in no wise bettered. It is not surprising that the world should entertain the world. But it *is* surprising, or should be surprising, that the children of light should call the children of darkness in to an entertainment; for an entertainment it undoubtedly is. This is not concealed. Indeed, the professed believers who get up the concert take care to publish the principal "attractions"—such as the size of the choir, the quality of the voices, the excellence of the instrumental music, and so on. You have thus the strange sight of professed followers of Christ standing up to "entertain" a lot of poor worldlings on their way to a lost eternity! The captive Israelites seemed to have a higher conception of what was due to Jehovah; for we find them positively refusing to entertain their captors by singing one of the songs of Zion (Ps. cxxxvii.). For God's people to give the world an entertainment is bad enough. But it is simply making matters worse when the holy things of God are prostituted to the unholy purpose of tickling the ears of the servants of the Devil.

But what is the avowed purpose of such concerts? It is to get up money for *God's work!* So we are told—so the handbills say. A certain sum *must* be got up immediately; and this is mentioned as an inducement to *patronise* the entertainment! In plain language, this is an appeal to the servants of the Devil to come and help on the “good work” of destroying their master's kingdom! It is virtually an appeal to the enemies of Christ to assist in establishing the Kingdom of Christ! The promoters of sacred concerts for “helping” the Lord's work, put the God of Heaven into the position of a suppliant—beseeching His enemies to help Him to carry on His own work; for the money is evidently so scarce that if His enemies do not come to His help, “the work” must suffer. We hold that it is a calumny on the character of God to put Him into such an attitude towards the world. Scripture gives no countenance to such a thought. Its testimony runs in an entirely opposite direction. “The sacrifice of the wicked,” He says, “is an abomination to the Lord” (Prov. xv. 8). “If I were hungry, I would not tell thee” (Ps. l. 12). Why should our God be represented as going a begging to the world that rejects His Son? Perish the thought. The silver and the gold are His; every beast of the forest is His, and the cattle upon a thousand hills (Ps. l. 10). Yet some are acting as if the Lord had run short of money to carry on His own work! Even if He had, we cannot conceive of

Him going to His enemies for help. Yet some of His professed friends are doing this to-day on His behalf. We trust that no child of God will be imposed upon by any “concert of sacred song.” The Lord has not sent us to *entertain* the world, but to *testify* to the world—to lead the world to Christ. He has not sent us to ask the world to *give*, but to *receive*. “Freely ye have received,” He says; “freely give.” He has not told us to beseech the world to “*help* the cause,” but to be “*reconciled* to God.” Our God is not seeking people's money. He wants their *heart*; and when He gets *that*, He has everything. The sacred concert for the Lord's work is nothing less than a blindfolding of the world to the purposes of God's grace; while it is utterly opposed to the mind of the Lord as revealed in His word. If, through what we have written, a single child of God shall be delivered from this snare of the Devil, we have not written in vain.

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“AND ye have not rather mourned” (1 Cor. v. 2). If we had more true mourning as to evils among the Lord's people, we believe we would speedily have much less to mourn about. But our eyes must be opened to see the evil, before we can seek the Lord as to its removal; and if our eyes are to be opened we must walk in the light. Let there be judgment of our own ways in the light of God's presence; and we shall be found mourning many an evil that now costs us but little thought.

## BY FAITH.

**A** PREACHER professing to carry on the Lord's work on the principle of *faith in God*, one day called on an aged saint. In the course of conversation, however, she drew from him the admission that he had *a plate* at the door of his Gospel meetings! The preacher was professedly walking by faith in God, while at the same time he was making an unmistakable appeal to the ungodly for money to carry on the Lord's work! But, whether one professes to walk by faith or not, we wish to point out that it is entirely unscriptural to appeal to the world for money to carry on the work of God. A collection at the door of a Gospel meeting puts the unsaved in an entirely false position. It treats them as if they were in a position to *give* to the Lord. This exactly turns the order of Scripture upside down; for the Gospel first of all puts the sinner in the place of a *receiver*. A man must *get* before he can *give*. God by His Spirit would convince sinners that their heart is enmity against Him; but the religious world by its plate at the door would convince sinners that they are *not so bad at all*; and that an offering will be accepted by Him whom they refuse to own! This is simply frustrating the work of the Spirit of God. Flattery is dear to the carnal heart; and to make the worldlings believe that they are on *giving terms* with God, is a flattery that is deluding and ruining souls.

This question about asking the ungodly

for money for the Lord's work is not the "small affair" that some would make it out to be. It is such a *great* affair, that if the money of the ungodly were withheld for six months, vast religious organisations would in three months be blotted out of existence! Take any flourishing worldly denomination, and deprive it of money given by the ungodly, and what have you left? A mere skeleton of its former self. In short, every worldly system of religion depends for its very existence on money subscribed by the enemies of Christ! But, not to go so far as purely worldly systems of religion, there are Christian associations carrying on Gospel work; and yet the first thing that greets you at the threshold of their meetings is the collection box, making its mute but earnest appeal to every one who enters there—whether he be friend of God or enemy of Christ, it seems to matter not! The work of the holy God is thus being carried on by money subscribed by His enemies! And many of His people seem to think that this is as it should be. They say that the money *must* be got; for the work *must* go on. But they completely shut their eyes to the fact that the money must be got in *God's way*. If in professed work for God we find we must appeal to the enemies of Christ for money to carry it on, then we may be quite clear on this point, that the work is not *God's work*. If we are truly engaged in *His* work, there is no need-be whatever for us to appeal to the enemies of the Cross for help. In striving "lawfully" in the

Lord's work we may not see the signs and wonders following that we would wish to see. But we shall at least have the satisfaction of knowing that we are not blinding the eyes of them that believe not, by flattering them that the God of salvation will accept their offerings while they are *rejecting His Son*.

### THE DOORS MUST BE CLOSED.

**B**UT if no money is to be asked from the ungodly," we are told, "then our denomination would have to close the door; for it is almost entirely composed of the world. The born-again people are a mere handful, compared with the mass of worldlings." Then, we say, let the door be closed. If the machinery would come to a standstill, let it come to that pass. Perhaps such a climax would be the very thing to show the godly remnant that the Lord was not there. If the machinery of a church is brought to a dead stand by its unconverted members buttoning up their pockets, then we do not see how such can be called a church of Christ. He is not *Lord* there. The ruling power is in the hands of His enemies; and if they withhold their money the doors must be closed. Then, be it so. If thereby the *converted* members see that God would not have them there, the doors will not have closed in vain.

WE are not called upon to question the wisdom of divine commands, but to obey them.

### NO MORE LIGHT.

**W**E need not expect fresh light to be given until the light we already possess has been followed. "One step at a time," is a law of the Kingdom. One step in God's path brings light sufficient for the next step; and so on. This is how we receive "grace for grace," or "grace upon grace," and go "from strength to strength." "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God" (Jno. vii. 17). The Lord will never submit completed "plans and specifications" of the walk of faith for our consideration. There can be no such unfolding of His purposes to any one,—and least of all to him who refuses to follow the heaven-bestowed light until he knows every difficulty into which it may lead him. If the Lord thus made everything plain beforehand, then the walk of faith would be no longer the walk of faith. It would have lost its character entirely. But, blessed be God, He deals not thus with His redeemed. He leads them on, one step at a time; and the man of faith never questions the wisdom of his God in so acting. If an Abraham is called to "go out," we at once read that he "went out, not knowing whither he went" (Heb. xi. 8). This is vastly different from much professed faith in the present day, that must see its way for a long distance ahead, and be sure of a tolerable degree of comfort and prosperity in the promised Canaan. But the man of faith cares not to bring his

God to terms. He hears the divine call. That is enough. The One who calls us to the path, is able to carry us through it, more than conquerors through Him that loves us.

## A GOOD TESTIMONY.

**S**OME men boast of their "good testimony," simply because they have never been drunk, or fallen into open sin. They can tell of the *bad* things they have *not* done; as if there were a special virtue in standing with their hands in their pockets and keeping sober! If this is to be the standard of "testimony," as it is called, then we make bold to say that you can get men of the world, who make no profession, and yet their moral character will rival, if not excel, that of the very professor who is boasting of his testimony! Christian testimony embraces far more than merely keeping clear of gross sin. Even a respectable worldling reaches that standard, and will often defy you to point to a "stain on his spotless character." Therefore the professed believer in Jesus must have far more than what is called the *negative* virtue of keeping clear of gross sin. It is certainly an important question: "What evil have you ceased to do?" But it is even a more important question: "What positive *good* are you *now doing*?" Christian testimony means a great deal more than merely throwing off the vices of the world. Its great work is to *manifest the virtues of*

*the Son of God*; and he who is manifesting these virtues will be *the last man in the world* to speak of his own "good testimony" as a Christian. Indeed, where you hear a professed believer bearing this witness to his own excellencies you have only to dig a very little way below the surface in order to find inconsistencies that might well have closed his own mouth. It is a bad sign of a believer's testimony when it is of such a nature that he requires constantly to call your attention to its existence!

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## WORSHIP, WALK, AND SERVICE.

T is recorded of the Seraphim in Isaiah vi. 2, that "each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly." In this Old-Testament Scripture we are convinced there are lessons of eternal value, both in the division of the subject and in the order in which the several *twains* are brought before us. In this passage we have the divine estimate of three things exercising the hearts of many in the present day — namely, *Worshipping* God, *Walking* with God, and *Working* for God.

Each seraphim has six wings. These are portioned off into pairs. Each pair is set apart for a special purpose. Let us look at each separate "twain" in its order; and let us remember that this order is divine. The God of infinite wisdom has arranged the "heads" of Isaiah vi. 2; and it is not for us to seek to re-arrange them according to human wisdom, but to bow our heads and learn what lessons the Lord would teach us in the six wings of the seraphim.

"*With twain he covered his face.*" We have here the attitude of *adoration*. The

covered face is the token of the worshipping heart. In the temple offerings of old we find that the Lord must have His portion before the need of man is considered (Lev. ii. 9, 10; vi. 15, 16). And so is it here. In the covered face of the seraphim we behold the symbol of adoring worship. If we are prone to forget, the Lord never forgets, the glory due unto His Name. Our God is seeking worshippers. Jno. iv. 23 emphatically declares this. No sooner are sinners turned from darkness unto light than the Father requires *His* portion—the bowed heart—the adoring spirit. In a word, the covered face of the seraphim tells us that our God must, first of all, have a *worshipping people*.

"*With twain he covered his feet.*" We have here the symbol of the *separated walk*, typified in another Scripture by the blood-sprinkled toe (Ex. xxix. 20). It would seem as if our God were saying unto His people, "It is not enough that I have the adoration of your hearts, and that you are offering unto Me the sacrifice of spiritual worship: you must tread the paths of holiness, and walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." The feet must be "shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace" (Eph.

vi. 15). The foot must be set apart for God. We worship inside the veil: we bear witness outside the camp. Therefore there must be *walking* in the Spirit as well as *worshipping* in the Spirit. The covered feet tells of the consistent walk—the walking in wisdom—the walking in love—the walking with God.

It will have been observed that up to this point there has not been a word about *flying*. But everything in its order. Due attention having first been given to *Worship*, and to *Walk*, we now come to *Service*, which is brought before us in the words, "*With twain he did fly.*" The word "fly" clearly points to the running of the Lord's messages, and corresponds to what is now called *engaging in the Lord's work*. But mark the order,—the adoring worship—the separated walk; and then you are ready to fly with the Lord's messages upon the wings of an all-constraining love. But how sadly has this beautiful and divine order been set aside in the religious world to-day! The Lord puts *Worship* first in the order of rotation; while man's wisdom comes in and puts it *last*,—yea, takes up the ground that worship is of so little importance that it may be dispensed with altogether. The religious world has *re-written* Isaiah vi. 2, and has given *Service* the foremost place. The Lord looks in vain for His portion. The need of man is made everything of: the glory due to the Lord's name is made little of. In vain He is heard saying to many of His people, "Let them make Me a Sanctuary, that I may dwell among

them" (Ex. xxv. 8). In vain does the sound go forth, "The Father seeketh worshippers"—those who will worship Him *in Spirit* and *in Truth* (Jno. iv. 23). "We must fly on the Lord's messages," is the cry allover Christendom. Yes, we reply; but what of the *covered face*? What of the *covered feet*? The Lord brings both of these before us ere we find the words, "*With twain he did fly.*" And who can fail to observe the beautiful "fitness of things" in the order laid down in the passage under our consideration? A people giving unto the Lord the joyful adoration of overflowing hearts, and manifesting to an unbelieving world the godly walk of separated ones,—such are they whom the Lord would have to *fly* with His messages of grace. All this is significant. It is more: it is instructive—it is pregnant with the very counsel of Heaven in a day of which it may truly be said: "Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil is accounted mad" (Isa. lix. 15, margin).

And not only is the covered face done away with, but in many cases the covered feet are disregarded. No sooner is a profession made than the professing one is made a Christian worker. He is urged to "fly" before he has even learned to walk! The young convert of yesterday becomes the preacher of to-day,—and the beacon-light of to-morrow!—giving warning to all, that the principles of eternal truth cannot be despised with impunity. No unshod foot can tread the path of holy service for God.

## BAAL MUST BE SPARED.

**W**HEN Gideon had thrown down the altar of Baal and the grove that was by it (see Jud. vi. 25-30) he was met by determined opposition. Next morning the men of the city were eagerly asking the question: "Who hath done this thing?" When it was discovered that Gideon had been the offender they passed sentence of death upon him forthwith. They had made up their minds that Baal's altar and grove must not be disturbed. They were groaning under the yoke of Midian, it is true, and would gladly be rid of *that*. But all the while, they would not allow the sword of judgment to fall upon Baal, —and woe betide the man who should lift that sword! They were determined to have altars to Baal, and yet they were expecting deliverance from Jehovah! Perhaps a more striking illustration could not be found of a people groaning to be delivered from bondage, and yet resolved to cling to the very thing that was the cause of their bondage! They would fain be delivered from the evil effects of their sin; and yet they had made up their minds to continue in their sin! Therefore Gideon is sentenced to death, in order that Baal may be honoured. They cried to God for deliverance; and yet in the first step He takes for their deliverance they must resist His actings! There is something solemn and instructive in all this, for history is repeating itself, and that which hath been is the thing that is now.

We learn here that God will deal with the *root* before he deals with the *fruit*. Israel's *idolatry* was the secret of Israel's *bondage*. His people might shut their eyes, and refuse to see any connection between the one and the other. But the first work of a gracious God was to open their eyes, and cause them to know that the idolatry of Baal and the liberty of God could not exist together. This great principle still holds good. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." There is in us a strong tendency to judge our failures rather in their *effect* than in their *cause*. If the worship of Baal had not been followed by a Midianite invasion, it is hard to tell how long Israel might have been estranged from God. If backsliding did not lead to bitter waters, many a child of God might be tempted to continue long away from Him. Sin in its consequences has taught many a lesson that sin in its causes could never have taught. And it is well that it is so. Happy for us if, even at the waters of Marah, we learn that it is "an evil thing and bitter" that we have forsaken the Lord our God (Jer. ii. 19). Happy for us if, when in the power of the enemy, we sit down to discover the causes that led to our bondage. The cause may have been, that some forbidden thing was tampered with—some doubtful thing indulged. It may have been our rejection of the Lord's counsel in order to walk in the light of our own fire; or, without any *special* departure, the cause of bondage may have been that low spiritual condition known as *heart-backsliding*. But, what-

ever the cause may be, let it be first of all hunted out and judged in the presence of the Lord. We shall *then* be in a condition to deal with Him as to the particular form of bondage from which we seek deliverance.

## WORSHIP FIRST.

**B**EFORE the Lord could go forth with His people against Midian, a revolution had to take place in the matter of *worship*. The worship of Baal had to be overthrown, and the worship of Jehovah had to be established. His people at that time were evidently of opinion that there was no need whatever to go into the question of worship. Why should the Lord not go forth with them against the Midianites, and leave their worship entirely undisturbed? The same question is being asked to-day; and many are trying now to do what was an impossibility in the days of Gideon. They are leaving the whole question of worship unjudged, and are yet going forth against the Midianitish host of evil. They act as if *worship* were of very little moment,—as if the Lord took very little account of *that*, and as if He were ready at all times to go forth against Midian—no matter how the question of *worship* might stand. But if we thus reason, then Gideon's history has been written in vain, so far as we are concerned. *Worship* was the first thing that God dealt with. The *false* had to be overthrown: the *true* had to be estab-

lished. Then, and not till then, was Gideon's trumpet heard, summoning Israel to the battle. This is instructive—at least to all who have eyes to see. *Service* for God has a very exalted position in the present day; and we have no wish whatever to detract from its dignity and importance. At the same time we wish to point out that *service* may be in a *false* position; and it is in such a position when it is *so* exalted that it makes light of worship. Children of God are to be found who hold that it does not matter *how* you worship or *where* you worship. They contend that *service* is the great thing. They cannot take too much pains with *it*. But *worship* is treated as if it were of very little moment! Such views, however, were never gathered from Scripture. They may be found “convenient,” and suited to the lawlessness of an apostate day. But let no one say, “Thus saith the Lord, ‘It matters little about worship: *service* is the great thing.’” The Lord never said so; and Holy Writ gives no warrant for such a conclusion. When *service* is exalted by depreciating *worship*, such exaltation is neither pleasing nor honouring to God. As to the question, “Is *service* more important than *worship*?” we believe this to be one of the “foolish and unlearned questions” which we are called to avoid. But although nothing is revealed as to whether *service* or *worship* be first *in importance*, Scripture clearly teaches that *worship* is first *in order*. Israel had to be a *worshipping* people before they could be a *servicing*

people. We have already seen this in the case of the Midianite oppression. But another illustration from Old-Testament Scripture may help us still further to an understanding of the mind of God in this matter. We refer to the seraphim of Isaiah vi. 2. As the subject is large and important we have treated it separately and at length in the first article of the present number.

### WHAT WILL IT COST?

**W**E often know not what we ask; and, in seeking for a closer walk, we forget that it may entail a heavier cross. The gold may require to pass through the fire. A painful humbling may be needed. Our longing for a deepened experience of the Master's presence may mean trial, buffeting, sorrow. The path that leads to the overcomer's crown is not a flower-decked way. We must be prepared to pass through the fires of self-mortification before the "Beulah land" of heavenly rest can be reached. This is where many fail—well-meaning children of God though they be. They are perfectly willing, perhaps eager, to have the joy of abiding communion. But they forget that the path thereto leads down through the valley of humiliation. They are not willing to *go down*. Yet there must be a coming down—a humbling before God—before there can be spiritual promotion. He that *descended* is the same also that *ascended* (Eph. iv. 10).

### COMMANDING SUBJECTION.

**I**T has been well remarked that the animal creation was in subjection to Adam as long as he continued in subjection to God. While Eden was unstained with sin we find no rebellion among "the beasts of the field." This fact is significant when applied to *rule in the Church*. Men in subjection to God are the only men who have any warrant to expect others to be subject to their authority. We know that there are lawless spirits who seem determined not to bow to the rule of God, let it come through whatever channel it may. But, with all due allowance for such cases, we believe that insubjection to rule is often due to the fact that the professed rulers themselves are not walking in the fear and meekness of subjection to God. The brother who is walking in true subjection to the Father of spirits possesses a holy boldness which in a certain measure *commands* subjection. We do not mean that *he* commands subjection in so many words. But his manifest subjection to God—his seeking to carry out the divine will with singleness of eye—his separated walk—his Christ-like spirit,—these all combine to call for subjection—not to *his* rule, correctly speaking, but to the rule of God *through him*.

YOU cannot very well say what is in a believer, until he is passing through the fire. Happy they who, when they are tried, "come forth as gold."

## THE DARK SIDE OF TRUTH.

**W**E must see that we do not dwell too much on "the dark side of truth," as it has been called. There is such a thing as describing the disease, and having but little to say as to the remedy. There is such a thing as dwelling with painful minuteness on the workings of the flesh and the wiles of the Devil, and yet having scarcely anything to say as to the beauties of Christ and His power to deliver. This is one-sided theology with a vengeance. Some preachers are constantly bemoaning evils which they seem powerless to alleviate. They are like a physician who comes in to treat a case, and devotes his whole time to a description of the disease; and closes by telling his patient that the case is simply desperate. We admit that the disease may require to be described, and the patient may need to be told of his danger. But if the physician *stops there*, he has failed to do his work. If the "good Samaritan" (see Luke x. 30-35) had simply described the wounded man's injuries, and told him of his perilous condition, he would never have earned the title by which he has ever afterwards been known. Whatever he had to say about the poor man's wounds, he carried with him the oil and the wine for these very wounds. He not only could tell what was needed, but he *brought forth* what was needed. He had the remedies in his possession; and into wounds made by the hand of another he could pour the healing oil and wine. Such it seems

to us is a fitting type of the true minister of Jesus Christ. There are many professedly ministering for Him, who are conspicuous for their painful lack of "oil and wine." They can describe the dangers of the way that goeth down "from Jerusalem to Jericho," and the serious condition of the wounded man; but at this point their testimony ceases. It is not so with him whom God hath sent. He brings forth the oil and wine of Heaven. Whether he speaks to saint or sinner, he points to Christ,—he leads to Christ. He not only tells you of a feast, but he shows you in to the feast,—points to the heavenly board, and says: "Your place is there." He not only tells you of your need for deliverance, but he takes you into the presence of the great Deliverer, saying, "This is the One who is mighty to save."

## STOP WITH THE "FINAL APPEAL."

**I**N giving an address, whether it be to saints or sinners, many preachers make the serious mistake of continuing to speak *after* they have made their "final appeal." Up to a certain point their address was arrestive. They grappled with the conscience,—they pointed to Christ as the great Deliverer. Then, gathering up all their energies for a powerful application of their subject, they sought to bring home the truth to every heart. And they did not fail in this. It was felt that a message from God had been delivered. But it was

also clear that the preacher had made his "final appeal." The meeting was perfectly consensual of this; and everybody was expecting the preacher to sit down. But lo! he continues to speak after everybody is persuaded he has finished! What is the result? It is simply a weariness of the flesh. He is evidently trying to deepen the "good impression" left by his address; but, instead of doing this, he is simply obliterating every trace of it. His "material" is exhausted; yet the "wheel" continues to go round. Thus he goes on, handing out whatever "common-places" he may manage to hunt-up in the corridors of memory. At last he draws to a close, amid many a sigh of relief that the end has come. Now, had that preacher sat down whenever he made his final appeal, his hearers would have "carried away" the final appeal, instead of forgetting all about it in their longing for the address to come to a close. "What a pity," you hear some brother of discernment saying,— "What a pity that he didn't sit down after he had made yon appeal." Up to that point everything had gone well; but after that point it was clear that the "chariot wheels were off"; and heavy driving was the inevitable consequence. It would be nothing short of a positive blessing if ministering brethren observed the very simple rule, to "stop when they are done"; for it cannot be denied that many go on speaking although it is manifest that they have nothing more to say.

## THE UNBROKEN CALM.

**I**N the heart of Jesus there reigned an unbroken calm. There was perfect freedom from sin: therefore there was perfect rest. That rest was never broken. The fierce assaults of Satan in the wilderness—the contradiction of sinners in the cities of Judah—the unceasing persecution by his brethren according to the flesh,—all could not break the eternal calm that reigned in that breast. The surface might be ruffled by the raging winds of opposition all around. But just as the ocean's depths are at rest though storms are sweeping its surface, so was it with the Man of Calvary. The fierce blasts of Gethsemane—the raging billows of Calvary—could not break the rest of the Spotless One. There was perfect freedom from sin: therefore there was perfect rest in God—a rest that remained unbroken, no matter how dark and trying the night of circumstances might be. Truly His was a rest that winds above and waves below could never move! In measure as we experience the purity of Christ, we shall enjoy His rest. Let us remember that *rest* and *sin* have never been joined together, and never can be joined together. There can be no resting in Christ if we are indulging in carnal desires. It is only the free in Christ that are at rest in Christ.

—♦—

"As long as we feel Christ's yoke *difficult*, and His burden *heavy*, we have not obeyed His '*Learn of Me.*'"

## TAKING GLORY TO OURSELVES.

**P**ERHAPS more signs and wonders would be found following our testimony if we were content to be nothing, and let God have the undivided glory. It is admitted on all hands that if the Lord is to use us we must be "clean," as it is written, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isa. lii. 11). But that word "clean" means much more than is generally supposed. Not only must we be clean as regards fleshly indulgence, but we must be clean concerning *spiritual pride*. We may be clean so far as fleshly defilement is concerned; and yet spiritual pride may render us altogether unfit to run the Lord's messages. Many a worker cannot bear success. When he sees his testimony bringing forth fruit unto God he becomes elated—talks of how he is being "used"—and seems to think that he is in special favour with Heaven. He soon, however, learns that the Lord will not give His glory to another, nor His praise to graven images (Isa. xlii. 8). No flesh—not even the flesh in an acknowledged minister of Christ—shall be allowed to glory in His presence. When a preacher is heard asking the question, "Was it through *me* you were converted?—Was I preaching when you were delivered?" he has yet to learn that he is dwelling among the fleshpots of self-conceit, and seeking to minister to an unholy pride by a traffic in the holy things of God. Let us therefore cleanse ourselves from all

filthiness of the flesh and spirit (2 Cor. vii. 1). Seeking thus to perfect holiness in the fear of God, we shall be found vessels meet for the Master's use, and furnished unto every good work.

## THE SECRET OF REST.

**T**RUE rest can only be enjoyed where there is freedom from the dominion of sin. God cannot rest where sin is. Neither can the believer find his rest where sin is. Wherever there is sin there is unrest. We read of the wicked that they are "like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest" (Isa. lvii. 20). But this is likewise true of the believer who is tampering with sin. Trace up unrest to its source, and you will find it to be sin. Any one can sing of the "blessed rest that Jesus gives." But it is only those who are being consciously delivered from the power of sin that *experience* the sweetness of that rest.

## IN A WRONG SPIRIT.

**W**E may well question if we are contending for the right thing, if we are striving for it in a wrong spirit. We know that "the work of righteousness shall be peace" (Isa. xxxii. 17); and if we are working righteousness there is no need for us to call in the aid of fleshly zeal in seeking to do the will of God. They can afford to be calm who are assured they are in God's leading.

## THE RELIGIOUS IMPOSTOR.

**T**HE religious impostor is about the most despicable character on earth. He deliberately adopts the guise of the man of God, and professes to be in closest communion with Heaven, in order that he may the more successfully carry out his nefarious schemes. Sometimes he turns up as a full-fledged Christian, using the term "brother" with the utmost familiarity, and making considerable efforts to show to everybody that he is enjoying a very large measure of the Lord's presence. Brethern of discernment generally observe something to arouse their suspicions. But "the simple" are deceived. They open their heart to the stranger's tale of misfortune. Then they open their purse; and then—they waken up some morning to find that they have been victimised. The new-found brother is off, no one knows where. He disappeared just about the same time that a warning letter was received, telling the Lord's people to be on their guard against the very man who has deceived them! They console themselves by the reflection that they erred on the *charitable* side. That may be so; but it would have been better if they had "erred" on the *scriptural* side, and acted on the injunction, "Lay hands suddenly on no man."

But there is another kind of impostor, —one far more difficult to deal with than the full-fledged religionist whom we have been describing. The impostor to

whom we now refer is one who takes his place as a worldling pure and simple. He makes no profession, except that he is a hell-deserving sinner. He comes to the Gospel meeting—for a purpose; but that purpose is not the salvation of his soul. No pangs of conviction have agonised his breast—no longings after holiness have thrilled his spirit. He passes through—that is, he *professes* to pass through—the usual experiences of an awakened sinner, and anon of a rejoicing convert. He acts the part well. His convictions are deep—his anxiety is great—his deliverance is clear and decisive. "Wonderful case!" you hear the saints saying—"As fine a convert as ever we saw,—and what a clear testimony he gives!" As the supposed convert has had all the "arrangements" in his own hand, he has very probably arranged who was to be the instrument of his conversion. It is often found desirable to "profess" under some prominent or influential brother, as it is to be expected that he will take a special interest in his own spiritual offspring. A profession having been made, the "convert" proceeds to carry out his purpose—whatever that may be. He may have been feeling his want of a reputation, and has concluded that a profession of conversion is the shortest road to the desired end. His object may have been to "form a connection" of a certain kind, in which it is necessary that he professes to be saved. Therefore the profession is duly made; and the "convert," only last week in the mire of

worldliness, is now recognised as a brother. He *appears* to be everything that is right. But no sooner has he attained the object for which he "professed" than he throws off the mask of conversion, and manifests that he is still the worldling he ever was. What need there is for heavenly discernment to distinguish that which is of God from that which is of the Devil! What need there is, while hoping all things, to calmly wait on God, and let space be given for the due testing of what professes to be the gold of heaven! What need for the Lord's workers to surround themselves with such an atmosphere of holiness that the flesh shall wither there, and iniquity be ashamed! We knew a man of God who so exposed the hypocrisy going on under his own eyes that the "enemy" had to flee,—much to the benefit of the Lord's work in that place. In other cases—it is to be feared, many cases—the wolf succeeded so well in representing himself as a sheep, that simple ones were deceived and have had a lifetime to mourn the day that they received the addresses of an undoubted child of the Devil! What we are stating may be new to some; but it will not be new to those who have any experience in watching for souls. Not a great time ago a brother, slightly known to us, was victimised to the extent of thousands of dollars by one who had professed, and who had evidently deceived all the saints in that place. More recently the religious world reports the case of a rascal who deliberately planned and carried out his

awakening and conversion. He was thereupon set up to preach. People flocked to hear one who had been such a notorious character. At first he deceived everybody in the town except one man. That man was an editor; and he boldly declared in his paper that the new evangelist had never been sent from above. People then raised the cry that the evangelist was being persecuted. Sympathy flowed in upon him, and so did offerings in the shape of bank cheques. In a few months the bubble burst, and the religious community in that place awoke to find that they had been lavishing their kindness upon one of the most consummate hypocrites under Heaven!

As nothing happens without a cause, we may be assured that certain causes are operating to bring about such wholesale and successful imposture. Some of these causes we shall proceed to consider in the succeeding article.

### WHY THEY SUCCEED.

**O**NE great reason why religious impostors succeed in doing so much harm is this: *The warnings and commands of Scripture are neglected.* It is always safe to keep by the Word; and the Word gives a very certain sound as to how we are to act with people we know nothing about, and with those who have lately professed to be converted. If we are not sure how to act, it is a sound and scriptural principle to wait on

God. We are under no obligation to accept every word a man says, simply because he professes to have passed from death unto life. There must be evidence of some kind, besides the mere profession of the lip. "Try the spirits, whether they are of God" (1 Jno. iv. 1). As it is a divine principle to give space for repentance, so it is a divine principle to give space for testing. Scripture plainly declares that one *newly come to the faith* must first be *proved* before he is allowed to *serve*. Many of the Lord's people have done away with this "probationary period" entirely. They have thus assumed to be wiser than Him who saw the end from the beginning. The young convert of a day old is at once set up to testify before the public, although Scripture expressly says "Not a novice (one newly come to the faith), lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the Devil" (1 Tim. iii. 6). What is the result? It is very generally this, that the young convert gets puffed up with pride, and soon proves what a perilous practice it is to put untried men into the place of public testimony. If heed were given to the simple scriptural injunction as to serving ones, "Let these also *first be proved*," the Lord's people would often have been saved a world of trouble and sorrow. "Know your man," is a distinct command of Scripture. If you don't know him, take time to *prove him*, so that you may know him. If "your man" is a professed labourer for God, and entirely unknown to you, doubtless you will be helped by

the testimony of brethren in whom you have confidence, and who *have* proved him and found him to be a faithful servant of Jesus Christ. But, in the absence of such testimony, be wary. Joshua had a lifetime to regret the day he received the Gibeonites without first taking counsel at the mouth of the Lord (Josh. ix.). We remember a stranger turning up at a certain assembly, representing himself as a labourer for God. No one had ever heard of him before. The brethren in that place failed to perceive in him the marks of a spiritually-minded man; and, while acknowledging him as a brother, they did not receive him as a minister of Christ. He passed on; and in a town not many miles distant, where he was received with open arms, he succeeded in dividing the Lord's people into two. The professed labourer (the cause of the whole trouble) refused to move, his hands being strengthened by a number of carnal-minded sympathisers. At length he was manifested, and the Lord's people delivered. In another case two professed labourers, accustomed to preach in the denominations, suddenly made application to have a series of meetings in connection with a gathered-out company of believers. The two preachers professed to have seen the evils of sectarianism, and said they wanted to follow the Lord fully. In this case the assembly in question refused to have anything to do with them as servants of the Lord,—acting on the simple principle, "Let them first be proved." They were received, however,

by another assembly, *without being proved*. Having obtained a footing, they began at once to secure sympathisers; and it was only by the most strenuous efforts on the part of the godly in the assembly that the two adventurers were prevented from taking the full control of the assembly's hall! They at last left the town, to the great relief of all true followers of the Lord in that region; and were soon found working in perfect harmony with a parish clergyman, although they had professed to be completely delivered from sectarianism!

But we have said enough to show that no time is ever lost by waiting on God. We can never be losers by taking counsel of the Lord in times of difficulty, and "proving all things" in the light of His revealed Word.

### REJECTING LIGHT.

**W**HEN a believer *rejects light* he incurs a solemn responsibility.

In the Kingdom of grace our God never gives light to be wasted; and, if His light be not followed, it is *withdrawn*. Then comes darkness, and the fulfilment of the Scripture which says: If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! (Matt. vi. 23). We are satisfied that in the life of many a child of God to-day there is much darkness and unrest, caused by his having *rejected light* at some point in his past experience. It is generally believed that in the life of

the unsaved there are points when a decision one way or other affects the whole life, and may involve the issues of eternity. But it is not so generally believed that, in the experience of the believer, rejected light may alter the course of his whole life, and seriously affect the issues of the coming judgment-seat. Rejecting light may not seem a very important matter in the eyes of some; yet we must ever remember that rejected light means the rejection of Him from whom the light proceeds.

### NONE TO LEAN UPON BUT GOD.

**T**HE votaries of worldly systems of religion can lean upon their traditions or their great men. But those who observe the Scriptural order of the Lord's house have nothing to lean upon, if they have not God. None so weak as they, if they are not conscious of the Lord's presence. Worldly systems of religion, when set in motion, can go on from week to week, and from year to year, although God is not there at all, and although there is not a child of God in the congregation. But it is vastly different with those who seek to own Christ as Lord in the midst of His people. They feel that if they had not *Him* they would be the most helpless company on earth. There are many worshippers in those days. Yet the Scripture is still unbroken that God must be worshipped "in *Spirit* and in *Truth*."

## MUST HAVE GOD.

**V**ERY few will deny that we are fallen upon the "difficult times" of the last days. Circumstances are arising in which it sometimes is hard to tell how to act. Faith is being tried in a way that it has not been tried heretofore. What, then, is our great need at this time? We believe the answer is found in one word—*God*. Some may say it is specially the *Word* we need. True;—yet not the whole truth on this point. All our need is met in "God, and the Word" (Acts xx. 32); and we know that the Word will always lead us to God. If there ever was a time when the Word, through present need, would lead us unto God, we believe that time is now.

*We must have God with us.* Moses was convinced of this. Therefore we hear him saying, "If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (Ex. xxxiii. 15). Moses might have much with him that pertained to God; yet he felt, if he had not the Lord Himself, he had nothing.

If the difficulty is too great for us, brethren, we must draw *nearer to God*. The difficulty (whatever it may be) may seem insurmountable just now. But would that be the case if we were experimentally in the holy place of inner communion with our Lord Jesus? May it not be the case that our difficulties are permitted of God for the purpose of showing us that we must have an experience of His presence and power

such as we are not enjoying at the present time? Heart-backsliding must be going on, else there could not be the outward manifestations of the flesh. What if the Lord, through our very troubles is calling a fast—a solemn assembly—a time of heart-searching and humiliation in His own presence? Perhaps we refused to hear His voice when, by a gentler instrumentality, He would have allured us into the desert of holy surrender; and now, by buffeting and trial, He is saying unto us, "*Seek ye ME, and ye shall live*" (Amos. v. 4). We believe that present difficulties would disappear, or be met with the grace and wisdom of a united people, if that people were only energised by power divine. If we allow the Lord to work—if we accord Him His true place in the heart, so that His glory may be revealed—we need not doubt that "the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain."

We want a deepened spiritual life—a drying up of fleshly power—a reign of Christ in the hearts of His people. Every faculty of the mind,—yea, the whole man must be set apart for God. Sentence of death must go forth against everything that is of the flesh;—or, rather, there must be the joyful *Amen* to the sentence which God has already pronounced; for is it not written that "our old man is crucified with Him"? (Rom. vi. 6). Our God is reminding us that all our springs are in Him. Let us see that we do not fail to understand the signs of the times. If we will not hear

the still small voice of our God calling us into the desert with Himself, He will speak so loud that we shall be compelled to hear.

### MAKING A STIR.

**I**T is no argument against Separation Truth that professedly separated believers do not make a great deal of stir in the town or village where they may happen to be located. If gathered-out believers are not making the stir they ought to make, that may be the fault of their *condition*, but it is no fault of their *position*. To be in a scriptural position gives no guarantee that the heart will be right with God. Moreover, there is more than one way of making a stir. If we secured trumpets and drums, as certain religious organisations do, we could soon alarm the whole place, and make a wonderful stir. But the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. If we are weak, we shall prefer to take the place of confessed weakness, rather than adorn ourselves with fleshly power.

### POOR IN GOSPEL GIFT.

**M**ANY assemblies are poor in what is called "Gospel Gift." But, if they are rich in faith, and walking godly in Christ Jesus, they need not be discouraged. The Lord does not expect from us what we have not to give Him. No doubt it is pleasant and refreshing to see sinners bending under

a powerful Gospel testimony. But, if we find this to be beyond the measure of our gift, we need not necessarily come to the conclusion, which some arrive at, namely—"There must be something serious wrong." There is many a feeble yet godly company of believers adorning the doctrines of Christ, although not possessed of brilliant Gospel gift. To such we would say, "Be not weary in well-doing." It takes more grace to continue stedfastly in God's path while it is the day of small things, than to drift with the current of enthusiasm in a time of awakening.

### INFLUENCE.

**W**E hear a great deal about the importance of having *influence* as Christian workers; and by many it is taken for granted that the man who can influence the greatest number is the man of greatest influence. That may be true. But the question remains—What kind of influence does he wield?—Has his influence come *from above*? In these days there are many influences at work besides the attractive power of an exalted Jesus. It takes the anointed eye to distinguish that which comes from God. Let each of us see that we are exercising the quiet but telling influence of a Christ-like life. And, after all, much must be left *for the Day* to declare. He who will count where this and that man were born, will also reckon up what our influence has been.

## HINTS ON FRIENDLY DISCUSSION.

**O**PENNESS of mind is not generally attained by forcing our own judgment. There is such a thing as "tarrying one for another" in seeking to carry out the injunction, "Be of one mind in the Lord." It is only Christian courtesy to give your opponent credit for purity of motive, unless you can put your finger on something to show that he is seeking other ends than the glory of God. Let your arguments be as forcible and your logic as conclusive as you please; but remember that God alone can see the hidden springs of action in the heart. He who righteously contends for eternal principles should be far above low personalities. Give an opponent due credit when he "scores a point" against you. Don't be afraid to say, "Yes, I admit you are right there, and I am wrong." Some brethren, when discussing a matter, seem to act upon the principle, "Question all your opponent's facts, and deny all his conclusions." They admit nothing. This may look smart; but it is neither honest nor gracious. While we are professedly seeking to arrive at the truth, we must be careful to see that we are not labouring to have our own counsel established. If we are contending for the truth, we need not be afraid to admit the force of an opponent's argument. The truth can never suffer by righteousness. It may suffer very materially through our seeking to uphold it by dishonest argument, which is unrighteousness.

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Vol. V.

## SATISFIED.

**M**ARY was in no vein for fault-finding while she sat at the Master's feet. She was *satisfied with Jesus*. Her heart had found its rest. She was so taken up with the altogether lovely One, that she seemed to see no one but Him. With Martha—the bustling and over-careful Martha—it was different. More occupied, for the time being, with her service than with the Master Himself, she is annoyed to observe that her sister is not bustling and over-careful too. She cannot see why one should bear the whole burden, while the other appeared to be simply wasting time. The case was clear,—at least to Martha's mind; and in her appeal to the Master she was evidently confident that He would “take her side.” But Martha meets with rebuke instead of approval. She was considering Mary's service—or lack of service; while she should have been absorbed in the presence of the Lord Himself. One thing was needful; and Martha had to learn that Christ was higher than service—even service for Him.

We are satisfied that the Master is not so much seeking *service* as He is seeking

*hearts*. And just as the greater includes the less, so when He gets the heart He has our service too. Such service, springing from the joy of a surrendered heart, is free from the fretting of the Martha spirit. The service that is born of communion, and nourished in the atmosphere of love, is a service of freedom and joy that has no heart to bring down the sword on my brother because he is not bearing his share of the burden. It pertains to the Martha spirit to watch Mary with a critical eye; while it pertains to the Mary spirit to be so satisfied with Christ as to have “neither time nor mind” to call her sister's service in question.

We are aware that the incident under consideration will not bear *any strain* that may be put upon it; and it is quite possible to use it in such a way as to make it prove too much. Nevertheless, we are convinced that in the story of the sisters of Bethany there is many a precious lesson for all who would serve the Lord Christ. If our service is to be happy and free from care, the heart must be occupied with Christ,—yea, *satisfied with Christ*. The spirit of bondage is unknown where Jesus reigns. When He fills the heart, service is a

delight. It has been said that "you cannot well overwork a well-oiled axle." So is it with the believer who has the joy of the Lord for his strength. Service sits lightly upon him. Commenting on Jno. iv. 6, it has been well said that the Master was "wearied *with* His journey, but never wearied *of* His journey." So is it with the joyful service of an all-constraining love. When this is so, we may be wearied *with* our work, but never *of* our work.

The heart must be satisfied with Christ before we can view our brother's service aright. Martha was not in this happy condition: therefore she *mis*judged her sister. And we, too, shall be as wide of the mark if we fail to sit where Mary sat, and, like her, behold and admire the beauty of the Lord. A discontented spirit is ill-fitted to estimate the value of another's service.

Mary did not seem to be doing much. To the superficial observer it was Martha who was doing the great work. Yet the Lord judged otherwise. Let us learn here that we have not yet reached the Judgment-seat. There may be much dazzling service here—service that causes our name to be sounded far and wide as great workers for God. But the verdict of our brethren may be entirely reversed in that coming day when the secrets of the heart shall be revealed. Was our service baptised in love?—Did it breathe the fragrance of the Master's spirit?—Did it spring from a heart *satisfied with Him*? These questions do not seem to be considered of vital

importance in the eyes of many to-day. But the time is not far distant when it will be found that from these very questions shall hang the issues of the Judgment-seat.

### DISCERNING OF SPIRITS.

**A**LTHOUGH the *discerning of spirits* is a gift by itself, we must not forget that spiritual discernment is possessed, more or less, by all who walk in the fear of the Lord. Mere knowledge of Scripture does not of itself confer spiritual discernment. The young convert of six weeks old may have more real spiritual discernment than the old believer who has got all the dispensations at his finger ends. Indeed, it is not uncommon to find a young believer who, in obedience to a certain spiritual instinct, is seeking to separate himself from some form of worldliness; when lo! an "experienced" believer counsels him not to be so particular! In other words, old Eli sends young Samuel to sleep again (See 1 Sam. iii. 5). We are satisfied that the young believer truly thirsting for the living God, has a spiritual discernment far in advance of many who can point to years of experience. A brother may have been travelling to Heaven for the last fifteen years, and yet have had very little Christian experience in all that time; for we must remember that *the experience of a Christian* is not always *Christian experience*. In some cases a "long experience" as a Christian,

instead of clearing the vision, has had the effect of turning light into darkness. Certain forms of worldliness are now tolerated that were once resisted; while certain things are now defended that were once upon a time hewn in pieces. Therefore we arrive at this conclusion, that age and experience are only value for *what they are worth*, and nothing more. If a believer has been truly taught of God,—if he has been acquiring an experience in that holy Presence “where the light of earthly glory dies,”—he shall be a heaven-sent guide to the saints, besides a light unto them that sit in darkness and in the region and shadow of death. But if such is not the kind of experience he has acquired, it shall be worth nothing—or considerably less than nothing—to any who may be seeking heavenly guiding in an evil day.

### NOT BY SENIORITY.

**L**ET us get rid of the thought that *age* must of necessity bring wisdom and spiritual discernment. The law of primogeniture (the eldest succeeding to the inheritance) may be in force among men. But in the kingdom of grace there is no such hard-and-fast line. On the contrary, the Lord, in bygone ages, has manifestly poured contempt upon the pride of man in this very particular. Jacob is not the first-born; yet he is chosen. Joseph, although almost the youngest of Jacob's sons, is selected for the place of power; and in

due time “the sun, and the moon, and the eleven stars,” make their obeisance to him (Gen. xxxvii. 9). Gideon is the least in his father's house, and his family is poor in Manasseh (Jud. vi. 15). Yet he is the divinely-chosen deliverer of the people of God in their dire extremity. David is the youngest in a family of many sons, and is considered so unlikely a person for the future king that it is not thought worth while to call him in from the field. Yet David was the chosen of God to rule His people Israel! Let us learn from this that the call of God and the anointing oil are not regulated by what is termed “seniority.” “The wind bloweth where it listeth” (Jno. iii. 8). The Lord doeth according to *His* will. It is for us to mark the operation of His hand, and to bow our heads in worship as we behold His goings forth. Samuel should have liked very well to see Jesse's eldest son anointed king of Israel. Indeed, the prophet had come to the conclusion that the Lord's anointed stood before him in the person of Eliab. But the Lord had determined otherwise; and His aged servant had to be reminded that the Lord seeth not as man seeth. From all this let us learn that carnal wisdom and fleshly power can avail nothing in the kingdom of grace.

The Lord is still sending forth His chosen. Their works testify to their call. Happy they who recognise the Great Shepherd's voice; for we know that he whom God hath sent shall speak the words of God; and he that is of God shall hear (Jno. iii. 34; viii. 47).

## LACK OF SPIRITUAL VITALITY.

**W**E are apt to wonder why some believers are so slow to obey the truth they profess to know. They admit that they have a certain degree of light. They acknowledge that a certain thing is right,—yet they fail to do it. How is this? Whatever may be the reasons, the *great* reason is simply a lack of true-heartedness for God. It requires a certain amount of spiritual vitality in order to *act*. Any one—even the unconverted professor—can remain in the position he has occupied for years. No spiritual vitality whatever is needed in order to float with the stream of the religious world, as many dear children of God, alas! are doing. They are in undoubted fellowship with the enemies of Christ. The voice of the Lord is heard saying, “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from among the dead.” But the Lord’s people—even some who possess a degree of separation light—refuse to move! But would they refuse to move if in their hearts it were a noontide of spiritual power? Nay, verily. We cannot conceive of a believer enjoying heavenly communion, and yet doing a thing which he knows to be opposed to the mind of God. If Christ be Lord in the heart, *you will act*. You will refuse to bow down to the thing which you know is opposed to the mind of God. If Christ be Lord in the heart, you will at once proceed to *put your theories into practice*. You will no longer present the spectacle of professing to believe one

thing while you deliberately do another thing. The man who enjoys the presence of God is one who not only will act, but *must* act. The inward fire must find a vent. He cannot contain himself. The fire will burn its way out as it did with Jeremiah of old (Jer. xx. 9).

## THE SUGGESTION OF EVIL.

**N**O tamper with sin is to yield to the Tempter. Let the *suggestion* of evil be nipped in the bud, and there will be no danger of it springing forth into the flower. When a believer has an open fall, you are almost safe to conclude that tampering with sin has been going on,—perhaps for a long period. He who has ever tasted of communion with God does not come down from his eminence in a day. The descent is gradual. Outsiders may observe no process of descending. Satisfied with an outward compliance with the forms of religion, they may look upon you as one who bears a steady and consistent testimony to the truth. But, if in heart you have been departing from God, it will reach the culminating point,—it will come to the light. Every sin possesses the property of multiplying itself. One sin indulged will “lengthen its cords and strengthen its stakes,” until its name be “legion,” and its power seemingly irresistible. Therefore, let there be no tampering with unholy desires. “Can a man take fire into his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?”

## WHAT SPIRIT IS MANIFESTED ?

**I**N speaking of the call of God to service among His people, it may be instructive to glance at the character of some who, in a bygone age, were undoubtedly the anointed of the Lord. We are satisfied that the spirit manifested by the Lord's anointed ones *then* will be the same spirit as that manifested by His anointed *now*; while there will be other features of resemblance that shall enable us to recognise those whom the Lord, in this day, is calling to the work of feeding the flock and bearing rule among His people.

In David we see an undoubted type, not only of the Great Shepherd of Israel, but of all whom He has called to the work of caring for His people. David, anointed in the midst of his brethren, is conscious that the throne of Israel is his, and his alone. Yet he never *presumes* on this knowledge. He never attempts to *force* his way to the throne. By no act of his, will he hasten the day when he shall sit in the place of power. The Lord's anointed can 'bide his time. He is in no hurry. The call of Heaven is ever accompanied by the patience of Heaven. David knew that the throne was his by *right*. Yet he never thinks of attempting to seize it by *might*. Moreover, the throne is already occupied. Saul is reigning—the man of the people's choice, given by God in His anger, to be in due time taken away in His wrath. What is David to do? Will he sow the seeds of discontent in Israel?—and then,

by a sudden blow, seek to overthrow the house of Saul? No. The Lord's anointed never acts in this fashion. It belongs to men of the Absalom spirit so to act. Strangers to the anointing oil of God—strangers to the true shepherd spirit—they care not although the prosperity of Israel be jeopardised, provided they see themselves or their theories triumphant. The Lord's anointed is not found thus acting. He loves the flock of God too well to make them the ladder by which he shall ascend to the pinnacle of kingly power. Is Saul reigning? "Let him reign," says David. Nor does he take the place of a martyr, as many do who believe they are not getting their proper place in the Church. David, although in the secret of the divine purpose, yet acquiesced in the arrangements of the divine will. Saul turns persecutor. But it makes no difference to David. The Lord's anointed repays not blow with blow. He is hunted as a partridge on the mountains. More than once his enemy is in his power. How easy to crush him, and be avenged! Yet revenge is not in David's thoughts. He leaves Saul wounded—but not with the sword. The "gracious words" of the fugitive king have touched the persecutor's heart. Such was the *spirit* manifested by the Lord's anointed in a bygone day; and we have no hint whatever from Scripture that another and a different spirit shall characterise the Lord's anointed now. If, under the reign of law, the large heart and the gracious spirit shone out with such lustre

in the divinely-chosen ruler of Israel, none the less shall these features be seen shining in all who are truly called of God to the ruling of His people under the reign of grace. Let all professed deliverers of Israel examine themselves as to what spirit they are of. Let no one be deceived in this matter. He who manifestly possesses the call of God shall as manifestly possess the spirit of Christ. The "anointing oil" is never given to strengthen the hands of fleshly power, or to lend the approval of Heaven to a spirit that never came down from above.

### DELIVERS ISRAEL.

N glancing at the history of David in rejection, we have seen that the manifestation of a beautiful spirit is an undoubted mark of the Lord's anointed. But there is another mark which will likewise help us to recognise those whom God has sent. The Lord's anointed *delivers Israel*. Saul, a type of the flesh, or of fleshly rule, fails to deliver. Goliath defies the armies of Israel, and Saul is powerless to resist. But he whom God hath chosen comes upon the scene; and Goliath is slain. There is victory for God; Israel is delivered. Even in rejection, the Lord's anointed delivers Israel. Goliath is slain to-day; the Philistines are overcome to-morrow (1 Sam. xviii. 27); and anon the captives of Ziklag are recovered—not one amissing (1 Sam. xxx. 18). Thus David makes it

manifest that he is one whom God hath sent. His anointing may be questioned; but none can question this, that he *delivers Israel*. It is admitted that while Saul had slain his thousands, David had slain his ten thousands (1 Sam. xviii. 7). That which was true of the Lord's anointed *then*, is true *now*. He delivers souls. He may not be "recognised,"—he may even be rejected. Yet he delivers souls. In a sense he cannot do otherwise. God has blessed him; and that blessing must make itself felt. A true lover of the commonwealth of the people of God, he persistently seeks their "weal," no matter how he himself may be cast aside. This mark will ever be found in those whom God has called to the shepherding of His people in the present day. His anointed ones now, as then, will be found *delivering souls*. Their call may be questioned. But their works cannot be denied. Through their ministry the saints of God are helped, and built up, and get their portion of meat in due season. Eliab may murmur; Saul may persecute; Shimei may revile. Yet the Lord's anointed, rising clear above the atmosphere of self-seeking and party-spirit, sees only the flock of God, needing help and deliverance. To deliver *them*—to feed *them*—to spend and be spent for *them*,—such is his aim. While others are seeking their own, or wasting their energies in fruitless strife, the Lord's anointed goes stedfastly on with his heaven-appointed work,—shepherding the flock of God—meeting their need—delivering souls.

## SINLESS PERFECTION.

**T**HE theory of "Sinless Perfection" is coming to the front again. We say *theory*, because we are satisfied there is no such thing in actual *practice*. But do not mistake us here. We have no sympathy with that great host of lukewarm Christianity which rouses itself to resist every movement that makes for *personal holiness*. Many believers are longing for a deepened experience of the Lord's power to deliver. Dissatisfied with their own attainments in the divine life, and dissatisfied with what often goes by the name of "Christian experience," they have determined to go direct to the "Head of the house" about this thing. They accordingly wait upon God, and search His word. They take the place of need—weakness—emptiness. They then make a discovery. They discover that in Christ is given unto them all things that pertain unto life and godliness (2 Pet. i. 3). They find that His strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor. xii. 9); while it has pleased the Father that in Christ should all fulness dwell (Col. i. 19). Their *need* is met by the *riches* of Christ; their *weakness* by the *strength* of Christ; and their *emptiness* by the *fulness* of Christ. These dear saints of God find that they have passed into a new experience—an experience to which, it may be, they have hitherto been strangers. They have found *in their experience* that Christ *delivers from the power of sin*. They had found this *in books* before;

they had heard the "doctrine" proclaimed from platforms. But now they have learned it experimentally for themselves. They have tasted and seen (Ps. xxxiv. 8). They have yielded themselves up to the great Deliverer; and they are proving that He is able to *keep* (Jude 24). This brings the calm of heavenly rest; for there can be no rest under the dominion of sin. The believer thus realising the delivering power of Christ—thus drawing out of the fulness of Christ—may very likely feel inclined to say, like the Psalmist of old, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul" (Ps. lxxvi. 16). It is just at this point that the opposition comes in. The believer thus testifying to Jesus' power to save, is very often resisted on the ground that he is propounding the doctrine of Sinless Perfection. But is he really teaching that doctrine? If he is simply testifying to his present deliverance from the power of sin, then there is no need to rush to the conclusion that he is a "sinless-perfectionist." He has undoubtedly got the *right thing*, although he may express himself about it in the *wrong way*. Yea, in the very exuberance of his delight in knowing Christ as the One *mighty to save*, he may be tempted to think that he has entered a region of such "everlasting calm" that "the old man" will never assert his power again. But in such cases we must deal gently, patiently, wisely. The brother, in the main, is a true seeker after God, and drinking the joys of the overcoming life. He may

need to be set right on a few points; and if we have the grace and wisdom to set him right, we shall be true ministers of Jesus Christ. But, if we proceed to condemn his whole experience, and bring him down to the "general level," we shall be simply attempting to *undo* much that God hath wrought! If the train only needs to be kept on the rails, it will do no good to bring it to a standstill, or bury it in a railway siding. Among the saints there is altogether too little "hungering and thirsting after God" — too little of a burning desire to know Christ in the character of the *Great Deliverer*. Let us praise God for whatever desire of this kind may be manifest. Let us fan the heavenly flame. Let us strengthen the heaven-born longings after a holier and a happier life, while we seek, if need be, to keep these longings within their heaven-appointed channels.

### THE OLD MAN DEAD.

**D**ON'T think that I am annoyed," said brother ———; "the old man's dead." The brother I was speaking to was one of an excellent spirit. He had espoused perfection theories, and we were having a chat about scriptural obedience. Perhaps he felt I was pressing him somewhat too closely; and he betrayed, as I thought, a little impatience. But he hastened to assure me that there was no impatience on his part, as "the old man was dead." He meant me to understand that he could

not speak in the flesh now, seeing the old nature was out of existence! I had my own convictions on that point. But I said very little about them. It was only at rare intervals I fell in with my perfection brother; and I felt no special call to enter into an exhaustive discussion at the time. I was satisfied, however, that he would find out for himself that the old nature was not so completely out of existence as he imagined. He was a man of a beautiful character; and, as he adorned his own doctrines as far as it was possible to do so, I always enjoyed a little chat with him on the Lord's work in the "inner life." I did not cast him off as a heretic. I was convinced that he was very little out of the way, so far as his inner experience was concerned; and I looked on his perfection idea simply as a blemish that would disappear as he advanced in experience in the school of Christ. It turned out just as I had expected. Not that the dear brother had any fall into what is called "open sin." He simply found, on searching himself in "the sanctuary" (Ps. lxxiii. 17), that he was not already perfect (Phil. iii. 12). In his own daily walk the little impatience here, and the little want of consideration there, showed him that he had *not* attained to the perfect image of the *Perfect One*. While enjoying the Lord's presence in no lessened degree he candidly admitted that increasing light was serving to reveal his own shortcomings. The un-Christ-like word and thought clearly showed him that the old nature was not utterly extinct.

## SOME EVILS OF THE PERFECTION THEORY.

**S**OME one has said that there is no fault so great as to claim to be without fault. Whether the profession of sinless perfection be so serious a fault or not, we are clear on this point, that the sinless-perfection theory never fails to do considerable damage to the cause of vital godliness. Those who profess to have reached that pinnacle are hindering their own spiritual progress, for the simple reason that they fancy they have no further progress to make. They put themselves into an entirely false position towards the God of truth. They have fixed a standard of holiness *in their own consciousness*; but that is a very different thing from the perfect standard of the Word, and the perfect example of the perfect One. They claim that they are perfectly free from the workings of the flesh. Indeed, one dear brother, personally known to us, wrote not long ago that for many years he had two natures; but now he has only one! *If* that be the case, then the *old* man cannot possibly assert his power again. We had long been accustomed to think that such a happy condition was reserved for the time when this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption; and we are still decidedly of the same opinion. But our dear brother has *anticipated* the resurrection; and, according to his own profession, he has already got rid of everything pertaining to the old Adam.

The old nature being extirpated root and branch, and having no existence, can therefore make no manifestation of itself; for effect cannot be produced without a cause. Now, in spite of all this profession of having got entirely rid of the old nature, we are persuaded that our brother will find there is such a thing as the flesh asserting its claims. Some hasty word will be uttered—some un-Christ-like thought will be discovered—some little piece of selfishness will be caught in the act. And what then? What will our perfectionist brother do in these circumstances? If he is an honest man, he will make an *honest confession* that he has been professing to stand on a pinnacle he had never reached. He will candidly admit that the doctrine of sinlessness does not square with his experience; and that he had been wrong in asserting that in him the flesh had no existence. This is what an honest man will do; and honest men have done the same thing in the same circumstances. But when a perfectionist discovers the uncharitable thought and the unkind word escaping him, there is the temptation to *conceal* the humiliating discovery,—to explain away these manifestations of the flesh, or persuade himself that they are in some mysterious way the workings of the new man! It is so mortifying to admit that we have been wrong, that the flesh (even in one who says it is annihilated) rebels against confession.

When the flesh thus gains a victory, the perfection brother gets entangled

deeper and deeper in the web of his own self-righteousness. He clings tenaciously to his profession that the old man has no existence. Conscience cries out at each successive failure, "Is that like Jesus?—Is that the spirit of the meek and lowly One?" But the voice of conscience must be quenched, for the profession of sinless perfection *must* be kept up! There are only two ways of it. The brother must either keep up his claim to sinless perfection and stifle the protests of conscience; or he must make an honest confession that he has not "already attained." If the "honest confession" be made, it is well. There is then room left for progress. But, if the profession of perfection *must* be maintained at all hazards, you have the lamentable spectacle of a believer persuading himself with all his might that the root of evil has been extracted, while conscience and experience are crying aloud against the delusion. Wherever the profession of perfection is made and must be kept up, a hardening process is sure to set in. To reject light is to invite darkness; and of the darkness that follows rejected light it may truly be said, "How great is that darkness!" This explains why professed perfectionists are often found doing things and manifesting a spirit at complete variance with the mind of Christ. Indeed, it has been remarked that believers professing sinless perfection are, generally speaking, those whose *imperfections* are visible to all who have eyes to see; while believers you would take to be perfect are the

very persons who declare that they have no sympathy with the doctrine!

Another evil effect of perfectionism is this: Where the theory is taught, it tends to discourage those who are truly seeking to walk in the light. It seeks to establish an *ideal* experience; and enquiring souls, finding the experience is hopelessly beyond their reach, are tempted to sit down in despair and give up the fight. The theory of sinless perfection may aim well; but it overshoots the mark. In its recoil from the regions of worldly-conformity and fleshly indulgence, it has gone to an opposite extreme which is in advance even of Scripture itself,—an extreme which must have a withering influence on all who espouse its teaching.

## FEAR AND LOVE.

UR *fear* of the Lord is the exact measure of our *love* to Him. We do not mean the fear of the slave, who trembles lest he offend, and thus come under the lash of his master. Neither do we mean that fear which dreads sin only in its consequences. We mean the fear born of love, which shrinks from inflicting pain upon the object of its affection. Where there is love for the person of Christ, there will be a holy shrinking from everything that might wound the heart of Christ. You cannot willingly, wantonly, grieve one you truly love. Therefore, love to the absent Lord is one of the most powerful influences in keeping us from sinning against Him.

## THE SPIRIT OF DIVISION.

**T**HE spirit of division seems to be abroad in this lukewarm day; and it becomes the godly in Israel to be on their watchtower. We can praise the Lord for the good tidings of breaches healed up during past months. His grace has abounded,—in some cases, at least; and godly effort for His glory has not failed of its purpose. But the experience gained in such blessed peace-making has simply shown what a bitter and lamentable thing is division among the saints of God.

We admit, as we are bound to admit, that division is not always an evil. We are to mark them that cause divisions and offences "*contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them*" (Rom. xvi. 17). If a believer is associated with a worldly system of religion, and leaves that system to gather with Christ, he cannot be treated as a causer of division contrary to the doctrine of Scripture. He is simply obeying the call of God, in coming out of that which is not of Him (See 2 Cor. vi. 17, &c.).

What we are referring to is a company of God-gathered believers, who have heard and responded to the heavenly call, and who have been united in the fellowship of a church of God in Christ Jesus. Even in such companies, when the spirit of love runs low, the spirit of division is sure to run high. An aged saint once said, "Humility is the secret of unity, just as pride is the secret of division." Where the "graces of the

Spirit," as they have been called, are in full bloom, you will seek in vain for the spirit of division. The spirit of love and the spirit of division cannot dwell in the same house. Therefore, when you find the spirit of division arising among a God-gathered company of believers, you may safely infer that the spirit of love has a very feeble existence there. The reasons given for the threatened separation may seem to be powerful and convincing. Alleged unscriptural doctrines taught, or evils tolerated, are pointed to as sufficient warrant for making an open rent. It is held that God's honour demands a separation. Feeling runs high. Bitter words are spoken, very likely on both sides; and, as is generally the case, in the midst of a storm of mutual recrimination, you are told that the proverbial "last straw" has been laid on the camel's back,—the furthest point of endurance has been reached; and the next thing you hear is, that certain brethren have "purged themselves" out, and "spread a table," to follow righteousness, &c., "with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

This may sound very faithful and very scriptural. But we believe the time has come when the gathered people of God must pause, and be fully persuaded, before they lend their countenance to the spirit of division that seems now to be on the increase. We admit that the outgoing company may have had cause to groan over undoubted evils. But what we want to know is this: Was every means used, and *exhausted*, in

order to purge out the evils in question? Was due space given for repentance? Were the evils dealt with in *the spirit of Christ*, as well as with the chapter-and-verse of Scripture? Or, was it simply a case of flesh contending with flesh? the effect of which could only be to still further rouse the evil spirit you wished to cast out. After having exhausted your own resources, did you call in the help of godly brethren from neighbouring churches, who, being free from the bias of party-spirit, might be able to help you with godly counsel? Lastly, Is it with the prayers and fellowship of such brethren that the final step has been taken?

We believe that these are proper and wholesome questions to ask in all cases of threatened division. Outgoing brethren may be sincere in thinking that they are acting for the glory of God. But, if we are acting for Him, we do not need the help of carnal policy, nor the inspiration of fleshly zeal, to carry out His mind. If it is God's path we are treading, we can afford to be calm. Let us take heed lest the Master have to say to us, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of" (Lu. ix. 55).

The rending of a testimony—the separating from saints whom up till now we have recognised as gathered by the Lord Himself,—such a step is of so solemn a character, and involves such momentous responsibilities, that those who take it must, at the very least, be certain they are *imbued with the spirit of Christ*. "The wrath of man worketh not

the righteousness of God" (Jas. i. 20). If we are not in a condition to carry out what we believe to be the Lord's mind, then we must wait before Him until we are in the required condition. If this simple scriptural principle had been acted upon, how many heart-burnings—how many sighs and tears—would have been prevented in the churches!—how many divisions would never have had an existence! Strange fire can avail no more with our God *now* than it did in the days of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. x. 1). If we are not in the calm enjoyment of communion with the Father,—if we are not manifesting the fruits of the Spirit,—we have no warrant to conclude that the secret of the Lord is with us. If, on the other hand, we are dwelling in the calm of the Father's holy presence, and manifesting the spirit of the meek and lowly One, we can patiently wait,—we are in no hurry, for the simple reason that we are in fellowship with Him who is never in a hurry. Being in the right condition, we can view our brethren aright, and take in the whole situation in all its bearings. It is then we hear the Master praying, "that they all may be one" (Jno. xvii. 21); and again, "that they may be made perfect in one" (ver. 23). We shrink at the very thought of that which will pain His heart. We reflect on the many brethren who shall be wounded,—of the many who shall in secret weep over this open division. We see enquiring believers distracted over it,—the great Enemy triumphant,—and a scoffing world pointing the slow

and scornful finger, while they say, "Behold these Christians, how they bite and devour one another!" In the clear light of communion all this is seen and felt,—and so seen and felt that we are willing, like Moses, to be blotted out,—to be invisible stars in the firmament of the Church, provided His people shall be blest, and His name magnified. No time was ever lost in waiting upon God. Therefore, unto all who may, directly or indirectly, be concerned in these matters, we would quote the Scripture, "Wait, I say, on the Lord" (Ps. xxvii. 14).

We do not deny that there may be circumstances in which the Word of God demands a separation from that which at one time was owned of Him. Yet we are persuaded that such separation shall have sufficient marks to identify it as *of the Lord*. It is true that even godly brethren, seeking to help you, may be mistaken in their judgment. They are liable to err; but *so are you*. If godly and esteemed brethren are persuaded you are taking a wrong step, that circumstance should be allowed to have its due weight in your deliberations. Obstacles of such a serious nature are not without a purpose. The *very least* you can do in such a case is calmly and patiently to *wait upon the Lord*, while you hold yourselves open to entertain the question, "Is it not possible that the step we contemplate is wrong after all?"

IN every case of heaven-bestowed faith, rest assured that God will put it to the proof.

## "THINE EYES SHALL SEE THE KING."

ISAIAH XXXIII. 17.

**M**Y heart had failed me, for the way was rough;  
Hush'd was my voice, I felt I could not sing;

When to my fainting heart this promise came—  
*"Thine eyes shall see the King."*

I cease my murmurings,—can it really be  
That after this sad journey He will bring  
My straying feet into His presence, where  
*Mine eyes shall see the King?*

Then let this wayward heart be full of praise—  
Nor fail to render thanks in everything;  
I have Him near me now; but very soon  
*Mine eyes shall see the King.*

With shame I own that this I oft forget:  
O let my thoughts, for ever on the wing,  
Fly to my home above, where Thou hast said,  
*"Thine eyes shall see the King."*

May earthly things prove only as the toys  
A tired child at eve aside doth fling.  
So may I leave all here, when, at Thy call,  
*Mine eyes shall see the King.*

This sweet and precious promise, how it cheers  
Me on the road, taking from pain the sting!  
Heart-longings shall one day be satisfied,—  
*Mine eyes shall see the King.*

How light each burden here, when shared by  
Thee!  
Life storms are stilled when to Thy hand I cling;  
O keep me ever close to Thee, until  
*Mine eyes shall see the King.*

And when at last I meet Thy smile of love,  
"Worthy the Lamb" with joy the heavens shall  
ring;  
With unveiled face, through everlasting years,  
*Mine eyes shall see the King!*

## WHY BE DISCOURAGED?

**I**F you are one who truly seeks to care for the flock, don't be discouraged although your service is not "appreciated" by some. There is no call for you to turn round and say, "*That's all the thanks I get!*" Why look to man for thanks? If you are serving the Lord Christ, then it is *His* well-done you must seek to earn. No doubt a word of cheer from one of the godly in Israel is encouraging in these days when so many are doing little else than putting on "the damper." But although words of cheer are few and words of discouragement are many, fulfil thou the ministry which you believe you have received of the Lord. If you wait until discouragement is extinct, you will accomplish nothing for God. We admit that it is trying—very trying—to be told that you are a mere place-seeker, while you desire only to serve the Lord according to the gift and grace He may have given. Let such accusations serve one purpose,—that of causing you to sit in judgment on your motives, to make sure you are not what some say you are. But you must not let these accusations so weaken your hands that you throw up a work to which you are convinced you have been called of God. Make sure that you have the single eye and the voice of an approving conscience, and the reward in due time will come from Him you seek to serve.

—♦—  
SLANDER is best answered by living it down.

## WITHOUT PARTIALITY.

**T**RUE zeal for God will act evenly. If it contends for the truth, it will be for the truth *all round*. We question the zeal of that brother who contends for *the truth* in ruling a church, while perfectly indifferent to *the truth* in ruling his own spirit. Then there are those who seize the sword of truth to deal with sin in a brother; and in bringing down the sword of judgment they seem to be consumed with a holy zeal for God. But another case arises, as much requiring the sword of judgment. But, lo! their arm trembles. They hesitate to act. Their zeal for purging the Lord's house seems to have disappeared. They seek to hush up the case. Why such uneven acting? Is there not a cause? There is. They sought to hush up the case because they saw that it would have involved one of their own relations! Alas, that sin should assume a different colour whenever it happens to be associated with our own flesh-and-blood! But we have ever seen it to be the case, that those who execute judgment without mercy to-day, are the very persons who will contend for mercy without judgment to-morrow. Let us beware of that unholy zeal that says, "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will have this evil judged;" while it can tolerate other and perhaps greater evils in its own circle of friends. If the name of brother So-and-so turns up, they strain out the gnat of evil. But if it is a certain other brother, they are quite

prepared to swallow the camel of inconsistency! (See Matt. xxiii. 24). Let us be delivered from such a spirit. It may exist in company with the highest profession of zeal for God. But it is easily distinguished from that "righteous judgment" which, like the wisdom that comes from above, is "*without partiality, and without hypocrisy*" (Jas. iii. 17).

IN seeking to be in a scriptural church position, it is dangerous to point to a good man, and say: "The position is sure to be right when *he* is there." It is likewise dangerous to point to an inconsistent professor, and say: "The position cannot be right when *he* is there." Joabs—men of the hard, revengeful spirit—are to be found under David's standard; and Jonathans—men of the loving and unenvious eye—are to be found at Saul's Table. You can draw no conclusions from such accidental circumstances. Instead of helping enquirers, these things will often prove a trial to faith. Our appeal must ever be to the unchanging principles of eternal truth.

IF, while others are proving the goodness of the Lord, we find that we are not in the conscious enjoyment of Jesus' saving power, then we had better pause and wait upon God before we seek to guide the feet of some youthful Samuel who has heard the call of God. How can we warn others of snares in the way of holiness, if we ourselves are not treading the path of communion, and proving the power of Christ to deliver?

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## MARKED MEN.

**W**E have heard it remarked that those who stand in public as witnesses for God are in danger from *special temptations*. There can be no reason to doubt the statement. The record of Scripture and the experience of the Lord's serving ones alike declare that they who stand in the front of the battle are a special mark for the great enemy of souls. Even the Perfect Servant Himself was not exempt from this fiery trial. It was just when about to enter the field of His public ministry that He was called to pass through the great Temptation in the wilderness. No sooner had He girded Himself for His great life-work, than the Adversary girds *himself* to resist the Faithful Witness, and calls in all the aids of Satanic power to weaken or frustrate the testimony of the Anointed One. As it was with the True Witness, so shall it be, though in lesser measure, with all who seek to witness for Him. Just as high spires court the lightning, so all who stand forth as the Lord's witnesses may expect that *they* shall be specially singled out for the fiercest attacks of the Wicked One. Unto Peter it was said, "Satan hath

desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat" (Lu. xxii. 31). Why was Peter selected for this peculiar and terrible sifting? We believe the reason to be simply this: Peter was a leader, even among apostles. He singled himself out,—or, rather, his fiery zeal and his strongly-marked personality singled him out for special service. All this was clear to the great Enemy of souls. *Therefore*, Peter must be silenced—his testimony must, if possible, be quenched. If he is selected for special service, for that very reason he shall be subjected to special temptation. Satan seems to wage a furious warfare against every leader in the conflict with the powers of evil. "Fight ye not with small or great, save only with the King of Israel," said the Syrian king (2 Chron. xviii. 30). And this would seem ever to have been the policy of the Adversary in resisting the testimony of God. Yet we must not infer that the "rank-and-file" of the saints are exempt from temptation. Each one is called to resist the Devil, and withstand his wiles. Yet he reserves his fiercest attacks for those who are, so to speak, standard-bearers in the fight, and whose fall may involve the discouragement, if not the fall, of many. In

overcoming a leading one among the saints, the enemy scores a double victory. He not only disables a believer but he silences a witness. He quenches a light of testimony, thereby frustrating all that such testimony might have accomplished.

Wherever there is a special call to special work for God, we may expect a special sifting at the hand of Satan. If David is anointed in the wilderness, he shall soon find a Goliath waiting for him in the valley of Elah. But as faith was victorious *then*, so there is no necessity that faith should fail *now*, or that the giant forces of temptation should overcome any who have gone to the front of the battle in obedience to the call of God. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. In "counting the cost," we must reckon upon the most determined opposition of a wily and powerful Devil. Nevertheless, be not cast down, O my soul. Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. Satan is mighty, we know. But there is One who is *almighty*; and that almighty One is now appearing in the presence of God for His redeemed.

The question may suggest itself: "But would it not be better if the Lord's servants and all seeking to be witnesses for God, were free from the distracting influences of special temptation?" To this we would answer, that we have to deal with things as they *are*, and not as we might wish them to be. Moreover, it may be questioned if the Lord's servants would be better without these special temptations. Fiery trials may be

—yea, through grace *shall* be—overruled of God to serve vastly different ends from what Satan has designed. These trials teach us our own weakness. We learn, in the furnace of temptation, to put no confidence in the flesh. We cleave to God *then* with a purpose of heart perhaps unknown in the day of smooth things. If serving ones were exempt from special sifting they might be exposed to the more subtle temptation of becoming lifted up with pride. It is needful that they who point to the highest heights of heavenly experience should tread the lowest paths of self-humiliation. If we will not humble ourselves, we shall be humbled in spite of ourselves. If, even in the case of a Paul, a thorn in the flesh was needful, lest he should be unduly exalted, let us not think it strange if we have to learn humility in the school of Temptation. There is many a blessed experience that could never have been tasted, had it not been for some fiery dart of the Wicked One. There is many a "closer walk" that could never have been known, had it not been for the fierce onslaught of some special temptation. Therefore, let us not look upon "special temptation" as an unmixed evil. It may be the instrument of untold blessing. If we are actively bearing witness to the truth, and to the power of Christ to save, "special grace" will doubtless be needed. Yet it will not be sought in vain. Whatever our position in the vineyard may be, the promise holds good: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

## ABNER, THE CAPTAIN OF SAUL'S HOST.

**A**BNER may, in some respects, have been what love declared him,—a prince and a great man in Israel (2 Sam. iii. 38). But these words do not by any means give us an accurate description of his character. Considering the treachery with which his death was accomplished, and the fact that his latest act had been an avowal of allegiance to the throne of David, we do not look for a catalogue of Abner's weak points in the king's lamentation over his untimely death. But weak points there were; and we shall read his history to but little profit if we fail to observe that his path was chosen rather in accordance with the accident of circumstances than in obedience to the call of God.

We have referred to his avowal of allegiance to David's throne. But this was a new thing with Abner. He had never before identified himself with the rejected David. We do not read of Abner in the cave of Adullam, or with the Lord's anointed in the wilderness of Ziph. He was captain of Saul's host (1 Sam. xiv. 50), and fought for him during his whole reign, until the ill-fated king fell before the Philistines on Mount Gilboa. Abner was thus the right-hand man of one who never ceased to persecute the Lord's anointed. Even with the death of Saul, the conflict between the contending houses did not cease. In 2 Sam. iii. 1 we read: "Now there was long war between the house of Saul and

the house of David." Yet we find Abner still maintaining his position. "And it came to pass," we read in verse 6, "while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner *made himself strong for the house of Saul.*" He gives no sign that he is about to desert the standard under which he has fought so long. On the contrary, he *strengthens* himself for the house of Saul,—seemingly more determined than ever to contend for the rule of Saul's house in Israel.

But there comes a sudden change; and he who had fought all his life for the house of Saul, astonishes Israel by professing to have come clear out on the side of David. But why this sudden change? We do not mean that there is anything necessarily wrong in a change of mind. He who is not in a right position cannot change his mind too soon. But we must see what causes are operating to bring about the change. In Abner's case these causes are not far to seek. A few hot words passed between him and Ish-bosheth as to a certain concubine, whose name was Rizpah (2 Sam. iii. 7); and at once Abner declares that he will leave the house of Saul to its fate, and go over to David's standard. Nor will he go alone. He will do his utmost "to translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel, and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba" (2 Sam. iii. 10).

It is thus clear that Abner was not acting upon any divine principle in

separating himself from the house of Saul, and seeking to fight under the standard of David. Had matters gone smoothly with him and Ish-bosheth, there is no reason to suppose that he would have changed his position. Circumstances, and not the call of God, determined Abner's choice.

In this respect Abner furnishes a striking illustration of those, in the present day, whom *circumstances* have thrust outside the camp, professedly to own the Lordship of Christ. Those who go forth to that position in obedience to the call of God, will doubtless continue in the same position,—at least so long as they are in subjection to Christ as Lord. But where *circumstances* constrain a man to go outside the camp, circumstances can constrain him to go back again; and the one "journey" may be made as quickly as the other. We believe this will explain some of those sudden changes of mind which have caused many to wonder, and more to stumble. It may be that a prominent believer, who had boldly taken his stand with the Lord's Anointed, suddenly goes back to the religious world; his name being duly published as one who had been outside the camp, and "discovered the nakedness of the land," and has now retraced his steps. This is one of the reproaches the truth has to bear. Yet, if the secret springs of action were known, it should perhaps be found that the tide of circumstances, and not the unchanging Word, carried him outside the camp. This being so, we need not wonder that the *returning tide*

should carry him back from whence he came. In Abner's case his career was cut short in the very act of taking the decisive step. We are therefore unable to trace what his after-history might have been. But the very man who compassed his death will furnish us with the needed illustration. Joab, as we have shown in bygone pages of this Paper, owed his position as captain of David's host, to a "fortunate combination of circumstances." Seeing he was guided by circumstances, and not by divine principles, the "changeable tide" in due time carried him the wrong way. There judgment found him; and there he died.

We shall bear a very flickering and uncertain testimony to the truth if our path depends upon how the wind of circumstances may blow. But if we act upon eternal principles, and seek to walk by the light of the unchanging Word, we shall be found true witnesses for God, steadfast and unmovable, no matter how the fitful wind of circumstances may blow.

We must never shut our eyes to the solemn responsibility connected with the handling of eternal principles. Even when seeking to follow the path of truth with singleness of eye, we must judge ourselves, else the very truth we profess to hold shall be used of God in judging us. With what accumulated force must this apply to the case of one who, like Abner, was prepared to play fast and loose with these principles,—using them for his own personal ends, while professing to carry out the counsel of the Lord!

## SECRETLY CONVINCED.

**W**HEN Abner, by force of circumstances, had resolved to come clear out on David's side, we find him seeking the elders of Israel. But he gives no hint as to the *true reason* for his leaving the house of Saul. He makes it appear as if the step were taken purely in obedience to the word of the Lord. "Ye sought for David in times past," he said, "to be king over you: now then do it: for the Lord hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of My servant David I will save My people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies" (2 Sam. iii. 17, 18). Abner quotes Scripture to justify the step he is taking. He appeals to what God hath spoken; and he shows clearly that David was the divinely-chosen leader of Israel. But Abner knew all this long before. While he was making himself "strong for the house of Saul," he was well aware that he was building up what God had rejected; and that David was the chosen deliverer. There is therefore no escaping the conclusion that Abner possessed light which he did not follow. He was secretly convinced that his true place was with David. But it was not convenient for him to obey the truth which he afterwards expounded with such clearness to the elders of Israel; and we question if it would ever have been convenient, had it not been for the personal slight he received at the hands of Ish-bosheth. In going over to the house of David he was

simply suiting his own convenience. His tragic death is to be deplored; and the treachery by which it was accomplished can only be detested. Nevertheless, we cannot fail to trace a connection between his time-serving policy and the disastrous termination of his career. In seeking David's standard he did a right thing; but he did it from an entirely unworthy motive. We can understand a *late repentance*; but in Abner's case all the elements of true repentance were wanting! In making his offering, he lacked purity of motive and singleness of eye. He professed to the elders of Israel to be acting in obedience to what the Lord had spoken, while in reality he was taking his revenge for what Ish-bosheth had spoken.

If Abner had been faithful, even to the light he had, his lines might afterwards have fallen in pleasant places. In compassing his death, Joab's plea was simply revenge for the death of Asahel (2 Sam. ii. 23). But if Abner had been with the Lord's anointed, instead of fighting for the rejected house of Saul, Joab could have had no such plea.

## THE FLESH ROUSED.

**I**T is quite true that the flesh can only rouse the flesh. But we must not forget that the flesh will often be roused by a manifestation of the spirit of Christ. We all know that the Lord, in the days of His humiliation, was constantly rousing the most deadly

opposition on the part of the religionists of that time. In Him there was no sin; neither was guile in His mouth. Yet the flesh in His Jewish brethren was roused to its highest pitch. Hell from beneath was moved to meet Him at His coming. The Spirit of the Holy One so roused the spirit of the Wicked One, that Judea could not rest until Messiah was cut off out of the land of the living.

We must therefore be careful in coming to the conclusion that a believer is in the flesh, if he rouses the flesh in others. If he encounters a storm of carnal opposition, *that* must not be taken as a sure sign that he is away from God. Everything will depend on the spirit he manifests.

In case our Lord's rousing of Jewish enmity may be held as an exception, let us turn to an Old-Testament example, and see how, even under the reign of law, grace could triumph in the face of unwarranted opposition. David is sent up to the valley of Elah to enquire as to the welfare of his brethren; and, fresh from victory in the wilderness (1 Sam. xvii. 34-36), he does not see why the uncircumcised Philistine should defy the armies of the living God. Strong in faith, David lets it be known that he himself is prepared to go forth against Goliath. Yet this simple faith in the God of Israel is the means of rousing opposition from an unexpected quarter (1 Sam. xvii. 28). Nevertheless, David shows no sign of resentment. He simply answers, "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" (ver. 29). There are

two noteworthy points in David's character while he is being slandered and misrepresented. (1) He continues to manifest an excellent spirit; and (2) he calmly goes on with the work to which God had called him. These two marks ever characterise the heaven-sent man. Fleshly opposition does not rouse him to fight with a similar weapon; neither does it cause him to sit down in despair until every Eliab shall express his approval. The envious eye can never approve the actings of simple faith in God, just as the fleshly mind can never understand these actings. David does not go about in the character of an injured man, telling how he is being abused and persecuted; although this is what many do in similar circumstances. They walk before men: therefore they must needs justify themselves before men. Into every willing ear they are ready to pour the tale of *their* sufferings, —how *they* are misunderstood and misrepresented. But the Lord's anointed does not act thus. We never read of David going up and down through Israel, telling how he is being opposed and slandered. He simply carries out the work to which the Lord has called him. The result is: He delivers Israel —he lives down opposition,—by "well-doing" he puts to silence the ignorance of foolish men (1 Pet. ii. 15). Each one of us, in our own little sphere, is called to manifest the same spirit; and in thus seeking to fulfil the ministry which we have received of the Lord, we may be assured that we shall not run in vain.

## PRAYER GETTING FORMAL.

**A**N esteemed brother, in expressing his approval of "*Stop with the final appeal*" in *May Treasury* (page 70), calls our attention to an article in an old number of the *Witness*, from which we make the following extracts :

"Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be *hasty* to utter anything before God ; for God is in heaven, and thou upon the earth ; therefore let thy words be *few*" (Ecc. v. 2).

Is there not a great danger of a "*gift in prayer*" becoming largely developed amongst us? By this I mean a long and fluent rehearsal of precious truths, well known to most, and certainly to God who gave them all, accompanied with a *painfully frequent reiteration of His name*. Is not the time at our prayer-meetings largely occupied with the exercise of this *unscriptural gift*, often to the exclusion of real prayer?

Are there not increasing numbers amongst us who think they will be "*heard for much speaking*," in which they feel quite at home, instead of "*much prayer*," of which they know but little?

We are not obliged to stay an hour and a half, or even an hour. Better far, simply and humbly present such requests as are laid upon our hearts, *with thanksgiving*, and retire, than offer such a vain substitute for prayer and supplication.

Prayer produces prayer; and one short, earnest cry awakens and encourages another.

It must be remembered that it is the fervent prayer of a *righteous* man that availeth much; and if one, walking in *unrighteousness*, with sin unconfessed, ventures to pray for others, *he will not be heard* (Ps. lxxi. 18).

Surely in the solemn attitude of drawing

near to the very throne of God, we should avoid and shun everything that is not *simple* and real.

To the above extracts we add our hearty "Amen." That which hath been, is that which is now. The truth that was so much needed ten years ago is, in many cases, the truth that is needed to-day. By all means let us have reality. There is no heavenly necessity whatever to spin out a meeting till the hands of the clock reach a certain position, merely because it is the custom to so spin it out. We fear it is often the case that as love waxes cold, prayers wax long,—much to the discouragement of all who are crying out to the Lord for a time of power. Sometimes brethren sit silent during the whole hour of prayer, though with ample opportunity to unburden their spirits; and then, when the meeting is evidently over, they seem to have received a sudden and pressing call to pray at inordinate length! Generally speaking, this betrays a lamentable lack of heavenly wisdom. You may say, as has been said: "I'll not put myself in bondage." True, my dear brother; but must we not be as careful to see that we do not put *others* in bondage? Are we not to *consider* one another? One of the great elements in public prayer is the edification of the saints. If, when the meeting is manifestly at an end, I indulge in a long, formal prayer, how can I expect it to be to edification? But in this, as in all other matters, with the lowly is wisdom.

## "THEY SAW A YOUNG MAN."

**W**HEN the devoted women entered the sepulchre on the resurrection morning they saw "a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment" (Mark xvi. 5). In our ordinary reading, we were recently struck by the expression, "They saw a *young man*." We know that he was an angel from Heaven. Matthew calls him "the angel of the Lord," and tells us that "his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men" (Matt. xxviii. 2-4). From John and Luke we learn that there were *two* heavenly messengers. John speaks of them as "two angels in white" (Jno. xx. 12); Luke describes them as "two men in shining garments" (Lu. xxiv. 4); while only one of these—he who addressed the sorrowing women—is singled out by Matthew and Mark; and to the latter evangelist we are indebted for one of those beautiful little touches with which his narrative abounds. Mark alone speaks of the heavenly messenger as "a young man." But why a *young* man? That messenger from the excellent glory had perhaps been a visitor to Mamre's plain in Abraham's day; or present, it may be, when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job xxxviii. 7). Yet he is spoken of as a young man! "Ah!" we said to ourselves, "they never grow old in Heaven."

Theirs is the dew of everlasting youth. Sorrow never enters there. The inhabitants thereof never say, "I am sick." No sin invades those heavenly plains—no sorrow—no death. No taint of corruption—no germ of decay—can enter there. No aching head—no weary heart—no care-furrowed brow, in the realms of the blest. No earth-born cloud can dim the sky of that fair, eternal morning. Clad in the robes of immortality, and arrayed in the beauty of Heaven, the angelic host know neither age nor decay. And he who seemed a young man to the sorrowing women on the resurrection morning, is still young—unimpaired in strength and beauty, and shall continue so through everlasting years!

What comfort here for weary hearts, waiting for that resurrection morning when this robe of flesh shall be laid aside for ever, and we shall see and be like Him who is fairer than the children of men! Then there shall be an eternal farewell to the sorrows of earth; and the redeemed of the Lord, free from all the withering influences of time, shall enter upon the timeless ages of everlasting purity, and "flourish in immortal youth"! Child of God, hold up thy head! Such is the destiny that awaits thee. Thy cross may be heavy, thy trials severe. Deep waters may cross life's pathway; but, as another has said, these are but "the dark vestibule through which thou shalt pass, into the blaze of everlasting day!"

HOLINESS and truth are never at variance.

## LEFT THE BRIDGES STANDING.

**W**HEN Israel had passed through the Red Sea, it closed up behind them, thereby signifying that they were for ever separated from Egypt: there was *no road back that way*. In Heb. xi. 29 we read that "*by faith*" Israel "passed through the Red Sea as by dry land." The path of faith is still the same. It makes no provision for the flesh. It leaves no loophole by which a retreat may be conveniently effected. He who walks by faith is a stranger to the methods of carnal policy. At the call of God he goes out, not knowing whither,—but assured that He who gave the call shall give the light. The man of faith burns the ships and destroys the bridges by which he may have crossed from the domain of worldliness into the goodly land of the promises. Seeing Scripture has separated him from the world—whether the ungodly or the religious world, it matters not—he gives his hearty "Amen" to what the Lord hath spoken. He has no desire to return to the weak and beggarly elements that once held him in bondage. Therefore he leaves no pathway for a return. He is convinced that he is treading God's path. He is not walking with a trembling step, like one who is not sure whether he is in the Lord's path or not. He has convictions—Heaven-wrought convictions—as to the Lord's path; and, like all who are thus convinced, he is not afraid to confess what he has been taught of God.

In contrast with all this, there are professed believers who seem to take a clear stand for God. They cross the river that divides the world's order of things from God's order of things. They step out into the "goodly land" of the promises. To all appearance they are clear out for God. But the careful observer perceives that they have left every bridge standing! Their ships are all lying at anchor, ready to take them back the very way by which they came! In plain language, they deliver no decided testimony against the world, and its worldliness, and its religious apostasy, and its dethronement of the Son of God. They say, "It's not for us to judge: we must be cautious how we condemn a thing." They take no clear stand against sectarianism. They never open up Scriptures that bear with withering effect upon the religious worldliness of the present day. Of all the things they profess to have left, they judge nothing—condemn nothing—hew nothing in pieces. They take care to *say nothing* that would hinder them from beating a retreat to the land from whence they came. It need therefore cause no surprise if the retreat is effected in due time. Everything was arranged for a retreat, *in-case-be* the "goodly land" should prove a "failure." In such circumstances it will be found that the thing you *make provision for* is the *very thing that comes*. But faith has no *in-case-be's*; and faith is never without its reward. On the other hand, he who is merely *experimenting* with God's truth

shall find he is engaged in dangerous work. The Egyptians tried to imitate Israel in passing through the Red Sea. They assayed to follow a path which only faith could tread; and the very waters that were a wall unto Israel proved the destruction of Pharaoh's host. This reveals a *principle* that applies to every man, be he saint or sinner. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. xi. 6). In the path of faith there is no such thing as *trying* the place of separation unto God, to see how it will do. To experiment thus with the Truth, and to leave all your bridges standing while you make the experiment, is *not of faith*. Such experimenters—strangers alike to the reward of faith and to the endurance of faith—shall beat a hasty retreat before the advancing tide of hostile circumstances; and the "provision" made for going back shall be found none too ample for its purpose!

Just as the Philistines were glad to get rid of God's Ark, so have many experimenters with God's truth been glad to get rid of the very truth with which they had been experimenting. The reason for this is not far to seek. The Truth was never given for such a purpose. God *commands obedience* to His revealed Word. He has given that Word that it may *judge us*—not that we may sit in judgment upon *it*. Man may judge it: he may resolve to try how it will do to carry out its precepts. If so, he shall make such trial to his own confusion. The world may go on with its religious ceremonies, which have not even *the form*

of godliness; and the world may seem to carry out all its religious observances with impunity. But they who seek to carry out divine principles apart from faith in the living God, shall find that He will be sanctified in all that draw near unto Him. To *experiment* with God's truth, is to doubt God—to dishonour God; and truth thus loosely held shall be found so troublesome—so dangerous—to keep, that it will soon cease to be held at all.

#### NOT TO WITNESS AGAINST ERROR.

 CERTAIN believers hold that we should never speak against that which is false: we should only contend for that which is true. Some time ago a brother wrote us on this subject; and, to strengthen his case, he quoted a remark which he once heard, and which he said he had never forgotten. It was this: "We are here, not to witness *against error*, but to witness FOR THE TRUTH." At the first glance that statement looks very sound and reasonable. But a very little reflection will show that it is unwarranted by Scripture,—yea, *opposed* to the teaching of Holy Writ. Like many other statements of a similar kind, it is right in what it *affirms*, and wrong in what it *denies*. It is quite true that we are here to witness for the Truth: it is *not* true that we are forbidden to witness against error. Our brother's remark is a dangerous compound of truth and error; and we know that error is

never so dangerous as when it is associated with truth.

There is abundance of Scripture to show that we are here to bear witness to the truth. We need not stay to prove *that*. But where are we told that we must not witness against error? We are not aware of any Scripture that can be produced to support such a statement. On the contrary, we are acquainted with many passages of the Word that warrant us—yea, command us—to bear witness against error. The Lord's messenger in a bygone dispensation was told to speak comfortably to Jerusalem. The fortieth chapter of Isaiah opens with the words, "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God." From that "text" it would be very easy to build up a theory that we are here to *comfort* the people of God, and not to show them where they are in error. But such a theory would be simply *opposed* to the tenor of Scripture. We must "rightly divide" the Word. We must take pains to learn what Scripture *does* teach, before we make sweeping statements as to what Scripture does *not* teach. While Isaiah xl. opens with, "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people," Isaiah lviii. opens with, "Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." Yet there are some dear children of God who tell us that we must not witness against error! Truly it would be a very convenient doctrine, that the Lord's witnesses must never lift their voice against that which is false.

Apostate Israel were ready to welcome such a theory. They could not bear the plain-spoken prophet who lifted up his voice like a trumpet and showed them where they were in error. They wanted prophets who should prophesy "smooth things." But the Lord's messengers simply delivered their Master's message; although, in so doing, they ran the risk of being marked down as "troublers of Israel." As a matter of fact, the Lord's servants in the old dispensation bore *powerful testimony* against error. They exposed the hollowness of a man-devised order of worship; and were at particular pains to show wherein God's people had embraced the false as well as forsaken the true (See Jer. ii. 11, 13, &c.).

But, to pass on to New-Testament times, we search in vain for our warrant to be silent concerning errors that may abound. We find the Apostle instructing Timothy not only to "preach the word," but to "*reprove, rebuke, exhort*, with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. iv. 2). But if error is not to be witnessed against, how can he reprove? If error is not to be mentioned, how can he rebuke? How are we to be the means of recovering any of our brethren out of the snare of the Devil, if we are never to refer to such a snare? Truly the New Testament does not countenance the theory that there must be no testimony against error. Is not the Epistle to the Galatians a deliberate exposure of the false teaching of that time? In the first of the Epistles to the Seven Churches, Ephesus is commended for resisting them that were

evil, and exposing false apostles (Rev. ii. 2). In the face of all this, how can any one affirm that we are not to witness against that which is opposed to the teaching of Scripture? We readily admit that we are not here for the *sole* purpose of testifying against error. Indeed, we do not believe that such is even our *special* work. But we are fully persuaded that faithful testimony for God will *include* testimony against error. *In the main* our testimony will doubtless be a bearing witness to positive truth. Nevertheless, if we remain silent while young converts, or old believers, are being carried away with positive error, and fail to deliver our souls, shall we be faithful witnesses? We trow not. If we are to be the means of delivering others from the error of the wicked (2 Pet. iii. 17), how shall this be effected if we make no reference whatever to the error in question? How shall gainsayers be convinced (Tit. i. 9) if there is to be no testimony against their evil doctrines or evil practices? But we have said enough to show that we are not only warranted but exhorted to bear witness against error. If dear saints of God are being ensnared by the errors of popular religion, or defiled by the worldliness of an evil day, let the Lord's witnesses bring *the truth* to bear upon these things. Let them lift up their voice like a trumpet, and shun not to declare God's counsel; and they shall be faithful ministers of Jesus Christ.

—♦—  
To parley with sin is to yield to the Tempter.

## THE WORLD NOT CHANGED.

**Y**OU may have observed that a lake of water seems to change its shape according as you change the position from which you look at it. Thus it is with the believer and the world. If you change your position,—if you get down from the Mount of Communion,—the world assumes quite a different shape. There are believers who once took their stand in holy separation from the world; yet to-day they do not look upon it as so bad a world after all. What is the cause of these altered relations? Has *the world* changed? No. The change is not *in it*. The world is still lying “in the Wicked One.” The change is *in the believer*. He has come down from his eminence. He has descended to the world's level. He has changed his position; and now you hear him say, “I would not like to judge the world in *this* ;” — “I don't see there is much harm in *that*,” and so on. He may profess to have got new light; but the real secret of the whole matter is, that backsliding in heart has been going on. He has not acquired new light: he has simply gone back in the direction of *the old darkness*.

—♦—  
BACKSLIDING does not change its name although the process of declension may be so gradual as to be almost imperceptible. None are so hard to reach as those who have descended from the heights of spiritual communion without having made any violent fall.

## THE STRONGEST SIDE.

**T**N connection with Abner's going over to David's side (2 Sam. iii.), it is worthy of note that the house of Saul by this time was waxing weaker and weaker, while the house of David was waxing stronger and stronger (ver. 1). No doubt Abner saw clearly what was going on. He had nothing to lose—on the contrary, he had much to gain—by fighting under a standard which was manifestly gaining strength every day. It is just possible that the "strong side" had its attraction for Abner. Of this much, at least, we are certain,—he did not propose to move until it was an ebbing tide with the fortunes of the house of Saul. There is a significance in all this, to the careful reader of Scripture. Who shall tell how many secret springs of action may have determined Abner's choice? *If* he was influenced to some extent by the prospect of being on the side of *power*, he only furnishes an illustration of those who, in the present day, make their church-position a simple question of, "What is the strongest side?—for that is where I want to be." There can be no reasonable doubt that in many cases the "strongest side" is accepted as the strongest argument. Man is, by nature, a vain creature,—loves to puff himself up with a sense of his own importance; or, at the very least, desires to be associated with a company of people possessing some weight and influence. Hence it comes that men, in determining their church position, have

been allured by the meteor of success, rather than guided by the unchanging word of the living God.

Those who thus shape their course according to what seems to be the strongest side, are simply at the mercy of what has been called the "fickle goddess of fortune." That which is a success to-day may be a failure to-morrow. In these circumstances what are they to do? In order to carry out their own line of policy they must go forth anew in search of the strong side. If they had been steering their course by the unvarying compass of eternal truth, they had no need to be distracted by seeming want of success. But they were sailing with *another* compass; and that other compass being liable to variation, their course was liable to variation likewise. In plain words (and to change our figure), they cannot fight "a losing battle," as it is called. They do not care to follow David *in rejection*. They can understand him while he is *reigning* in Jerusalem; but if he is the despised one in the wilderness, with only a few to do him reverence, they do not know him! Nevertheless he is the same David. Reigning, or rejected, he is the Lord's anointed one. Yet they who walk by sight will prefer Saul's court,—at least so long as it is manifestly in the ascendant in Israel. But let the day come when that power begins to wane, and the rejected David is surrounded by a host; and at once you find former opponents coming forward to make their obeisance. But an obeisance that is so largely due to the

external appearance of success is only a very shallow affair at the best. David may seem to have a large and enthusiastic following ; but it only needs an Absalom to rise in rebellion, to make manifest to Israel who are really for the man whom God hath chosen. Where there was *love to the person of David* it mattered not whether he were a king in Zion, or a wanderer in the wilderness of Paran (1 Sam. xxv. 1). The devoted heart asks no questions as to which is the strongest side. Even in the hour of rejection, with stormy times at hand, the king's weary spirit is refreshed while Ittai answers : "As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be" (2 Sam. xv. 21).

### HE CAN TALK.

**W**ELL, had you a good Conference?" we enquired.

"We had a fine large meeting," said brother R——.

"Yes ; I suppose the hall was well filled. But had you a good time?"

"I believe we were helped of God."

"Did brother —— speak?"

"Yes ; and he had a message."

"Did brother So-and-so not minister?"

"Yes, he gave an address."

"A fluent speaker, I suppose?"

"O, *he can talk*," said the quiet, thoughtful brother with whom I was conversing. And there was a certain

significance in his tone which told me that, so far as he could judge, there had been no message with the speaker of the fluent tongue.

I did not press my enquiries further. I began to muse on what I had heard. "*He can talk*." Yes, I said to myself, there is a vast difference between *talk* and *ministry in the Holy Spirit*. It is easy to talk. There is no difficulty in standing up and occupying ten minutes, or half-an-hour and ten minutes, in opening up some passage of Scripture. That can be done, even by one who is out of communion with God, and who may have been for months in the same condition. A believer out of communion will often manifest a greater eagerness to minister than one who is conscious of the Lord's approving presence. But such ministry will be nothing better than talk. It will reach no hearts. It will send no backslider to his knees. It will build up no saint of God upon his most holy faith. But while it fails in all the purposes of true ministry, it will have an effect which ever follows the counterfeit of God's message. It will lull backsliders to sleep. It will declare peace at the expense of righteousness. It will puff up the fleshly mind, and grant a license to transgressors. The ministry which is *not of God* is thus a failure in every respect. It may be lauded to the skies as a piece of eloquence. But the anointed ear discerns that it has not come from above ; and, this being so, it has not accomplished the purpose of God, whatever other purpose it may have served.

## MINISTRY IN POWER.

**M**INISTRY in the Holy Spirit will ever be found to possess the element of power. "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts iv. 33). "And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people" (Acts vi. 8). But before this could be recorded of these sent-ones, they had to be "*endued with power from on high*" (Lu. xxiv. 49; Acts. i. 8). It is somewhat difficult to describe *power*. It must be felt, rather than described. It cannot be acquired in the world's schools of learning. It cannot be created by the laying-on of men's hands. Power—spiritual power—is "from on high." It is not lackey to the will of man, and can only exist in a kindred atmosphere to that from whence it came. There is no such thing as getting a lease of power. Just as it is "through faith" we stand, so it is *through faith* that power is retained. If forbidden things are harboured—if the flesh is indulged—the power of the Holy One cannot abide there. There may still be great command of speech—there may be words of "thundering sound." Yet, apart from heavenly power, the grandest ministry is but as some fair and symmetrical human form bereft of life. *Power* cannot be counterfeited. An imitation may be attempted; but such imitation will impose only upon those who have a counterfeited faith. Power may be possessed for a time,—yet depart,

nevermore to return; and he whose words once swayed the hearts of the multitude may find, as many have found, that over his testimony these words might truly be written: "The glory has departed." You may use every device to simulate the departed power;—you may charm never so wisely. Yet Israel refuses to be charmed,—refuses even to tremble. The departed power can be found only where it was left—in the presence of the Holy One!

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THE

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## THE FRANKINCENSE.

**F**RANKINCENSE was so called because of its whiteness. But, besides being white, it had the fragrance of a sweet smell. Thus, in the frankincense which was to be put upon the fine flour of the meat-offering (Lev. ii. 1), we have Christ brought before us in the twofold aspect of *purity of life* and *beauty of character*. He was the holy, the harmless, the undefiled. In Him there was no sin. He alone, of all the sons of men, could say: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath *nothing* in Me" (Jno. xiv. 30). The purity of His life was one long, unbroken testimony against the hollowness and hypocrisy by which He was surrounded in the days of His humiliation. It was a moral impossibility for Him to "accommodate" Himself to the times. *That* would have required a certain amount of dissimulation on His part. But there was no variability—no shadow of turning—with Him. He ever was what He seemed to be. The Light never merged itself in the darkness—never burned dim, out of deference, so to speak, to the darkness. Calm, clear, constant, the light of that pure and beautiful life was ever shining.

Purity was thus brought side by side with impurity. The contrast was manifest. The formalist and the hypocrite were ill at ease. The presence of the Holy One was a rebuke to their unholy lives. The presence of the Light served to make their darkness visible. They were not so much dazzled by the Light as condemned by the Light. They were uncomfortable. But theirs was the discomfort that ever arises when the pure is brought into contact with the impure. They could not bear that holy eye reading the unreality of their profession. They could not bear that holy life being brought into such sharp contrast with their unblushing hypocrisy. A few might bear testimony that the Light was good; but, to the many, that same Light was the swift and powerful witness that their deeds were evil. Therefore they quenched the Light—at least so far as it was in the power of man to do so. They had no rest until the great "Troubler of Israel" had been cut off out of the land of the living!

While the whiteness of the frankincense bespeaks the purity of our Lord's life, it also tells of that purity which should characterise the life of the believer. We have been united to the Holy One. We

profess to be followers — imitators — of Him who knew no sin,—who was a stranger to deception and artifice, and all that plotting and scheming which is known among men by the term “policy.” If the purity of the Master’s life is being reproduced in measure in us, then in that measure shall we be true witnesses for Him. It matters not what we may profess to be. If there is not purity of life, our testimony cannot glorify God, however dazzling it may appear in the eyes of men. Let purity of life be the great feature in a believer’s character, and the effect will, in measure at least, be the same as that produced by the purity of our Lord’s life while He tabernacled among men. Purity of life, in the case of the believer, shall not be without its “signs following.” It will be an offence to worldliness. It will make manifest that which is opposed to Christ. Refusing to bow down to that which is not of God, it will rouse the enmity of the carnal mind. Yet he that is of God shall approve the testimony of the pure in heart. The life that is cast in the mould of righteousness, and baptised in the atmosphere of purity, shall not, and cannot, be without its effect. *The Day* shall declare what even one such life hath wrought!

In the sweet smell of the frankincense we have the beauty of our Lord’s character set forth. Wherever there is the inner purity, there will be the outer beauty or fragrance; for the one is but the counterpart of the other. “Thy Name is as ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love Thee”

(S. of S. i. 3). The beauty of our Lord’s character might not be apparent to the eye blinded by envy (Matt. xxvii. 18). But to the anointed eye He was “the chiefest among ten thousand;” while there were those even among “the people” who bore witness that He had “done all things well” (Mark vii. 37), and that “never man spake like this Man” (Jno. vii. 46). Apply this to the individual believer, and what do we learn? We learn that where there is purity of life it will so manifest itself in our ways, that our conversation—our manner of life—shall have the savour of a sweet smell. This corresponds with the qualification of a serving one, in 1 Tim. iii. 7—“Must have a good report of them that are without.”

What kind of savour do we leave behind us in the world? Is it the fragrance of a sweet smell? Or is the world heard saying, as it sometimes says: “If *that* is Christianity, I want none of it”? By our ways and actions we are all spreading a fragrance of *some* kind around us; and it behoves us to see that we are making known *a savour of Christ*. It is no mark of grace to say, “I don’t care what the world thinks of my ways.” If we are *misrepresenting* Christ, it is surely time we were caring what the world thinks. And if the world questions our reality—if it plainly declares that it perceives the odour of an offensive smell in our ways, it is surely time we were examining ourselves to see if in our private life there is the purity which our God requires. There is a most direct

connection between that outer manifestation of character which men can see, and that inner purity of life which men cannot see. If there be a lack of sweet-smelling savour in our ways and actions, we may rest assured that some hidden corruption is gnawing at the very vitals of our testimony.

### THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS.

**G**RACE reigns through righteousness (Rom. v. 21). That is to say, grace has a certain well-defined channel in which it runs. It may be likened to a river; and the banks between which it flows are the banks of righteousness. As it is with the grace of God, so will it be with love in the believer. The love that is of God will act precisely on the same principle as the grace that is of God. If love reigns, it reigns *through righteousness*. Some speak as if love had a special license to do as it pleased. They seem to hold that in the manifestation of love to our brethren we should be under no restraint whatever. But such love would be simply lawless love. The love that is from above will ever be found acting in unison with righteousness, and in accordance with truth. Love of that description never sacrifices the truth on the altar of expediency. The love that is of God puts *Him* first,—considers everything in relation to Him and to His glory. The love that is merely natural sentiment puts *man* first. Therefore the need of man is

considered in preference to the glory of God and the claims of truth,—thus reversing the order of Scripture.

### MAKING SCRIPTURE SQUARE WITH OUR WAYS.

**W**HEN we will not make our ways to square with the Scriptures, carnal wisdom suggests that we should make the Scriptures to square with our ways. This is the reason why such desperate attempts are being made to prove that the Bible means what it does not say. No righteous government would allow a judge to sit on a case if it were known beforehand that his *mind was made up* to make the evidence prove a certain thing. Yet it is in this spirit that light is often sought. In a very different spirit we should approach the statutes of the Lord. If we search the Word merely for something to endorse our own ideas, we will very likely get, or think we get, what we want; and we may then sit down to congratulate ourselves on the wonderful discovery we have made in the field of truth. But if we search the Word simply to learn the mind of the Lord, no matter how the Word may run contrary to our ideas, we are then in a condition *to learn*; for “the meek will He teach His way” (Ps. xxv. 9). Only as we approach Scripture in this humble, unbiassed spirit shall we be able to say, “The statutes of the Lord are right, *rejoicing the heart*” (Ps. xix. 8).

## WILL REVOLT MORE AND MORE.

“**Y**E will revolt more and more” (Isa. i. 5). This was spoken of backsliding Israel; and the same thing can be said of a backsliding church, or a backsliding believer. Unless there be real repentance—a true turning-again to the Lord—these words shall have their sad fulfilment: “Ye will revolt more and more.” When spiritual declension has set in, you cannot tell where it will stop. The believer who has begun to depart from the ways of God, is emphatically *going down*. He was going down yesterday, and he is going down to-day; but with this difference, that he is going down *faster* to-day than yesterday. In his downward course he is gaining momentum every day,—he is revolting more and more! This is nothing less than a law of the Kingdom. There is no such thing as remaining simply inactive, and trying to console yourself with the reflection: “If I am doing no good, I am doing no harm—if I am not gaining ground, I am not losing any.” There is no such comfort to those who fancy they are merely standing still in the heavenly race. We are either pressing onwards or going backwards. Of those who are pressing onwards it is recorded: “They go from strength to strength” (Ps. lxxxiv. 7). To those who are going backwards the words still apply: “Ye will revolt more and more.”

WHEREVER there is the grace of Christ, there will also be the graciousness of Christ.

## CAUSE AND EFFECT.

**E**ACH word, look, action,—our whole manner of life,—is affecting, for better or for worse, all with whom we come in contact. All whom we thus affect are affecting those with whom *they* come in contact; and so on. Our lives, in this indirect way, are thus affecting many whom we have never seen, and may never see on earth. How solemn to live! The angry word may be regretted. But its effect, who shall measure? Like an arrow sped from the bow, it is beyond recall. The stone plunged into the lake of silent waters, causes more than a few ripples and a little foam at that particular spot. Its waves spread out on every side—its pulsations reach to the furthest shore of that sheet of water. Thus our actions are telling on all around, and on many who are far beyond what we consider “the sphere of our own influence.” The reflection is certainly not a comforting one,—*if* we are conscious that we are not doing the right thing before God and man. But if we are honestly seeking to live by the faith of the Son of God, we shall not be discouraged by the thought that our manner of life is so far-reaching in its effect. Such a reflection will only make us the more watchful to see that we put nothing into the great stream of life but that which is pure and lovely,—nothing save that which will sweeten the bitter waters, and lead weary hearts to Him who is the source of all blessing and the Fountain of all true delight.

## STRIPPING OFF THE GOLD.

**H**EZEKIAH began well. "In the first year of his reign, in the first month," he "opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and repaired them" (2 Chron. xxix. 3). He showed himself a zealous reformer. He did not devote his energies to the task of *making himself comfortable*. He made *the glory of God* his concern. The Lord's house was in a deplorable condition. Hezekiah saw this; and resolved to seek help of God in cleansing the temple from its filthiness. Therefore the doors of the Lord's house were opened and repaired.

In all this we admire Hezekiah's zeal and devotion. Yet, in a later day, he was the very man to strip the gold off the doors of the temple of the Lord! (2 Kings xviii. 16). He who had repaired these doors, and beautified them, was the man who afterwards bereft them of their beauty. Scripture tells us that he "cut off the gold from the doors and pillars." But for what purpose is the gold so ruthlessly torn from the doors of the Lord's house? It is that Hezekiah may *save himself*. He is in great straits. The invader is at hand. What the king of Judah is seeking is *personal deliverance*. *That* must be obtained; and it seems to matter little *how* it is obtained. He resolves to *buy up* the enemy. There is gold; but it is on the doors and pillars of the Lord's house. This is awkward; and it is even more awkward that his own hand had fastened the gold upon these doors and pillars in an earlier and

a happier day. But, then, the case is urgent. His own safety demands, or seems to demand, that something desperate be done. Thus, evidently, Hezekiah reasoned. But there was really no urgency in the matter—at least none to a man of faith in the living God. Hezekiah might well have trusted Jehovah to take care both of His Temple and His servant. Yet the king's confidence was not in the arm of omnipotence. Once upon a time he was strong for the Lord's house. But his strong point, strange to say, was the very point in which he failed. A brother lately made the remark that "your strongest point is your weakest point, if it is a point that is of God." Satan knows the stand we have taken for the truth,—he knows what is supposed to be our strong point; and, if he can touch us *there*, he knows well that his victory will be overwhelming. It will not only damage us personally, but it will bring discredit on the very truth we profess to adorn. Never does Satan succeed so well as when he gets you to pull down what you had once built up for God.

Hezekiah **BUILT** for *the glory of God*, and **PULLED DOWN** for *his own personal safety*. Circumstances of a *personal* nature were thus the occasion of his stripping off the gold. In this we have a striking illustration of those, in the church's history, who once came out clear on the Lord's side,—perhaps helped to build the Lord's house, and beautify its doors and pillars. Yet now they are stripping off the gold!—pulling down

the things which once on a time they had so zealously built up,—denying the truth for which they once contended with all their might! We may wonder at such a remarkable “change of mind.” Yet, is there not a cause? We know the cause that seemed to compel Hezekiah to surrender the gold once set apart for Jehovah. We may *not* know the cause for yonder brother denying the truth he once held dear. But we may rest assured that there *is* a cause,—yet a cause not found in the *call of God*; for He never contradicts Himself. We must look for the cause in another direction, viz, in this—that *circumstances* are pressing. Perhaps the Assyrian is at the gate. It has become somewhat inconvenient to hold these clearly-defined separation truths. If some of them could just be surrendered, one should get on so much more smoothly with the religious world from Assyria, and even with the fashionable world from Egypt! What is to be done? “Something *must* be done,” says the believer to himself. He accordingly proceeds to tear down the gold—to surrender truths once reckoned more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold (Ps. xix. 10). *This* separation truth and *that* separation truth are thus yielded up; and an unrighteous peace is patched up between the child of God and the Assyrian! In a word, truth that was once held that God might be honoured, is now surrendered that man may be pleased!

We need not read the history of Hezekiah's failure in vain. It is recorded

for our learning. Its lesson is plain: “Hold that fast which thou hast” (Rev. iii. 11). “Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal. v. 1). Let us remember that the clamour of circumstances is a very different thing from the call of God. The case may appear urgent. There may *seem* to be no way of escape except a surrender of truth. Yet we must not do evil that good may come. In no circumstances are we warranted in running contrary to the revealed will of God. Faith in Him never fails of its reward.

### OUR STRONG POINT.

 BRAHAM'S strong point was his faith. Yet that was the very point in which he failed. While sojourning in Gerar he denied his wife (Gen. xx. 1). Moses, the meekest man, spake unadvisedly with his lips (Ps. cvi. 33); and for that sin he was not permitted to enter the promised land. Solomon was the wisest man. “Nevertheless, even him did outlandish women cause to sin” (Neh. xiii. 26). Therefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There are special reasons why our strong point should be jealously guarded. It is in our “strong point” that we are prone to fancy ourselves secure; and such fancied security is simply the signal to the enemy that his time has come. A weak point well guarded is stronger than a strong point with no sentinel.

## SORROW AND JOY.

**T**HE heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddled it not therewith." Hence it is that a Mary hides in her heart much that reaches her ears concerning her care and love. Wherefore, also, the poet hath cried :

"Go, bury thy sorrow; the world hath its share;  
Go, tell it to Jesus: leave all with Him by prayer."

Secret, sweet, and sacredly precious as such heart-experience is—bearing oft-times its fruit in one's being able to comfort others with the comfort where-with he himself has been comforted of God—there is another experience that the heart knows, even its joys. These joys God would have scattered and shared as faithfully as He would that our sorrows be poured into His own ear. In the spirit thereof we would add that no joy equals that which is experienced through fellowship with God Himself. By "fellowship with God" we mean learning from Him in the Scriptures what His will is concerning us; then, by His grace within our hearts, seeking to obey Him therein. Such, indeed, is fellowship with God. Anything else is really not so.

In remnant times of other days, when a people restored to fellowship with their God felt ready to faint because of their sad failure,—yea, felt ready to mourn and weep, (the evidence of their true repentance from evil and a thirsting after God,)—their God-given teachers bade them neither to mourn nor weep, for

such a day was holy unto Jehovah their God. Wherefore, it became them not to disturb His rest nor mar His pleasure; but rather to arise from themselves and others, and enter into fellowship with Him.

Therefore were they bidden to go their way, eating the fat (the Lord's own very special portion, Lev. iii. 16, 17), drinking the sweet, and sending portions for others. Neither should they allow the absence of others to cause them to be sorry. That, too, for this reason, that their strength to reach those as well as to do all else that such entailed, lay in this—"THE JOY OF THE LORD." Let no one imagine that this is joy *from* the Lord. There is such from Him for them that are His. Here, however, it is His own joy—His own delight in such a recovery to Himself of His loved and His own; who verily were a foreshadow of those He names in 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. Because of which POSSIBLE BLISS it behoves every born-again one to heed the exhortation of 2 Cor. vii. 1. Ay, indeed, because of what that and those were to Him, so were they exhorted TO SHARE in His own joy; and sharing with Him is fellowship with Him. No wonder that they went forth to do and dare, being strengthened *through* understanding *the words* that were declared unto them. No passing pleasant entertainment was this—no sitting as the Lord's people in the spirit of such as listen to a lovely song. Rather was it the reached and instructed spirit that has listened to learn, and has learned to obey, as those

who have been cast or poured like the melted metal into a mould of doctrine that shapes their whole spirit, soul, and body. Our God has not changed, nor has His word. The name *Jehovah* being interpreted means, "Who was, Who is, and Who is to come." That is to say, what He was, He is; and what He is, He will be.

"No change *Jehovah* knows."

But ah! me, who is there to-day that is so at leisure from himself or his fellows, or even perishing men's need, that he enters into fellowship with his God by learning wherein is His joy? Then, strengthened thereby, he comes forth doing and teaching and causing to understand the will of the Lord Christ; whereby days of gladness are experienced, because days of obedience are manifested through the requirements of the Lord being known and done. Surely if such there be, there shall also be greater obedience than heretofore. Yea, shall there not be a separation such as followed in the Ezra day?—a separation marked by laughter turned into mourning, which in turn was changed into acceptable worship, sustained by diligent heed to all the commands of the Lord, as well as prayer not to forget the past, nor yet to make light of the present. Nay, rather, there shall be a seeking to lay up a good foundation against the time to come, so that when one is no longer with beloved fellow-saints they may have these things in remembrance. Thus shall saints be fortified against cunningly devised fables—against the traditions

and commandments of men, being led into and kept in the old path of "*the Faith*," even in the ways that be in Christ. And this as opposed to, and different from, the well-meant ways of some who have zeal and much else that is commendable; but whose ways notwithstanding should not be imitated. And why? Because their ways are as a mixture of woollen and linen—pleasing and attractive as the many colours of a pet son's coat—rather than that manner of life which is as in one piece, being woven throughout; and which thereby protests to its very enemies against being rent asunder. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

J. B.

### CANNOT DO THIS.

**T**HE religious world may lead a man through the outward forms of its Christianity, and make him look wonderfully like a Christian. But there is one thing it cannot do. It cannot make him *humble*. The religious world may cause him to assume a sanctimonious air at certain seasons. But that is not humility. True humility is the attitude of the soul *in relation to another*; and that other is *Christ*. The mere professor of Christianity therefore knows nothing of humility, for the simple reason that he knows nothing of Christ. There must be union with Christ before such humility is possible; and then there must be *communion* before the meek and lowly spirit can be learned of Him.

## ONE MEETING IN A WEEK.

**W**E have heard it remarked, as an evidence of spiritual declension, that there are believers who are never to be seen except at the "morning meeting" on Lord's-day. Undoubtedly the "sign" is a bad one. A little religion on Lord's-day is not a very striking testimony to the truth that we are "buried with Christ and raised with Him too."

We are aware that there are those who are really *hindered* from assembling themselves together, however much they long to be where two or three are waiting in the presence of the Lord. We are not referring to these dear believers. We are persuaded that *they* shall have their portion of the children's bread. The Lord looks on the heart; and where He sees the willing heart, it is accepted (2 Cor. viii. 12).

But what of those who have opportunity to be at a week-night meeting, and are yet deliberately or carelessly absent? It is truly lamentable to think of what a meagre attendance is often seen at the prayer-meeting. Some brethren seem actually to have forgotten that there is such a meeting! Even the religious world pays rigorous attention to "doing its religion" *once-a-week*. Has it actually come to this, that we have so cut down our "time for God" that we are spending no more in public testimony for Him than the religious world spends on its religion? If so, we are fallen upon an evil day. We have

been accustomed to think that "Sunday religion" was a thing that belonged peculiarly to the world. In the name of the Lord let us hand it over to the world, root and branch. If Christ is to us "the Chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely"—if it was the case, even in a lukewarm day, that they that feared the Lord spake often one to another (Mal. iii. 16)—surely one meeting in the week will utterly fail to satisfy us! There shall be a longing for the courts of the Lord's presence, in fellowship with His people. Yes, beloved, that is it. If Christ is to us "a living, bright reality"—if our estimate of Him is expressed in the words of the forty-fifth Psalm: "Thou art fairer than the children of men,"—we shall long to be with those who admire the beauty of the Lord and enquire in His temple.

But, if we have only a feeble desire to meet with our brethren unitedly—if week-night meetings come and go while we "take no note of time"—why disguise the true state of matters, and seek to deceive ourselves? Coldness of heart has set in. Declension from God is doing its deadly work. Satan is getting an undoubted advantage, *whether we are aware of it or not*. We may try to persuade ourselves that we are in quite a good condition of soul, and that we have as true a heart for the Lord as ever we had. But, *if that be the case*, there shall assuredly be signs, and tokens, and fruits, and evidences,—not the least of which will be a decided desire to meet with the people of God, and speak and

hear of the things "touching the King" (Ps. xlv. 1).

Let us see that we do not undervalue the "means of grace" which our God has put within our reach. In these dark days it surely becomes us to buy up the opportunities and strengthen the bonds of scriptural fellowship! Our God will not be robbed, in the matter of waiting upon Him in company with His saints. Let us therefore give Him His portion. In making our arrangements, and when we are saying, "*This* MUST be attended to," and "*That* MUST be attended to," let us not fail to ask, "Where does God come in?" Where does the meeting of the saints come in? "Seek ye first the Kingdom" simply means, "Put God *first*." Give Him the foremost place; and then make your arrangements. A faithful God will "add" all that is needful. No matter what the circumstances of our earthly lot may be, if we are thus found honouring God, our experience shall be that of Psalm iv. 7,—Gladness of heart, more than the world when its corn and its wine abounds.

### ABSENT FROM THE ASSEMBLY.

 attendance at only one meeting in a week (the "Breaking-of-Bread meeting") is an evidence of serious spiritual declension, what shall be said for those who feel themselves hampered to attend even that meeting? It is to be hoped that their number is limited. Nevertheless, it is well for us to remem-

ber that they who reckon once-a-week often enough for attendance at meetings, will very likely soon discover that once-a-week is *too often*—that is, for them! Excuses for absence will be easily found. One says he was not feeling very well; although there is no appearance of anything serious being wrong. Another says he "slept in." Yet the meeting-time is not till eleven o'clock at least; and the strange thing is, that both he and the unwell brother are ready to step in to their work the moment six o'clock strikes on Monday morning! These are incongruities that admit of only one explanation, and it is this, that the believers in question are all alive for the business of Monday, while they are sadly insensible to the business of that day in which it is the will of God we should "joy triumphantly." We appeal to all whom it may concern—ought these things so to be? The Lord has said, "This do, in remembrance of Me." The Memorial Feast is *the* Meeting above all others to which the Lord Himself has specially called us. It becomes us therefore to diligently watch against that condition of heart in which there is the lurking thought that "it is a weariness, this keeping the ordinances of the Lord." We speak of a certain *condition of heart* as the great danger to be guarded against, because out of the heart are the issues of life. Get the heart right, and you will have very little difficulty with attendance at meetings. If we have reason to praise the Lord that we possess a measure of desire after Himself, let us not neglect

any God-appointed means whereby that desire shall be maintained and intensified. We speak only of those who have opportunity. Circumstances may hedge up our way, and render it difficult to get out to the meeting. If so, we must see that we do not rob God with one hand to offer unto Him with the other. But the loving heart will seek to devise some means of overcoming these difficulties in a righteous way; and if that cannot be done we know that the Lord will not forget the "prisoners in Zion."

### INFLUENCE FOR EVIL.

**T**HE greater your influence, the greater is your responsibility if you do not use that influence for God. Some men have it in their power to do much good; but these are just the men who have it in their power to do correspondingly much harm. The man of great "gift" as a preacher or a teacher, will be a powerful instrument for evil, if he is not likewise great in the grace of humility. Some of the most grievous trials that have afflicted the Church, have been due to the action of men supposed to be great in gift, yet sadly deficient in all the elements that go to make up a Christ-like life. Perhaps they were possessed of undoubted abilities,—clear reasoning powers, and a wonderful acquaintance with the truths of Scripture. But these very qualifications, in the absence of the meekness and gentleness of Christ, rendered them dangerous in

the highest degree to the prosperity of believers within the circle of their influence. There is no man so capable of being an instrument of evil as he who is mighty in intellect and poor in the "graces" of Gal. v. 22, 23. Such a man may be called a brother of remarkable "gift." But the word "gift" is completely misapplied in that case; for we must remember that gift is *God's giving*: it comes from Christ, and leads to Christ. It is written, "The Lord shall give that which is good" (Ps. lxxxv. 12). His "giving" is always *good*. As the Lord taketh no pleasure in the legs of a man (Ps. cxlvii. 10)—the world's athlete, neither does He take pleasure in the reasoning powers of a man—the intellectual giant. Powers of mind or body are valued by our God only in so far as they subserve the purposes of His eternal glory. Where a clear and powerful mind is found wedded to a Christ-like disposition and a will subjected to the Father of spirits, you have a divine combination—a believer who is an undoubted "gift" from the ascended Lord. But where mere intellect sits upon the throne, you have a man who will use that intellect for his own exaltation, or (however good his intentions) lead saints sadly astray with his torch of carnal wisdom.

—♦—♦—♦—

IF you cannot do mighty works as a preacher, you can at least avoid being a hinderer. If you cultivate the Christ-like spirit you cannot fail to be a helper of your brethren who truly serve the Lord.

## KNOWING AND DOING.

**I**N earthly things it is reckoned that a man's *ability* multiplied into his *industry* gives you the sum of his *genius*. That is to say, genius, or "greatness" (to use a popular word), is composed of two elements,—*ability to do* and *industry in doing*. In this matter the same rule applies to the kingdom of grace as to the kingdoms of men. In other words, in spiritual things a man's *knowledge* multiplied into his *obedience* gives you the sum of his *Christianity*.

In earthly things a man may have abilities of a high order. Yet he may fail to put these abilities into exercise. He may *know* how to get wealth. Yet, failing in *industry*, he may remain poor to the end of his days. Knowledge is not always power. Splendid abilities avail nothing unless they are put beneath the yoke of patient industry. These may be called self-evident truths in the domain of earthly things. Yet, in the higher sphere of spiritual things, they are just as self-evident to all who have eyes to see. Truth never becomes *living truth* to us until we put it into practice. God's *promises* are only turned into the gold of Heaven, as we obey His precepts. We may *know* how to walk as pleasing the Lord; yet, if we fail to follow the light we have, we shall be strangers to the "great peace" (Ps. cxix. 165) of them that love His law, and who "remember His commandments *to do them*."

A certain philosopher has said that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing."

In the things of God such knowledge is only dangerous when unaccompanied by obedience. It then carries with it the responsibility of rejected light,—surely "a dangerous thing" to any child of God. But there is no danger—on the contrary there is positive reward—to those who, with only a limited knowledge, are "adorning the doctrine."

In some quarters there is a great accumulating of mere knowledge, as if knowledge alone were sufficient to make up a Christian experience. But the *knowing* of our Father's will is a very different thing from the *doing* of His will. What we *know* must be multiplied by what we *do*; and the *product* thus brought out will represent whereabouts we are in our Christian experience. It will make us no richer, merely to know that "blessed is he that considereth the poor." That blessing, like a thousand others, only becomes ours as we carry out the condition attached to it. It is of the one who *keepeth* the Master's words that He says: "I will love him, and will manifest myself to him . . . and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (Jno. xiv. 21, 23). It is well for us to know—yea, we ought to make it our business to learn—what is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us; that we may be "filled with the knowledge of His will" (Col. i. 9). Yet such *filling* is for a purpose, viz., that we may *delight* to do that will, and thus please Him who has said, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God *and keep it*."

## WILDERNESS BREATHINGS.

"A Man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isaiah xxxii. 2).

"Thou art my Rock" (Psalm lxxi. 3).



THIS is but a weary land;

Faith's children find it so,—  
The wind, the tempest, and the heat  
Make feeble steps and slow;  
No shadow cools the sun's fierce ray,  
Nor rippling stream beguiles the way.

No "habitation" this for them, (Isa. xxxv. 7)

The pilgrim's name they bear, (Heb. xi. 13)

This wilderness is not their rest,

The stamp of death is there;  
How sweet the home that lures them on,—  
The desert past, the City won! (Heb. xi. 16)

But still, while on their homeward way,

The eyes that upward gaze,  
A "Hiding place," a "Covert" see,  
A "Shelter" from the rays  
Of burning sun, or tempest's shock—  
The "Shadow" of a mighty "Rock."

How grand that Rock! eternal calm

Broods on its mighty crest;  
No burning sun nor storms of earth  
Can mar the perfect rest  
Of those who hide them like the dove,  
In those deep clefts prepared by Love.  
(S. of S. ii. 14).

But if the pilgrim's eyes are fixed

On desert's toilsome ways,  
No cheering view of that great Rock  
Can meet his longing gaze;  
How can he rest "with great delight,"  
(S. of S. ii. 3).

And nought but desert sands in sight?

The symbol changes;—low and sweet

It whispers to the heart—  
"A MAN shall be an hiding place,"  
A "Covert" from each dart  
With which the tempter tries and proves  
The weary ones whom Jesus loves.

Upon a tender human heart  
Rest thou and all thy care,  
For Son of God and Man is He  
Who bids thee nestle there;  
When faith is weak, and eyes are dim,  
Fly to His arms and hide in Him.

"Only a little while, belov'd,"—  
Whisp'ring He folds thee there—

"Only a few more tears to shed,  
A few more storms to bear;  
Then in that 'place prepared' for thee  
Mine arms thy home for aye shall be."

E. J. A. P.

## WILL NOT COME DOWN.



IN Gospel testimony you may have heard it said that many are unsaved because they will not humble themselves. They will not come down: therefore they remain strangers to Christ. And it is for the same reason that many a child of God remains in great part a stranger to the ways of Christ. If *coming down* is needed at conversion, it is no less needed *after* conversion. The One to whose image we are predestinated to be conformed is He who is meek and lowly in heart. To bear *His* yoke is one of the first lessons we are called to learn. In order to bear that yoke we must come down—down from much that is dear to the pride of the natural heart—down from much that is highly esteemed among men. If there be not a coming down from self, there can be no growing up into Christ. If we are not prepared to humble ourselves, there can be no heavenly promotion. It is vain to bear the name of Christ, if we do not manifest the spirit of Christ.

## THERE IS SOMETHING AWANTING.

**S**OME twenty years ago a brother stepped into a meeting where "two or three" had been gathered together in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and were "breaking bread" in remembrance of Him. At the close of the meeting he made the remark: "*There is something awanting.*" He had been accustomed to have everything "cut and dry," and was altogether a stranger to the order of God's house. But, on looking back, now that twenty years have passed, he can thank God for "the searching of heart" awakened by the thought that there was "something awanting," and for having learned that it was with that little company the Lord would have him to be. Twenty years ago there seemed to be something awanting—the "one man," who could be seen by the eye of sense, doing everything pertaining to "public worship." *Now*, it is altogether different, for the brother in question is abundantly satisfied with that One in the midst, who is seen only by the eye of faith.

But even when we have gone forth to the rejected Lord Jesus Christ, it is good for us to discover if there is "something awanting." When gathered together according to His precious word we sometimes sing:

"My Saviour, whom absent I love,  
Whom not having seen I adore."

That is what we want—the adoring heart going out after the absent One, while we are constrained by love divine

to "do this" in remembrance of Him, "till He come." And in anticipation of His coming again we say:

"I shall meet Him whom absent I loved,  
And whom, though unseen, I adored."

Nothing shall ever be awanting then. When that Scripture is fulfilled: "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am" (Jno. xvii. 24), we shall be perfectly satisfied throughout eternal ages.

How sad it is that, through the traditions of men, children of God should be content with worship that is not "in Spirit and in Truth"! Jesus is not "in the midst": but they do not seem to miss Him! Yet, by His Spirit, He is in the midst of those who have been gathered into His precious Name. We know that His personal return is at hand,—that He is soon coming again to take us to be forever with Himself. It is only as we have these two truths burning in our hearts that we can walk with Him, and so "abide" that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming (1 Jno. ii. 28). A. S.

It needs something besides years of experience to understand the secret springs of action in our own heart. There must be a *present* walking in the light and a drinking in of the Master's spirit. Past experience is not to be undervalued; but it must be joined to *present fellowship* with the Lord Himself, before we can rightly judge the workings of the flesh in our own heart.

## FROM BAD TO WORSE.

**T**HE world is evidently going from bad to worse. The dread tragedy of Calvary is actually being represented on the stage! The world seems to be afraid that its theatre may become dull and uninteresting. In order therefore to cater the more successfully for the *entertainment* of the people, the "Passion Play" has been put "on the boards"! Yes, and some of the world's religious teachers are patronising it; while men who poise in the world as "Christians" are trying to say a good word for this new invention of the great Enemy of souls. Are we surprised? No. We have ceased to be surprised at anything the world's religious teachers may do. But even in the denominations there is not an entire absence of testimony regarding the Tragedy of the Crucifixion. Some professed leaders of religious opinion speak as if they had not made up their minds as to whether this theatrical performance is good or bad. But there are others, and notably one periodical, which speaks right out in withering denunciation of the whole business, speaking of "the blasphemous burlesque" as "*this diabolical travesty of the death of the Son of God.*"

Such is the religious world,—a spark of heavenly light here and there, serving only to make the surrounding darkness visible,—a few devoted souls crying out against the world's theatre to-day, and to-morrow uniting in the vain attempt to stem the torrent of infidelity that comes

rushing through a professor's chair! Devoted souls! Yet, in the very futility of their attempts to bring the religious world up to God's standard, not a few of them have come to a standstill and asked the question, "Is this where the Lord desires me to be?—Is this where, by His Word and Spirit, He has placed me?" They discovered they were powerless to arrest the tide of worldliness, for the simple reason that "the world loves its own." They searched the Word, and found that the Lord had never placed them in these ungodly surroundings. They discovered that they were there merely through the accident of birth, or some other "accidental" cause, and not through learning from the Scriptures that such was the place where they ought to be. In obedience, therefore, to the call of God they went forth from the world's ecclesiastical camp, to seek and own the rejected Lord Jesus Christ. Let us hope and pray that the number of all such delivered ones may be increased manifold; that He who prayed "that they all may be one" may in this matter see of the travail of His soul.

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Vol. V.

## OUR GREAT BUSINESS.

**W**E Christians have a great business down here," said an aged servant of the Lord; "and that business is to *manifest Christ*."

Our business, you see, does not consist so much in *preaching* Christ as in *manifesting* Christ. Indeed, manifesting Christ is the highest form of preaching Christ. You may be a preacher without manifesting "the life also of Jesus." But you cannot manifest the life of Jesus without at the same time preaching Him in the world.

We believe it cannot be sounded too clearly that our first and great business on earth is to manifest Him whom we profess to have enthroned as Lord in our heart's affections. This is certainly the great purpose for which we have been "called,"—that we should be conformed to the image of God's Son (Rom. viii. 29)—that we should show forth the virtues of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Pet. ii. 9).

Is it not the case that we are in danger of forgetting the very purpose for which we have been left in an ungodly world? Christ was sent to reveal what

God is: we have been sent to reveal what Jesus is. Are we fulfilling our mission? Are we bearing about in our body the dying of Jesus? Are we making it the business of our life that the heavenly light shall shine through the earthly tabernacle, no matter how the clouds may go and come—no matter what storms may sweep the firmament of the church?

We have been saved and sent into the world in order that we may shine with the light of the blessed One, and manifest His spirit, and love with His love. Oh what a mission! And it is your mission and mine, my brother, my sister. We may have forgotten it,—we may never have apprehended it as clearly as we ought. Yet the purpose of our God concerning you and me is still the same. We have been *called*, and *separated*, and *sent*, to MANIFEST JESUS to a dying world. Yea, God has kindled in each of our hearts the flame of everlasting love, and told us to *let* that light be ever shining in the darkness; as if He would say unto His redeemed: "Go, each one your way, to the factory, to the workshop, the busy mart—wherever your lot be cast—and let the world see that you have been with Jesus."

This is the preaching that never fails, — Jesus manifest in our mortal body. We want a revival of truth that shall bear upon this all-important theme. We want Heaven-sent men to declare, with no uncertain sound, the calling of the believer. And when we have had a mighty revival time as to the calling of *the believer*, the truth as to the calling of *the church* shall be carried home with a power unknown in lukewarm days.

We have had revivals of various kinds in the past. We have had revivals that emphasised the inner witness of the Spirit; and we have had revivals whose peculiar feature was the simple believing of the record. While praising God for these, we are nevertheless convinced that the revival that is to manifest hypocrisy and startle the world from its sleep of death, is one whose great "fundamental tone" shall be, *Jesus manifest in the believer's mortal body*. Such a revival soon makes manifest what is of God and what is of man. Revival of that kind is a positive terror to the formalist. He can keep up to the "general standard" — he can give you chapter-and-verse for his conversion — he can sing hymns and speak of "splendid meetings." But if *Christ manifest in the life* is to "rule the day" in the Lord's work, the formalist would soon be made to feel that he is in an atmosphere too trying *for him*. The reign of "ease in Zion" would be shaken to its very centre, and the grave-clothes of mere profession would be found falling off on every side, before the new and abundant life of Jesus made manifest in

the lives of His people. The mere professor can say, "I believe." He may have a kind of zeal for God, and give his assent to certain lines of truth. But there is one thing he cannot do — he cannot *manifest the life of Jesus*, for the simple reason that "the life" must be *possessed* before it can be *manifested*. But the "manifested life" does far more than merely tear off the grave-clothes of profession. A people showing forth the virtues of the Son of God cannot testify in vain. "Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord" (Ps. xl. 3). The light shall be seen. The fire shall make itself felt. Christ cannot be hid. The life bright with His praise, shall allure unto Him. The world may not hear much sound of words from that company whose lives are manifesting the life of Jesus. There may be but little "gift," and nothing wherein the flesh can glory. But love is greater than eloquence, and the Master's spirit more than angel's voice; for both that love and that spirit will "abide" when "tongues shall cease and prophets fail."

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If you see some men going to an extreme, do not let that provoke you to rush to the opposite extreme. The truth can never be helped by our wresting it in one direction, simply because others are wresting it in the contrary direction. Such a course may seem to be good policy; but it proceeds upon a bad principle. We have only to tread the path of truth as revealed in the Scriptures, and leave the rest with God.

## EASY LED AWAY.

“**H**E is a brother that's very easy led away, unfortunately.”  
 “Yes,” was the reply; “but it is always the *wrong* way: he is not at all easily led in the way that is according to God.”

We fear this is generally the case, whenever there has been a yielding to the seductions of the world. There are professed believers whom it is scarcely possible to move in the direction of truth and righteousness; and yet they are ready to yield, the moment some worldling gives a wave of his hand! Why this ready response to the attraction of Egypt?—Why such slowness to yield to the call of Heaven? The answer is found in very few words. There is a *secret affinity* between the heart and the attractive power.

If you take a magnet and push it into a heap of joiner's chips, you do not attract one of them. Why? Because there is no affinity,—there is nothing in common between the magnet and the pieces of wood. But put your magnet into those steel filings, and what a rush the little pieces of steel make for the magnet! They literally cluster round it. Why? Because there is affinity;—the attractive power and the particles attracted are of a kindred nature. Thus it is with the believer, or the professed believer, who is attracted by some allurements of the Egypt world. Egypt has *already got into the heart*; and, when *Egypt-from-without* knocks at the door,

*Egypt-from-within* is ready to rise and open immediately. This is the chief reason why so many professed children of God are falling such a prey to the great Enemy of souls. He first deals with *the heart*—suggests the thought that such-and-such a thing is not such a heinous sin after all—that the ungodly are not so ungodly after all—that the world, which God's says “lieth in the Wicked One,” is not so bad a world after all. Thus the heart is prepared—not to seek the Lord (2 Chron. xxx. 19)—but to respond to the Tempter's attraction. The attraction is then presented and embraced. The believer yields at the first summons to surrender. Hell rejoices; but there is no joy in Heaven! Saints wonder how the believer in question could have yielded so quickly and so easily to the Egypt world. But the battle had been lost long before the Egypt world came up and knocked at the door of the heart. It was lost on the same day that the unholy thought was allowed an entrance. It was lost in the evil hour when the voice of conscience was silenced and the voice of carnal reasoning accepted as “a sure word of prophecy.” It was lost in that evil time when the Spirit's pleadings were one by one neglected, and when thoughts of Egypt were rolled as a sweet morsel under the tongue! It was *then* that the battle was lost; although to the eye of man all might seem to be going on well. Therefore let us see that *no forbidden thought* is allowed a harbour in our hearts. But who is sufficient for

these things? There is one—the Almighty One—the risen Son of God. Enthroned Him—let Him have His place in the heart; and “the Strong Man” will “keep the house.” Where Jesus is enthroned, sin is abhorred. The world may knock at the door,—the forbidden thought may seek to be entertained. Yet, if Jesus be reigning in the heart, Satan shall be met at the very threshold of the door and resisted.

### DEPENDS ON WHERE WE STAND.

**W**HEN an eclipse of the Sun is announced, the public are informed that the crossing of the heavenly bodies can only be seen from a particular spot on the earth's surface. Scientific men travel hundreds, sometimes thousands, of miles to the required spot. *Any place* will not do as a stand-point. In such circumstances your *ability to see* depends upon *where you stand*. This law in the physical world loses none of its force when you apply it to things spiritual. If the astronomer must make sure he is standing on the right spot in order to see the wonderful movements of the heavenly bodies, no less is it needful that the believer makes sure he is standing where he can behold the wonderful things of God in the great firmament of revealed truth.

A believer may profess to have great difficulty in *seeing* some particular truth; and he may be quite honest in saying that he “cannot see it.” But what he

needs is not so much new light as a *new condition of soul*. A believer who cares not to walk in the light of God, can not be expected to behold many “wonderful things” in the pages of Scripture. He may contend, that because he “cannot see” a certain truth, it has therefore no existence. But it would be just as reasonable to contend that because *you* could not see an eclipse of the Sun on a particular day, *therefore* there was no eclipse at that time. Were you standing *on the right spot* from which to witness the eclipse? That is the question that goes to the root of the matter. And that is the very question that explains why much precious truth can not be *seen*.

What position do we occupy in our spiritual experience? Have we gone forth to the Mount of Communion, to hear the voice of the Beloved One? If so, we cannot fail to *see* much in the domain of truth that would otherwise have been hid from our eyes. Abraham had messages—yea, he had visitors—from Heaven while sojourning in the plain of Mamre. But to Lot, in Sodom's gate, no message came—save the message of judgment!

If we surround ourselves with the atmosphere of worldliness, it becomes a moral impossibility for us to see anything that takes a measure of spiritual discernment to perceive. If we come forth from the unhallowed influences of unconverted company, or carnal professors of religion, we cannot be expected to understand the things of the Spirit of

God. We must be experimentally near to God,—we must habitually walk in the inner courts of His Holy presence,—if we would perceive the beauties of His Word, and rejoice to run in the way of His commandments. The professed believer who is at home in the world's giddy crowd, and finds congenial company in the enemies of Christ, looks around in amazement as you point him to the most precious and separating truths of Scripture. He tells you decidedly that he “can't see it.” And we are not surprised. We should be greatly surprised if he *did* see it. He who finds so much to attract him in an ungodly world will discover but little beauty in that Jesus whom the world is still rejecting with all its heart. The professed believer who—whether it be in heart or life—is pitching his tent toward Sodom, cannot be expected to say “Amen” to truth that cuts at the root of his own departure from God.

We must draw *near* to God if we would *hear*. We must come into the *light* if we would *see*. Let there be a preparation of heart, and a separation of heart; and the will of God shall only need to be known to be obeyed. Thus we shall be found rejoicing in the Word as those that find great spoil. Thus shall the crooked places be made straight, and the rough places plain (Isa. xl. 4); for “if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God” (Jno. vii. 17). “Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord” (Hosea vi. 3).

## NO SWORD.

**S**AUL had no sword for Agag;—there was too much of a kindred spirit between them. And it is for the same reason that Agags without number are allowed to walk at large to-day. If we feel that there is much in common between ourselves and Agag, we shall have very little desire to seize the sword of judgment; for if, in such circumstances, we take up the sword to smite Agag we simply condemn ourselves! It is lamentable to reflect that the lack of self-judgment is the great reason why “popular sins” remain unjudged. He who is conscious that he is not laying the knife of circumcision to his own ways, has a very trembling hand when he takes the sword to deal with evil in another. Thus it comes that the right arm is paralysed which should have been wielding the sword of Samuel. Thus it comes that Agags are allowed to survive—yea, and to flourish—yea, and to make their boast that “the bitterness of death is past.” What is wanted in order to reverse all this and bring the reign of Agag to a close? We simply want to walk anew in the power of *death-and-resurrection truth*; and the moment it is *death with us* in our inner experience, that moment shall sound the death-knell of the Agags who now hold high carnival in Israel.

—♦—  
SIN is always begotten in the womb of thought before it can form itself into the bud of action.

## THE MEANS OF WONDERFUL BLESSING.

**A** BROTHER in a certain Assembly was an undoubted "trouble" to the saints. The godly groaned before the Lord about him; and there was a general sigh of relief when he left the town and went to reside in a distant part of the country. The troublesome brother soon found a company of believers gathered to *The Name*; one of them being an aged brother of great experience in the things of God, and excelling in "the grace of patience." Months passed away; and one day the aged brother was accosted by a believer from a distance. "How do you get on with brother ——?" he enquired; "he used to be a great trouble to us, you know; and I understand he is with you now." "O," replied the aged believer, "he has been the means of wonderful blessing to us all." The stranger expressed his surprise. But the old brother still praised God for the blessing received by means of the new-comer, and added the significant words—"*On his account we have been often brought to our knees before the Lord.*"

This was a striking illustration of the Scripture which says: "In everything give thanks" (1 Thess. v. 18). It is clear that the aged brother and the godly souls in that Assembly, had been passing through a trying time. The crookedness of the troublesome brother was a severe strain upon their faith; and they did not attempt to disguise that. Yet they were

persuaded that out of such a seeming hindrance to spiritual prosperity God could "command the blessing." And He did it. They acquired an experience in the grace of patience which they never had before. Perhaps they could not praise God *for* the tribulation through which they were passing. But they praised Him *in it*. They accepted the trial as among the all things that work together for good to them that love God, while they did not cease to cry to Him for deliverance.

It is at this point we often fail to learn some needed lesson, and come short of some new and needed experience. When trouble arises, or when some perverse brother acts in such a way as to become an infliction to the saints, let us remember that the grace of patience is the chief thing that is needed, although it may not be the only thing that is needed. If we have not grace to *wait*, we may well question if we have grace to *act*. Action may be needed; but if it be not characterised by the patience of Christ, it cannot be expected to yield "the peaceable fruits of righteousness." Those who *seek* God's hand in everything never fail to *see* His hand. If we viewed our troubles as coming from God, we should find blessing in everything, and hear His voice, like David of old, even through the cursings of a Shimei.

HE that has never known adversity is but half acquainted with others, or with himself. Constant success shows us but one side of the world.

## “WE DON'T BELIEVE IT.”

**T**HE world seems to have a wonderfully accurate standard of Christianity for those who profess to be on their way to Heaven. “We heard that So-and-so was converted,” the world says; “but we don't believe it; for he is *attending the football club the same as ever.*” Even the world seems to understand what is unbecoming for an heir of Heaven. And it is well that it is so. We have now reached a point in the history of the religious world when people will profess anything in the way of conversion, provided you allow them to hold on to their idols! In some cases even the world itself has a higher standard of Christianity than some who profess to be on their way to God. In this religious age you will find those who contend that you may be born again and yet remain in association with the ungodly; although the ungodly, in such circumstances, have been known to turn round and say: “If you are converted now, what are you doing among us?” It is truly an evil day for children of God when the world has to tell them to raise their standard of separation, or pull down the notice-board of profession.

When a man professes to be saved for eternity—to have undergone the great change of conversion to God—and yet continues, quite complacently, to be associated with the ungodly, whether in the football club or elsewhere, we are convinced that something is seriously wrong. There has been a daubing of

the walls with untempered mortar. In other words, there is reason to fear that the convert in question has simply been persuaded to “embrace Christianity,” without coming into living contact with the risen Son of God. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away,” as saith the Scripture (2 Cor. v. 17). But if old things are *not* passed away, how is any one warranted to conclude that there has been a new creation there? If we are not saved from ungodly associations, it may well be asked what are we saved from? The purpose of God in sending His Son, was “that He might deliver us from this present evil world” (Gal. i. 4). If there has been deliverance from that evil world, then what means this affinity with these ungodly associations? If Christ be enthroned as Lord in the heart, how can you find yourself at home in associations where He is practically disowned? These questions go to the root of the matter. If you have been truly converted to God there has been a revolution in the heart. As an inevitable consequence you will instinctively recoil from association with that world which crucified the Son of God; while the world will have as little desire for association with *you*. But if, on the other hand, you have merely *professed* to be converted,—if you are a stranger to the pangs of the new birth,—then between you and the world there is still an unbroken affinity. You are *of the world*, and cannot be expected to sever yourself from its ungodly associations.

In clinging to these associations you are simply acting *in keeping with your character.*

### MUST HAVE PLAIN-SPEAKING.

**W**E must have plain-speaking as to what conversion to God really means. Let those who profess to be heaven-sent ambassadors give this important matter their attention. Let the line of separation be clearly drawn; or, rather, let clear testimony be given concerning the separation lines which God has drawn. Worldliness is on the increase; worldly-conformity is lifting its head, and finding so many supporters among professing Christians that one will soon be puzzled to know "where the Church ends and the world begins." Wherein lies the remedy for all this? It lies (in great part, at least) in the faithful ministry of God's ambassadors. Let the light of truth be "flashed in" upon the darkness of worldly Christianity. Let the rejected Jesus be proclaimed as the Elect One of God, although still the despised of men. Let the believer's calling be told out, as one with Christ in resurrection. In the midst of such testimony we are persuaded that worldly Christianity would have a hard time of it—yea, would soon be compelled to hide its head.

EVERY man is a missionary, now and for ever, for good or for evil, whether he intends or designs it or not.

### THE SPIRITUAL INSTINCT.

**T**HERE is a great deal of truth to which the young convert is necessarily a stranger. He has much to learn as to what is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning him. But while this is the case, the new-born soul possesses a kind of spiritual instinct, which preserves him from many a pitfall, even in conversion's earliest day. This spiritual instinct is perhaps most conspicuous in the matter of keeping company with the unconverted. One who has drunk, for the first time, from the "deep, sweet well" of a Saviour's love, instinctively turns to that which will nourish and sustain the new life. New longings have been begotten in the soul; and these longings seek to be satisfied in hearing more of the absent One. Among the unconverted His name is never mentioned: they care not to talk of His priceless worth. The young convert therefore looks around for kindred spirits, as if already saying in the language of Scripture: "Thy people shall be my people" (Ruth i. 16). The earliest instincts of the new nature thus *anticipate* what is already recorded on the page of inspiration, viz.—"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 Jno. iii. 14); and again, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Cor. vi. 17). This spiritual instinct of the new-born soul is ever found in keeping with the teachings of Scripture; and is thus distinguished from that

professed leading of the Spirit which is often claimed by certain "old converts"; but which "leading" runs *contrary* to that which is written.

### THE CHILDREN NEGLECTED.

**T**HE opponents of revival work are often heard bringing up the objection that one's own family are neglected in order that meetings may be attended. "There's So-and-so," they say, "continually attending meetings, while it would be more to his credit if he sat down at home and devoted half the time to bringing up his little ones in the nurture and admonition and fear of the Lord." In this matter it is quite possible that the opponents of revival work may not be very far from the mark. There is something to be learned, even from an enemy; and we must not mark down a thing as nonsense because it proceeds from an unfriendly critic. The men who thus find fault, and who seem to be so greatly concerned as to the upbringing of the young, are very likely utterly callous regarding that great work; for opponents of revival work generally, can have no interest in the *special* revival-work associated with the bringing up of their children. Nevertheless, there may be *something* in what they say. We believe there *is* something—perhaps a great deal, in some cases at least.

On Lord's-day it is no uncommon thing for believers to be engaged during the whole day in what professes to be

work for God. Between attending meetings—especially when a long distance is travelled—and conversing on kindred topics, the time is swallowed up; and in some cases the wearied worker reaches home at such a late hour that his children have all retired for the night. The whole of the Lord's-day has passed; but the brother in question has been so busy "working for God" that his own family have been almost entirely neglected, so far as he is concerned. Now, the question that arises is simply this: Is such a state of things glorifying to God? Are we warranted to habitually absent ourselves in this way from our own family circle? We may argue that the call is urgent—that the need is great—and that the Lord's work *must* be attended to. All very true, perhaps. But "the Lord's work" covers a lot of ground; and not the least important department of that work is to be found within the circle of our own family. Are we duly exercised as to our little ones? Are we as anxious that the Lord's work should prosper in our own homes as in the wider circle of the Gospel meeting? We are far from saying, as some say,—“Let religion be kept at home: that is the place for it.” We simply contend for this: Let our Christianity be made manifest in our own house; let our children feel, and be made to feel, that God is there: and let due time be devoted to the training up of a child in the way he should go. *Then*, when we are consciously doing the Lord's work in the family circle, we are

free to serve Him in a wider circle. It will be at the peril of our children, and to the serious detriment of our own souls, if we are found burning with enthusiasm as to other people's vineyards while manifesting little anxiety about our own.

We must beware of that restless spirit of a restless age, that makes it a weariness to sit calmly down with the Book of Books, and hear what God the Lord will say; or leisurely to tell to our little ones the wonders of His Kingdom. We must watch against that tendency to "religious dissipation" which would make us discontented in everything pertaining to the Lord's work except the whirl of great meetings. The test of our Christianity lies in this: *What is seen and felt of it at home?* If this question be answered satisfactorily—if you are truly and stedfastly carrying on the Lord's work *there*, then there is no fear of your failing to bear testimony for Him in a wider circle, according to the ability which God giveth. In plain words, the man who is diligently attending to the Lord's work in his own house is the very man who will take a real and hearty interest in the Lord's work in the world around him; while he who is careless as to his home responsibilities can have no vital interest in the outside world, however anxious he may seem to be for its salvation.

—♦—  
A CROWD is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love.

## TILL HE IS TEN.

"GIVE me the training of a child till he is ten years of age," said a Romish priest; "and, after that, I care not what you do with him." We merely quote this to show that Rome is alive to the importance of *bending the tree while it is a twig*. While Rome is bending the twigs *Romewards*, let us seek, according to our ability and opportunity, to bend them *Godwards*. Nor must our vigilance flag when the child has reached the age of ten. That is not the *point* brought before us in the sentence we have quoted above; but simply this, that early training is of such paramount importance that the great battle of life is lost or won during childhood's tender years. You will find exceptions to the rule,—due to causes that are seen—or that may be unseen. Yet the great principle remains—true alike in grace as in nature—that as you bend the sapling you bend the future tree. This reflection brings with it a sense of solemn responsibility; and it becomes us to see that we are seeking to discharge our responsibility as those that must give account. We may not have the tongue of an Apollos in preaching Christ among the Gentiles; we may not possess the wisdom of a Paul in dealing with difficulties in the Church; but if, by the aids of grace divine, we give a *heavenward bias* to some young life, we may kindle a fire that shall burn with "Reformation" glow, although our eyes may never see it!

## BY FAITH AND THE WORD.

**I**T has been said that our Lord's life on earth was as wonderful in the miracles which it left undone as in those which it wrought. In the wilderness the Tempter says to Him: "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matt. iv. 3). A single word from Him, and the stones of the desert would have furnished a repast. But no such word is spoken. We never find our Lord working a miracle to supply His own wants. He had turned the water into wine at Cana. But that was to supply the need of others. Here, in the wilderness, He could as easily have made the stones bread. But as it is only *His own* need that is involved, we see no miracle. This seems to have been a rule of His life. Doubtless there were other considerations that had to do with His refusal to command the stones to be made bread. He would thereby have been acting on the suggestion of the Tempter, and taking Himself out of His Father's hand. Our Lord would thus have left the path of faith, which He trod as Son of Man, and delivered Himself by asserting His power as Son of God. But in that case His victory in the wilderness could have been of very little value *to us*. It would have been quite impossible for us to "follow His example" in resisting the attacks of Satan, had He delivered Himself in the manner suggested by the Tempter. But by no such device would He escape the hour of Temptation. By

simple faith in God, and by an appeal to the written Word, He vanquished the Tempter. He used no weapons but those that are within the reach of His people. *As man* He fought and overcame. His victory thus becomes ours in its deepest sense; for the weapons with which He overcame (the shield of Faith and the sword of the Word) are within the reach of all who have believed in His Name.

## HAPPINESS AND HOLINESS.

**Y**OU need not try to make a man happier without making him holier. You may "get up the enthusiasm," as the saying goes. You may have special meetings, and "splendid" addresses, and tell the saints to "rejoice in the Lord." But the measure of a believer's joy is the exact measure of his *separation in heart to God*. Happiness is not a commodity which you pick up at a "good-going meeting." It is a plant that grows from a certain root; and that root is righteousness. He who is not doing righteousness (the right thing) has no right to be happy. If he *is* happy, it is an unreal happiness — a counterfeit — a delusion. Neither God's salvation nor God's truth were ever intended to make men comfortable in the path of fleshly indulgence or worldly conformity. Happiness is not a thing you need to follow after: it will *follow you* in exact proportion as you follow God and walk in His ways.

## GO ON SOWING.

**I**N the evening withhold not thine hand" (Ecc. xi. 6). Go on sowing. You do not know the issues. These are with God. It is ours to sow. We do not know which shall prosper—"this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." Therefore, withhold not thine hand. Say not, "It is toward evening now; and it seems to make very little difference whether we sow or not." The word dropped by the wayside may be God's message of life to some soul that shall, in a coming day, receive you into "everlasting habitations." The little word of kindness, reflecting the Master's spirit, may be the gladdening sunbeam to some weary brother discouraged by the darkness of the way. We may not see much positive fruit from our sowing: it may be that we could not bear to know what God hath wrought through our humbleness. But the day is coming when we shall know. Meanwhile, "withhold not thine hand." The sowing time will soon be past; the season for testimony will, ere long, be beyond our reach; "yet a little while," and the weary workers shall "rest for evermore." Therefore, let the time be redeemed—let the opportunities be bought up. Iniquity is abounding—the darkness is deepening—the Day is nearing—"withhold not thine hand."

WHEREVER there is a revived believer you are sure to find awakened believers—awakened to see that they have been following Christ afar off.

## UNCONSECRATED METHODS.

**G**OD will never be prevailed upon to bless either un consecrated men or un consecrated methods." So says a beloved brother in an evangelical monthly; and we are quite at one with him on that point. It must be remembered, however, that what is meant by *un consecrated* methods of doing God's work is simply *un scriptural* methods of doing it. If a method is opposed to Scripture, you need not try to "consecrate" that method to God. We are aware that some act on the principle that "no matter whether the method is scriptural or not, if you go *earnestly* about it, God will accept the service." But it would be just as reasonable to say (as certain popular preachers say) that "no matter whether your way of getting to Heaven is right or not, you are sure to reach it if you are *earnest enough*." Mere earnestness will never take a man into the presence of God, if he enters not by God's appointed way. And earnestness, with devotion combined, however estimable these qualities may be, can never commend to God methods that are opposed to His revealed Word. It is consecrated men—men devoted in heart to God—and serving Him in accordance with the methods and principles of New-Testament Christianity, that God will own in a coming Day, however much He may seem *now* to own that which is opposed to His Word. A man is "not crowned, except he strive lawfully" (2 Tim. ii. 5).

## EXPECTING TOO MUCH.

**S**OME brethren seem to have the idea that the true Evangelist is one who can "visit all day and preach every night." That is the sort of Evangelist they are evidently looking for. We trust, however, that our dear brethren are not expecting too much. We question if we are warranted to lay down certain lines upon which God's servants are to walk. It may be a very easy thing for us to write out what we conceive to be the routine of work for a servant of Christ; but, if we had a week's experience of it ourselves, we should very likely discover that it was easier to make the burden than to carry it. We fear that it is only the few that have any idea of the "tear and wear" involved in preaching every night, even for a short series of meetings. Every meeting costs a certain amount of what is called "waste of tissue"; and nature must be allowed some time to do her repairs. The mind needs rest; the nervous system must have space wherein to recuperate its wasted energies. Then, some men "burn quicker" than others; while there are those who scarce burn at all—they seem never to be on fire. Men of that unimpassioned character, who wear out but slowly, might manage to overtake the all-day visitation and the evening address. Yet, having got all this, you would find yourself with a questionable blessing, if blessing at all.

These considerations would of themselves be sufficient to account for the

"scarcity" of men who "visit all day and preach every night." We are not surprised at the scarcity. God's servants are only mortal,—subject to nature's laws, and in some cases to special infirmities. But we may be assured that the Heaven-sent man is no idler. He will not be found neglecting the work of visitation. Yet we must not expect him to perform impossibilities. He will be found following up his work,—going with an invitation to come to the meetings, or calling to lead some awakened soul into the way of peace.\* But such visitation will arise out of God's leading, and *not* from the feeling that he must keep up a certain "tale of work." The Lord's servants must be free from bondage of that kind. You cannot keep the bow always bent. You cannot go on always giving out, except at the peril of spiritual bankruptcy. There must be time for meditation. God's ambassadors must have a measure of freshness for the great work of preaching Christ. Considering all these things, it seems to us that our wisdom is simply to ask the Lord to thrust forth labourers, without our giving any enumeration of the work they are to accomplish. Israel never made a greater mistake than when they described the kind of king they wanted.

\* There is also, in many cases, the item of time taken up by correspondence with young believers in various parts of the country, or with others needing a word of cheer. This is truly important work, although it does not yield itself to be measured and tabulated by those who judge according to the sight of their eyes.

The God-sent man will do the God-appointed work; and a little of such work will go far farther than any amount of work done according to our "plan and specification."

### WEEPING FOR JOY.

**A** LABOURER writes: "The work goes on here. More have been saved and separated. Last Lord's-Day morning meeting was the best I ever experienced. Several of the young converts were received into fellowship; and some of these did little else than weep for joy at being privileged to remember Jesus in the breaking-of-bread for the first time."

Truly this is cheering tidings. The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save. And not only can He save from the dominion of sin, but He can bring these rescued ones into His banqueting-house, while they weep for joy at the remembrance of His love.

These are the "morning meetings" we want to see,—meetings in which the hearts of the gathered worshippers shall be melted as they remember the Blessed One—meetings in which He shall be so truly Lord in the midst that the flesh shall be compelled to hide its head, while the Memorial Feast is kept with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

THE Lord often brings His people into deep waters that He may show them great mercies.

### MUST BE REJOICING.

**I**T is a sad spectacle to witness a preacher extolling the joys of salvation and the blessedness of being saved, while he is himself manifestly a stranger to the joy he is commending to others. Good tidings of great joy should not be told, and indeed cannot be told, with a heavy heart. "The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits" (2 Tim. ii. 6). It is not enough for the preacher to know that he *should be* in a rejoicing condition: he must be actually rejoicing. If he is not drinking from the same wells of salvation to which he is pointing others, he had better be silent until out of the abundance of the heart the mouth shall speak. There is a vast amount of preaching that is nothing more than sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. The preacher indulges in "great swelling words," and would like to create the impression that he is sailing "through seas of heavenly bliss." But his audience knows too much to believe anything of the kind. No one seems to be impressed; for the simple reason that *unreality is fatal in a preacher*. The true fire, which comes from above, never fails of its effect. But the *worked-up* enthusiasm—the "strange fire," begotten of fleshly power—worketh not the purposes of God. If in the preacher's soul the heavenly joy is burning, it will make itself felt without an effort. But if that joy is not burning there, the preacher runs unsent.

## ROOM FOR GOD AND THE WORD.

**T**HE great feature in a church of God which distinguishes it from a church of man's devising, lies in this—that in a church of God there is an open Bible, and liberty for the Spirit to act through whomsoever He will. In a church according to man there is not room for "a whole Bible." Certain parts of the written word must not be referred to. You may *hold* any doctrines you find in Holy Writ. But these doctrines must not be publicly proclaimed, in case they might disturb the peace of the church. But if doctrines which are according to God would disturb the peace of a church, it may well be asked if such peace is according to God. The doctrines which are of God can never disturb the peace which is of God. But further, in a man-devised church there is *not* liberty for the Spirit to act through whomsoever He pleases. In coming together, professedly to worship God, worldly systems of religion practically shut out God. These systems have it arranged that worship is to ascend through *one man*. That one man is to give out all the hymns, lead all the prayers, and do everything in the way of ministry. There is thus no room whatever for God the Spirit to act through whomsoever He will. Human arrangement has virtually said: "The one man chosen by the people is the only man that dare open his mouth." This being the case, it is clear that man-devised arrangements for worship must inevitably

set the Lord aside. It surely therefore becomes the people of God to see that their church fellowship is not circumscribed by the hard-and-fast lines of human arrangement, which shuts out the Spirit's leading and an open Bible. There must be room for *God and the Word*. And, if there be not room for these, we ask the simple question: How *can* there be room in that fellowship for any one who loves the Lord and seeks to walk in accordance with His Word?

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## CAUGHT IN THE VORTEX.

**W**HEN a Christian *inclines toward* the world, and dwells on the border-land, it is not long until he is *drawn into the vortex*. Jehoshaphat found this, to his cost, when he "went down" to Ahab to Samaria (2 Chron. xviii. 2). There is no evidence that Jehoshaphat knew anything of the projected expedition to Ramoth-gilead. He simply went down to make "a friendly visit." But one wrong step leads to another; and Jehoshaphat at once found himself in an awkward position. No sooner had he reached Samaria than Ahab "killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance"—just as worldlings make a great ado when they get some prominent Christian down from his eminence to figure as a man of the world. After this flattering reception Ahab boldly asks the question, "Wilt thou go with me to Ramoth-gilead?" (ver. 3). Jehoshaphat had not counted on this,—he had not intended to go *so far*. Indeed, it is clear that he had grave misgivings as to the expedition (ver. 6). Yet, what was he to do? He felt that he could not well draw back—especially as Ahab had given him such a flattering reception. It

would appear so uncourteous—so ungrateful—to refuse to help. In short, there was no getting over it. Jehoshaphat had entered upon a certain course; and he did not see how he could do anything else than follow it up—no matter how conscience might cry out at every successive step in departure from God. Therefore, the answer is given: "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war."

The same thing is being enacted to-day. Professed children of God are found "going down" in the direction of the world, although they do not *intend* to go *down very far*. The world receives them with a great flourish of trumpets; for we must remember that although the world wants nothing to do with Christians of the burning-and-shining-light order, it has a cordial welcome for all who will keep their Christianity out of sight, and "do as the Romans do." But no sooner is the gate of Samaria reached than the world brings out its proposals. "Wilt thou go with us," the world says; "we are going on an expedition to 'Ramoth-gilead,' and will be so pleased if you can give us your valued help." The believer is now in the toils. He has his secret misgivings; but he does not see how he

can *consistently* refuse. "The proposed expedition," he says, "is not actually wrong *in itself*," (neither was the attack on Ramoth-gilead); "although it may lead to unpleasant associations; but one must not draw too fine a line. The *object* aimed at is good in the main; the end must justify the means;—in fact, I can't get out of it." Thus the world-bordering believer reasons out the matter, and then answers accordingly: "*I will go.*" Thus it comes that many a once-bright testimony has been quenched in the world's "gate of Samaria." There are believers to-day hopelessly involved in the Ahab confederacy, who never intended to go near "Ramoth-gilead." They merely wished to go down to the border-land and have a peep at how things were moving. But if you go an inch with the world to-day, you may be certain that it will be wanting you to go an ell with it to-morrow. It is surely, therefore, time that we were upon our watch-tower. The tide of worldliness must be resisted with all the energy of the renewed nature. How shall we be delivered from the Ramoth-gilead expeditions?—how shall we escape the Ahab alliances? By giving heed to the call of God which says: "Come out from among them, and *be ye separate.*" If we are living in the power of that great separating truth, "*I am crucified with Christ*" (Gal. ii. 20), the "gate of Samaria" shall have no attraction for us; and we know that the world never seeks the co-operation of *crucified* men. We simply want to *abide* in that separated

position to which our God has shut us in *with Himself*

"Far far above  
The restless world which wars below."

Thus hearing *His* voice, and rejoicing in *His* presence, we shall have *His* mind as to that world which "lieth in the wicked One." Thus shall we discern the workings of Satan, although he may transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. xi. 14). Thus shall we keep our garments unspotted from the world, and be not of those to whom the Lord has to say, "What hast thou to do *in the way of Egypt*? . . . or what hast thou to do *in the way of Assyria*?" (Jer. ii. 18).

### SO-CALLED LIBERTY.

**T**HE spirit of lawlessness often passes current under the name of *liberty*; and children of God are being carried away by its fair promises, that every "member" will be at liberty to do that which is right in his own eyes. But there is no such liberty in the Word. It is true that we read of it in the reign of the Judges,—a state of things, however, recorded for our warning, and not for our imitation. Liberty, apart from obedience to the Word, is simply a license to do our own will. Therefore, let no one be carried away by promises of such liberty. The country where every man does as he pleases is a lawless country; and, in like manner, the church in which every man does as he pleases is a lawless church.

## OBEDIENCE TESTED.

**I**T does not take a very deep experience in the things of God to judge and condemn what is known as the grosser sins. These are so far removed from that which is pure and lovely, that the contrast is seen at once, even by many who make no profession of Christianity. But when worldliness presents itself in the guise of something that is highly esteemed among men, it is then that a certain spiritual discernment is required to detect that which is of man, as distinguished from that which is of God. We have a striking illustration of this in the history of Saul, the rejected king. When he received the commandment, "Go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have" (1 Sam. xv. 3), he set himself rather to sit in judgment upon the word of the Lord than to obey that word. He evidently sat down to consider how far it would be "judicious" to go in the path of obedience. That path was plain enough. There was no mistaking what God had said. "*Spare them not.*" This was sufficient for any one who simply wished to carry out what God had spoken. But this was not the case with Saul. Faith obeys without asking any questions, and leaves the issues with God. But unbelief hesitates to obey,—questions if it would be expedient to obey,—and finally concludes to obey *to a certain extent*, and "*spare*" that which commends itself to the carnal mind as "too good to be destroyed." Saul acted

exactly on this principle. Everything that was "vile and refuse" he utterly destroyed. "But Saul and the people *spared* Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen," and "all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them." The Lord had passed judgment upon Agag and all that pertained to him. Saul accepted that judgment in so far as it applied to that which was "vile and refuse," but passed his own judgment upon that which was "good," as he reckoned good. Therefore the hand of fleshly compassion was extended to that which the Lord had "appointed to utter destruction."

We see all this around us to-day. God has passed sentence upon the world, and all that is in the world,— "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Scripture emphatically declares that these are *not of the Father*, but of the world (1 Jno. ii. 16). Yet it has become fashionable to "spare" whatever may seem "good" in the sight of the carnal eye. That which is "vile and refuse" is utterly condemned; but the "refined" forms of evil are spared. Friendship with the world is being treated as if it had many "good points," although Scripture expressly declares that such friendship is enmity with God! (Jas. iv. 4). The vainglory of life seems to be filling the eye of many who were once enraptured with Him who is "fairer than the children of men." The question is being asked again and again, "What harm is there in this?" while the question should be,

“How far will this help or hinder the divine life in my soul?” The successors of Saul are busy preaching and practising a gospel of fleshly compassion, which runs contrary to the plainest teaching of Scripture. They accept God's estimate of the world,—but only in so far as the openly *ungodly* part of it is concerned. They utterly reject His estimate of the Egypt-world in its more refined character. The successors of Saul can enjoy fellowship with the undoubted enemies of Christ, provided they are *respectable* enemies! Yea, and if these enemies put on the cloak of pretended friendship, and profess a certain amount of religion, they are recognised by the successors of Saul,—their hands are strengthened, their unscriptural system of religion is patronised, although utterly opposed to the revealed will of God. The successors of Saul may profess, as Saul professed, to have “performed the commandment of the Lord.” But “the bleating of the sheep” and “the lowing of the oxen” (1 Sam. xv. 14) shall tell out the extent of their obedience. This is the test that must ever be applied to professed subjection to the word of the Lord. Where the spirit of Saul is at work, you may find obedience *up to a certain point*; but, after that point is reached, there is a *sitting in judgment* upon what God has said, and a deliberate *refusing* to carry out His will concerning the fairer forms of the world and the flesh. But no one need be deceived. In the midst of all such high-sounding professions of obedience, the anointed ear will not fail to

perceive “the bleating of the sheep” and “the lowing of the oxen.”

### SAFE IN OUR FATHER'S CARE.

**F**ATHER, the night is wild and dark ;  
 The waves run strong and high :  
 Yet (restful in our storm-toss'd barque)  
 We know that Thou art nigh.  
 We are safe in Thy loving care,  
 And fear not any ill :  
 The night will pass, the sky will clear,  
 When Thou say'st, “Peace, be still.”

We would not have it always light,—  
 'Tis often hard to see ;  
 Yet sweet to close our eyes at night,  
 And *trust* alone in Thee.

Into Thy hands we put the helm,  
 And let it there remain :  
 No storm can ever then o'erwhelm,  
 Though every plank may strain.

The waves rush past at Thy command ;  
 The winds obey Thy will :  
 They only bear us to the land,  
 Where all is calm and still.

And when the storms of life are o'er—  
 Safe in our Father's home—  
 We'll hear the winds and waves no more :  
 Their work will then be done.

Till then let pealing thunders crash,  
 They are to us Thy voice :  
 We see Thy face by lightnings' flash,  
 And in Thy Name rejoice.

We trust in Thee, though tempest-toss'd ;  
 For Thou dost rule the sea :  
 And, in the hour when all seems lost,  
 Thou then wilt nearest be.

So 'midst the wild and stormy night,  
 Our hearts enjoy sweet rest ;  
 And softly sing, “Come dark or light,  
 Our Father knoweth best.”

Castle Douglas.

W. H. S.

## SOMETHING COMFORTABLE.

**T**HE desire of the natural heart is always after something *comfortable*; and perhaps there is not a more natural desire than to be associated with a "nice company of Christians"—just such a company as will give the world no cause to blaspheme; and such a spiritual, well-behaved company that there will never be any "troubles" to put right. Not a few believers, in their search for such a company of Christians, have been disappointed; and we do not wonder at it. What they are after is a "select" company—that is a selection of choice Christians—fine, kindred spirits, with whom you can have unhindered fellowship, and against whom nobody has a word to say. If such were the character of the Assemblies of God's saints, we should certainly rejoice; and if it please God to send such a "revival time" we shall praise Him for the comfortable circumstances in which we would find ourselves. But even with a revival time we need not expect the perfection which many look for. The Word of God does not warrant us to expect a gathered company of saints to be of the select character we should like. In this matter it is altogether a question of *pleasing self* or *pleasing the Lord*. If I want to please the Lord, I will act in fellowship with Him. If I want to please self, I will consult my own interests and my own reputation. When the Lord gathers His people together into a Church of God, He gathers the weak as well as the strong,

—the quick-tempered as well as the slow-to-wrath,—those who are not very spiritual as well as those who are spiritual,—the "crooked" ones as well as the straight. If we are in fellowship with the Lord, we shall praise Him, even in spite of such a variety of temperament. But if we are not in fellowship with the Lord as to "The Church," we will likely have our own ideas of gathering saints together. And if *we* had the gathering of them, we would make a very careful selection,—taking care to have all the kindred spirits with us. But as for the crooked, and otherwise objectionable ones, we would not mind much about them, seeing "we must keep up our name with the world." Such is the tendency of the flesh. How different from the mind of the Lord concerning His people! *He* would have *all* His saints gathered together to Himself. We may not find such a company as *we* would have gathered; but we will find such a company as the *Holy Spirit has gathered*; and, if we have the Lord's mind about them, we will not find ourselves grumbling. We freely admit that it may be quite possible for you to *get together* a company of believers "according to your mind." But such is not a company which *God* has gathered; as it is written: "They shall surely gather together, but not by Me" (Isa. liv. 15). You may by such a course keep up your name with the world and sail clear of many a "trouble in the meeting." But the Day of Christ shall declare at what a cost such comfort was bought!

## IT IS GOD WHO GATHERS.

**A**NY two or three believers (or any two or three hundred), can have a *meeting*. They may resolve to *meet*; but it is only *God* who can *gather*. This is an important distinction, although one that is very apt to be forgotten. In Isaiah xi. 12, it is written: He shall "*gather* together the dispersed of Judah." And, again, it is written: "The Lord God, who *gathereth* the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather others to Him, beside those that are gathered unto Him" (Isa. lvi. 8). In these cases, and others that might be adduced, it is *God* who gathers. When we turn to the New Testament we see that the Lord is still the Gatherer of His people. In Matt. xviii. 20 we find these words: "Where two or three are gathered together"—or, rather, "Where two or three *ARE, having been gathered together into My Name*, there am I in the midst of them." We thus see the Lord at work, as of old—*gathering* His people. It does not say, "Where two or three meet." It says "Where two or three *ARE, having been gathered.*"

A Church of God, then, is a company of believers whom God has *gathered together*. They have heard the divine call; and, in obedience to that call, they have gone forth to the rejected Lord Jesus Christ. But when God gathers, He gathers *into a Name*; and that is the Name of THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. God never gathers into the name of any man, however eminent that man may be,

—nor into the name of any doctrine, nor into the name of any Church. As there is "none other Name" by which we must be saved, so there is none other Name into which God gathers His people, save the Name of His Son. When God gathers a company of believers together, they at once drop all names devised by man's wisdom, such as "Congregationalist," "Presbyterian," "Baptist," "Methodist," &c.; and this for the simple reason that the Holy Spirit does not gather into the name of John the Baptist, nor into the name of John Wesley, &c., but into the One Great NAME of *OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST*. Let the simple question be asked, "What are you?" and perhaps you are told, "I am a member of the United Presbyterian Church." Very well, dear brother, we reply; we have no fault to find, personally. But stay a moment. Is that *the Name* into which the Holy Spirit of God gathers His people? Is the United Presbyterian Church *the centre* around which the Lord gathers His redeemed? You answer "No";—you are compelled to answer "No." Then you cannot say you are one whom *God has gathered*; for He gathers only into *one Name*. In the Scriptures there is no vestige whatever of God's gathering to a sectarian name. We there find Him gathering; but we search in vain for His gathering into the Name of the United Presbyterian Church, or the Free Church, or the Episcopalian Church. It surely therefore becomes the child of God to stand still and ask the question: "Has God

gathered me to where I am?—Am I here in obedience to the call of God?—Is this where I have been led by the Spirit, in accordance with that which is written?—Or am I here simply because of the accident of my birth, or my religious upbringing?”

These are solemn questions. Some may treat them lightly; but we are satisfied that no loving heart will thus treat anything that is dear to Him whom they seek to own as Lord and Christ. We simply contend for the light of truth being let in upon the great question of Church-fellowship. Let the Word of God be appealed to; and, whatever the verdict may be, we shall rejoice. We have no interest whatever in contending for anything that is not in the Word. If some man-devised Church—if some sectarian name—is the thing into which the Holy Spirit of God is gathering the saints in this dispensation, then we think it is time that God's people should know it, and should know what that name is. But if, on the contrary, we find that there is only *One Name* into which God is gathering His people—the Name of the Rejected Lord Jesus—it is surely time that His people should know it. Let it therefore be sounded high and clear that, whether it be in the salvation of sinners or in the gathering of saints by our God,

“None other Name is given—  
*None other Name is known.*”

THEY that will not be counselled cannot be helped.

## DILIGENT SEARCH.

WE lately received a letter from a brother who has gone to reside in a distant town. Among other things he says: “After making diligent search, to make sure that the Lord had no gathered-out company of believers in this place, we gathered together to *The Name*, and have been going on with God,” &c. This was truly a beautiful touch. “After making diligent search.” Our brother, and the few who were with him, wished to make sure that God had not been *already at work* gathering a people into the rejected Name. Therefore diligent search was made. These believers had felt the power of that Scripture which says, “That they all may be one, . . . that the world may believe” (Jno. xvii. 21). They had no wish to be separated from those who had come out in obedience to the call of God. They might have pleaded their ignorance, as many would have done. They might have said, “We don't know of any company of believers in this place who are gathered according to the Word. Therefore we will ‘set up a Table’ on our own responsibility.” But they did not take up that ground. Inspired by the true spirit of *unity according to God*, they made *diligent search*. This will ever be the case where there is the spirit of unity, as opposed to the spirit of division. If we are in fellowship with God as to the gathering power of that Name which is above every name, we shall be found *gathering*

with Him. It is written: "He that gathereth not with Me, scattereth abroad" (Matt. xii. 30). Are we gathering with Him? If so, or if such be our desire, we shall make "diligent search." We shall be careful lest we even appear to judge and set aside that which the Lord has already "buildd together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 22). In a word, we shall be found *gathering with Christ*.

We may be addressing some who are exercised as to their church position, and who are wondering where they should go. To such we would say: See that you *gather with Christ*. God hath said, "Gather My saints together *unto Me*" (Ps. l. 5). Then it is written of the Promised One, "*Unto Him* shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. xlix. 10). God gathers only into One Name, and that is the Name of His Son. If God has already been at work gathering out a people, with JESUS as the centre of gathering, how can you form or acknowledge another centre? Would such be in keeping with the Master's prayer, "that they all may be one"? Would it not rather be in keeping with the spirit of the woman who, when she saw she could not have *her* will carried out, cried, "Divide the child"? (1 Ki. iii.). It may be safely affirmed that those who have learned to tremble at the Word, and are seeking to walk in its light, will not fail to make "diligent search" when the proposal is made to "have a Breaking-of-bread Meeting." Their first question will be: "Has God

already, in this place, a gathered-out company to the Name He delights to honour?" If so, why a *second* company?—seeing He has no *second name* to which to gather that company!

### A GOOD ADDRESS.

 THE chief concern of some preachers is to *have a good address*. "What will I say?—I must have something fresh—something *entirely* new. I must get some striking text—one that nobody ever thought of before; and I must have something special to say on the text. People so enjoy a good address. I wonder where I'll find something startling." And so the preacher proceeds with his reflections—not in these exact words, perhaps; yet all to the same effect. But he has made the serious mistake of supposing that the Gospel meeting exists for *preaching purposes*, while it really exists for *saving purposes*. Preaching is merely a means to an end; and that end is that souls may be brought to the Son of God. The man who merely aims at delivering a "remarkable address" may reach his mark, while he fails to reach a single sinner's heart. We do not say that the preacher should be careless as to his preaching. We have no sympathy with those who "never concern themselves" about the *matter* of their address, and leave all that "to the Lord," as they use the phrase. We simply point out that in Gospel work the preacher must see that

the "master-passion" is a desire to bring sinners to Christ. This point being a settled matter, *preaching* comes in its proper place. "Gift" is then used to *attract to Christ*; and the preacher is found wondering, not what the people will think of his address, but how he can *so* preach as to *draw souls to Jesus*. "Not I, but Christ," is the true motto of every one who would win souls. He takes pains to use his gift to the best advantage—not, however, to tickle the ears of the people, but to allure to Christ. He may find it needful to go over old truth—to give an address on a well-worn subject, if he is to reach hearts. But he is not afraid of being told that a similar address was given years ago. If hearts are reached he cares not although he is counted commonplace by those who are ever seeking for something new. To sum up the whole matter, the mere "preacher" is concerned about his preaching, while the true soul-winner is concerned about souls. He who aims to produce a fine address, and leave a good impression as to his oratorical powers, *may* get what he wants, and yet have nothing, save the transient smile of the multitude. Verily he *has* his reward. But he who is "more bent to raise the wretched than to rise," shall see, in some measure, "of the travail of his soul." His labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. While others verily *have* their reward, his reward is *yet to come*.

ADVERSITY borrows its sharpest sting from our impatience.

## UNREALITY.

WHEREVER there is *unreality* there must of necessity be a certain amount of hypocrisy. The unreal man is one who appears to be what he is not. His words are far in advance of his experience. Judging from his profession, you would take him to be one who dwells in the light of unbroken communion. But, when you measure him by his manner of life, you come to quite a different conclusion. His high-sounding professions of devotion are discovered to be unreal; and that is just another way of saying they are untrue.

Unreality is one of the most common abominations connected with modern preaching. Men can now ascend the platform and wax eloquent over something in which they have only a languid interest. If they were right-down honest men, they would throw off the cloak of counterfeited zeal, and stand forth in their true colours. But a certain amount of earnestness is needed to keep up the interest, and "preserve one's reputation." Therefore the preacher must needs thunder away as if the sun were about to set for the last time. If the preacher is truly in earnest, we have no objection whatever. But if his inner experience is not in keeping with his outer testimony, we have no hesitation in saying that he had better be silent. A preacher may not have much of the heavenly fire. But if he is *real*—if he is true to his light—if his experience and his life endorse

his testimony, you can esteem the preacher according to his measure, however small that measure may be. But, if a man arrays himself in borrowed plumes—if he adopts a borrowed voice and strange gestures—if he puts on airs, and indulges in raptures to which he is at heart a stranger, you feel that in such a performance there is nothing whatever to command your esteem. On the contrary, there may be much in it to draw out your commiseration for the misguided “ambassador” who thus prostitutes the platform to the unholy uses of self-exaltation.

### RESISTING DIVINE TESTIMONY.

**S**ATAN has ever sought to bring discredit upon what God hath said. What God declares as certain, is the very thing that Satan will seek to bring into the region of the doubtful. To the first Adam, in the Garden, God had said (in the event of disobedience), “Thou shalt surely die” (Gen. ii. 17). But the great Enemy throws doubt upon this statement—yea, denies it entirely, saying: “Ye shall not surely die” (Gen. iii. 4). When the last Adam appears, all this is repeated, although in an altered form. We hear the Father saying: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. iii. 17). And, immediately afterwards, we hear Satan saying to our Lord in the wilderness: “If Thou be the Son of God” (Matt. iv. 3). God says, “This is

My Son”: Satan says, “If Thou be the Son.” The great aim of Satan was thus to throw discredit upon the divine testimony, and if possible thwart it entirely. Such was his work then; such has been his work all down the ages; and such is his work to-day. The assaults upon the miracles of Christ—the attacks on the inspiration of Scripture,—led on by so-called religious leaders,—are only a part of the great Enemy’s plan to overthrow everything and anything that God hath said. In Eden and in the wilderness Satan led the attack in person. *Now*, however, his ends are better served by handing the work over to men of great influence in the religious world. But how, it may be asked, can any one tell that these theological leaders are serving the purposes of the great Adversary? We reply, “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Their works testify as to whom they are serving. They are engaged in questioning and denying what God hath plainly revealed in His word. This is pre-eminently the Devil’s work; and it bears fruit after its kind. Wherever you find the words of inspiration being questioned and explained away, you find the infidel and the sceptic jubilant, and men of carnal mind rejoicing, while the true lovers of the Lord are sad at heart. These *signs* never follow upon testimony that is according to God.

MISFORTUNE does not always follow vice; nor is success the constant guest of virtue.

## CHOSEN VESSELS.

**D**AVID wanted to build the Lord a house. In this desire he no doubt had the best of intentions; but, though it was the right thing to do, David was not the one chosen of God to do it. There is a great principle brought out here, which, if it had been duly weighed, would have prevented a world of trouble in the Lord's work. David was, no doubt, a very good man; but he was not the man the Lord had chosen to build the temple; and, whenever this was made clear to David, he acquiesced joyfully in the divine counsel, and took the humble place of a *preparer of material* for the man that should come after him. Now, in the Lord's work there may be things we would *like* to do; but the question is this: What has the Lord called us and fitted us to do? He has given to every man his work (Mark xiii. 34). What is *my* work? Let this question be taken humbly and prayerfully into the presence of God, and He will make it clear what our path of service is. We may have an ambition to do some "great work"; and some Nathan may say to us, as in David's case, "Do all that is in thine heart" (1 Chron. xvii. 2). But if our ear were tuned to catch God's voice we should perhaps hear another message. No doubt some may say: "But there's the work to be done—why not do it?—it matters not who does it, so being it is done." This is not heavenly counsel. Even the children of this world are too wise in their generation to go by

such a rule. If it is a workshop or manufactory, the man best fitted for some particular work is the one set apart for that work. *Anybody* will not do. In earthly service every man has his work; and the result is that the work is well done. In the Lord's work the same principle applies. Every man has his work there, too; and surely the Lord of Heaven is as much entitled to have His work well done as an earthly master? Yea, we will go further and say that the Lord's work cannot be done *according to God*, unless it be done by those whom He has chosen to do it. In the Kingdom of grace the instrument is always fitted for the work to be done. The Lord may choose unlikely persons; but He Himself buckles on their armour, and equips them for the fight; and it is soon manifest that God is with them. It is a great mistake to suppose that the Lord works with any kind of instrument, and even without any instrument at all. Such has not been His way heretofore. He has always wrought through means. He could have revealed Himself directly to the Eunuch in the desert (Acts viii. 27); but He chose to send Philip to preach to that son of Ethiopia. He could have delivered Israel from the oppression of Midian without any instrumentality; but He chose Gideon as the instrument in saving His people at that time. Thus it has ever been. Through human instrumentality our God is pleased to carry on His work; and He ever finds a *chosen vessel* to suit His purpose. Happy for us if we have discovered what *our work is*.

## THE POPULAR GOSPEL.

**I**S it possible to have a Gospel that will commend itself to the carnal mind? It is quite possible. In Christendom to-day a Gospel is preached which leaves the servants of the Devil perfectly undisturbed. Indeed, they profess to be "highly pleased with the service." They come and go to what they call "hearing the Gospel"; yet they remain unconverted; and (strangest of all) they praise "the service." How do we explain it? The explanation is not far to seek. They were listening to a gospel, but not to *the* Gospel. They were hearing a gospel, so dressed up with the honey of sentimental sweetness, that it was quite palatable to the carnal mind. "Splendid address," says the worldling as he comes out. And he may well be pleased with the address; for it had nothing in it to disturb his conscience. If *the Gospel* had been preached—man's utter ruin and God's mighty redemption—would the carnal-minded hearer have been delighted with that which pours contempt upon man's pride? A full Gospel exposes the enmity of the carnal heart, reveals man as a hell-deserving sinner, and shuts him up, either to receive the Son of God or to reject Him. The respectable worldling resents this with all his might. He denies that his heart is enmity against God,—he will not admit that he is a hell-deserving sinner,—and he objects to be brought to the testing-point of either accepting or rejecting the God-provided

Saviour. Such is the worldling who finds it desirable to have a little religion on Sunday. He cares not for preaching that will grapple with the conscience. If he is to listen to a sermon or an address it must be of a very mild type,—sweetened up by much that is pleasing to the carnal ear, and unaccompanied by anything like personal appeal. We question if anything has a more deadly effect on the progress of vital godliness than the milk-and-water gospel that aims merely at *getting people out to meetings*. In this religious day there are hosts listening to what is generally called the Gospel; and yet, if you take one of them by the arm and say, "Well, after this long while of listening to preaching, *is your soul saved?*—are you *converted to Jesus?*—have you come *clear out* for God?" what consternation you produce! Converted! They feel the question to be an awkward one. "That's our business," they say. Yet next day you see them rushing into the world's concert, or the world's ball! In a word, they are strangers to grace and to God,—hurrying down to a lost eternity. On Sunday they profess to be highly pleased with "the Gospel," and on Monday they are highly pleased with the concert! "Impossible," you say. Yes, we reply, impossible,—*if* they had been listening to *the* Gospel of God; for that Gospel is ever seasoned with the salt of truth. God's Gospel, preached in power, will clear sinners either to one side or another. It will lay no flattering unction to the soul of the man who wants a little

religion on Sunday to soothe his conscience for another week. God's Gospel lays the axe to the root of the tree,—contemns the praise of men,—and proclaims the tidings of a salvation which is free, immediate, and eternal. When this is the case, men are compelled either to surrender to God's Son, or to be made manifest as those who say, "We will not have this Man to reign over us." The Gospel of God leaves no middle ground on which the worldling may stand and say, as many say to-day: "Oh yes, we enjoy the preaching;" while at the same time they enjoy the world, and evidently have not the slightest desire to undergo the great change of *Conversion to God*.

### SAMUEL'S SONS.

**I**T may safely be affirmed that a great proportion of "church troubles" are the result of individuals acting beyond their measure, and attempting to do work for which they have not been fitted of God. This seems to have been at the root of Israel's great departure from Jehovah, in demanding a king (1 Sam. viii.). Samuel made his sons judges over Israel. But Israel refused to acknowledge the rule of his sons. They acknowledged the rule of Samuel. They bowed to his authority. But they positively refused to acknowledge his sons in any shape or form. Nor were they to be blamed for this. Their refusal to acknowledge Samuel's sons never appears in the list of Israel's sins. In

short, they did right in accepting Samuel, whom God had called; and they did right in rejecting Samuel's sons, whom God had not called.

### HE COMES!

**H**E comes! He comes! The Lord of Life,  
His glory lights the skies;  
The trump is heard, the tombs unfold,  
The dead in Christ arise.

He comes! He comes! O gladsome word,  
With joy the shout *we* hear;  
Earth holds us not, at once we rise  
To meet Him in the air.

He comes! He comes! The world we leave,  
With all its gilded toys;  
Its gain and gold we cannot hold,  
And rise to endless joys.

He comes! He comes!—From factory loom,  
From plough and office chair,  
From workhouse ward, and palace hall,  
We meet Him in the air.

He comes! He comes! O blissful ray!  
It lights the darkest hour;  
The dreaded cloud makes haste to flee  
Before His voice of power.

He comes! He comes! O Blessed Hope!  
It cheers the fainting heart;  
And where it shines on bed of pain,  
Chill death must needs depart.

He comes! He comes! O Star of morn,  
E'en now to faith so bright!  
Thy beams have scattered all our fears,  
And banished all our night.

He comes! He comes! The glory gleams  
Through yonder rended skies,  
And Jesus whom our hearts have loved,  
We see with glad surprise!

## STEADFAST IN A WRONG COURSE.

**S**TEADFASTNESS is one of the Christian virtues. But let no one think that it is a virtue to be steadfast in a wrong course, or in a work to which he has not been called of God. If you run unspent—if, unbidden by the Lord, you undertake a certain work for Him, the exhortation to be steadfast does not apply to *you*, at least as concerns that work. You may point to your own steadfastness in the work as an evidence that you are obeying the Lord; while, if you had His mind on the matter, you would see that you were attempting service to which He had never called you. If God has made me a “foot” in the body, and I am determined I will do the work of a “hand,” I may keep steadfastly at my self-appointed task; but the more steadfastly I keep to it, the more effectually shall I thwart the divine purposes. Steadfastness in such a course ceases to be a virtue. The work of the *hand* is not done, for I am not able to do it; while the work of the *foot* is neglected, for I believe I am called to a more “honourable” work. I must therefore see, first of all, that the work in question is work which the Lord commands to be done, and that *I* am the person He has called to do it.

“No human being can come into this world without increasing or diminishing the sum-total of human happiness, not only of the present, but of every subsequent age of humanity.”

## NOT SATISFIED.

**A**BROTHER said lately: “I know of nothing more dishonouring to the Name of the Lord than people professing to have been *saved*, while apparently they are *not satisfied*.” Once upon a time—in an earlier and a happier day—they were heard saying,

“All that my soul hath tried  
Left but a dismal void;  
Jesus has satisfied—  
Jesus alone.”

But they have forsaken the Fountain of living waters. Then, has Jesus failed to satisfy? No. They have ceased to draw from His satisfying store. Why this patronage of the world's streams? Why is yonder believer frequenting the world's gatherings? It is because he is not satisfied with Jesus! What a humiliating confession!—for confession it truly is. But it is more than a confession,—it is testimony to an ungodly world that Jesus is not the great satisfying One whom Scripture declares Him to be. We need not point out that these are false witnesses. In spite of all the world-conformity that prevails, it yet remains true that *Jesus satisfies*. In His presence is fulness of joy.

HE is happy whose circumstances suit his temper; but he is more excellent who can suit his temper to his circumstances.

AFFECT not little shifts or subterfuges to avoid the force of an argument.

## TEN THOUSAND OF US.

**W**HEN David's men were going forth to the battle in the wood of Ephraim (2 Sam. xviii.), "the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also" (ver. 2). They would not, however, hear of this; and, in the answer they gave him, we have these remarkable words: "*Thou art worth ten thousand of us*" (ver. 3). Such was their estimate of David. Their devotion to his person could scarcely have found a more fitting expression,—"*Worth ten thousand of us!*" They could not afford to do without David: without him they were nothing. Does these men's estimate of David speak the words of our heart concerning our Lord and Master? As it was with them, so is it with us; for Jesus has said: "Without Me ye can do nothing" (Jno. xv. 5). "*Worth ten thousand of us!*" Do we sigh for numbers? But stay—is *He* in the midst? Is *He* accorded His place—the place of honour, the place of Lordship? Then we number a goodly company—ten thousand at the very least.

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Vol. V.

THE FIRE OF LOVE.

S the fire of love burning brightly in yonder company of believers? Upon this very simple question the most momentous issues hang. Where love reigns, there are a host of evils that are compelled to hide their heads; and where love does *not* reign there are a host of evils that hold high carnival. We do not say that love is *everything*; but we say this—or rather Scripture says this—"If you have everything apart from love, you have *nothing*" (See 1 Cor. xiii. 2). Love is emphatically God's atmosphere; "for God is love" (1 Jno. iv. 8). It was love that provided the Sacrifice of Calvary, and it was love that drew us out of many waters and brought us to the feet of the blessed One, whose love passeth knowledge. In that day when we first knew the Lord, we plunged, so to speak, into an ocean of love, and drank for the first time of that joy which is pure as Heaven and lasting as eternity. But the same hand that drew us to Himself had kindled in our hearts the flame of that love which should be the token of our heavenly citizenship. We at once felt that we were introduced—yea born—into a new family; and in that family

*love* was to be the great fundamental tone. In becoming partakers of the divine nature we found ourselves in fellowship with the God of love. The reign of love bore a twofold testimony. To *us* it gave the witness that we were children of God; for "we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 Jno. iii. 14). To the world it gave the witness that we were followers of the blessed One; for is it not written, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another?" (Jno. xiii. 35).

Such is our calling—to manifest the love of the absent One—to bear about the dying of Jesus—to breathe His spirit, and shed abroad His fragrance. Have we remembered our calling? Have we been careful at all hazards, and at any cost, to abide in that atmosphere of love into which our God brought us when we first sat down in the banqueting-house of our Saviour's presence? We may have contended valiantly for certain principles,—we may have made extraordinary sacrifices, even for the truth itself,—we may have waxed vehement in standing up for God's honour. But have we been as earnest in cherishing the fire of heavenly love in our own

souls? Have we been as conspicuous for our manifestation of that love, as for our zeal in some other department of truth? *If not*, then our testimony has been ill-balanced, and unequal, and therefore un-Christ-like. If work or testimony be not baptised in love, you need not look for the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Love is the great element we want to see glowing—shining—burning, among the Churches. We are not of those who set up *love* against *truth*. On the contrary, we hold that love is *included in truth*. There can be no God-honouring contending for truth apart from contending for love. It is through the truth we know that we are loved with an everlasting love (Jer. xxxi. 3), and that we are to “love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Pet. i. 22). It is through the truth we have learned that as Christ has loved us even so are we to love one another. Therefore, let the truth in all its length and breadth be proclaimed. Let it spread and prevail; for well we know that “*the truth in love*” (Eph. iv. 15) shall never fail to work the purposes of God’s eternal glory by Christ Jesus.

Love apart from truth (speaking after the manner of men) is mere sentimentality; while truth apart from love is cold, hard, cheerless, and repelling. Let us hold fast whatever God has taught us from His word. Let us slack not our hand in contending earnestly for *the Faith* once for all delivered to the saints. But let us see that we are under the constraint and inspiration of love.

Love may be said to sit as a queen among “the graces”—serving to keep each within its appointed bounds, and imparting to all a fragrance from the heavenly fields. Energised by love, even a very small company of believers are a power for God, and in a sense cannot help being so; for the power of our testimony is not measured so much by what we *say we are* as by what we *are seen to be*.

Those who are not breathing the genial air of that love which is of God, are ill-fitted to see, far less to deal with, the evils of an apostate day. We cannot see our brethren aright—we cannot deal with them aright—except we be in fellowship with the Man of Sorrows. Having loved His own which were in the world, He loves them to the end. Only in measure as we are under the power of that love shall we manifest Him to the world, and be a sweet savour of His name among our brethren.

## HE CARES FOR THEE.

1 Peter v. 7.

**H**OLD FAST on the Lord thy every care,  
 Let Him thy weight of sorrow bear;  
 Why sink beneath the load which He  
 So willingly would bear for thee?

He cares for thee, go tell Him all,—  
 No little grief, however small,  
 Can e'er too small or trifling be  
 To tell to Him who cares for thee.

Pour out thy heart to Him in prayer—  
 Thy burden take, and leave it there;  
 When once laid down let it remain,  
 Nor go and take it up again. A. Y.

## UNEQUAL TO THE TASK.

**W**HEN Jether, Gideon's first-born, was told to draw the sword of judgment against Zebah and Zalmunna, he hesitated. He felt unequal to the task, "because he was yet a youth" (Jud. viii. 20). Hence the words that follow: "*As the man is, so is his strength.*" This will serve as an illustration of the principle that in the things of God every man has his measure. We do not say that every man *knows* his measure; for it is quite possible for a man to think of himself "more highly than he ought to think" (Rom. xii. 3). Whether it be in ministry or rule, we need to see that we do not exceed "our measure;" for in going beyond our measure we simply go beyond the call of God. Another man's call can be no rule for me. I must wait on God for my ministry (Rom. xii. 7). If I am found saying: "I have as good a right to preach as So-and-so"—"I have as good a right to rule as So-and-so," I thereby make it clear that I am not acting in obedience to the call of God. I must see that I am not a mere imitator of what another man is doing, else I may find myself essaying to do work that is beyond my *faith*, or beyond my *gift*,—perhaps beyond both my faith and my gift! Happy for many who have thus acted, if they had taken the place of obscurity, or the position of confessed weakness, instead of assuming a position manifestly beyond their measure. They may plead the urgency of the circumstances, and that they were *compelled* to

take the sword. But the seeming urgency of circumstances can never justify us in going beyond our measure. He who thus acts is acting out of character; and that is just another way of saying that he is acting out of communion. Fellowship with the meek and lowly One will ever keep us from acting beyond our measure; and abiding in His love will have the same effect, for that love never behaves itself unseemly (1 Cor. xiii. 5).

## "WORK OF FAITH"—"LABOUR OF LOVE"—"PATIENCE OF HOPE."

1 Thessalonians i. 3.

**W**ORK on, work on, tried servant of the Lord;  
Consider Him who contradiction sore endured.  
Oh weary not, but off to Jesus look,  
He never yet one faithful heart forsook.

Heb. xii. 2, 3.

In faith look upward, and your Lord shall bless  
Each act of love and grace and tenderness,  
Which in His name and for His sake you do;  
Then labour on in love, and still be true;—

Heb. vi. 10.

True to the Blesséd One who loved you so—  
True to His little flock down here below,  
And wait in patience for that joyful day  
When He shall come to bear His own away.

1 Thess. iv. 17.

Thus shall your work of faith rewarded be,  
*Himself* the prize throughout eternity;  
Your labour, too, of love then owned and blest,  
Hope lost in sight, and patience laid to rest.

James v. 8.

A. O.

ONE of the severest trials to our patience is to see fleshly power prevailing, while God's people are seemingly content to have it so.

## NOT MEASURED BY WORDS.

**Y**OU cannot measure a man's love by what he may *say* on that subject. It is only in deeds that love is really visible and effective. A man may preach for half-an-hour-and-ten-minutes on love, and he may seem to be the living embodiment of what he is preaching. But it is not safe to come to too rapid a conclusion on that point. He *may* be "an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile." Or he may be a mere preacher for effect. If he be one of this class, who can wax eloquent upon any theme, you have simply to follow him down into the walks of private life to discover that he is quite a different man from the one that seemed to be carried away with his subject on the platform.

## MY DESIRE.

2 Cor. v. 9; John viii. 29; Ps. xix. 14.

**T**HIS my desire, O gracious God,  
That I may always be  
At every time and everywhere,  
Well-pleasing unto Thee.

Throughout my days, in walk and ways,  
May Christ my pattern be,  
Whose one delight it was to do  
Those things that pleased thee.

My meditations guide and guard;  
May they, O Father, be  
Such as in Thy most holy sight  
Shall be approved of Thee.

Let others say whate'er they may—  
My only care would be,  
To have the consciousness within  
That I am pleasing Thee.

A. Y.

## TWO EXTREMES.

**S**PEAKING of our Church Position it has been remarked that there are two extremes that help to keep us in the *right* way. On the one hand we have the looseness of the religious world, and on the other hand we have the rigidity of Exclusivism. Each of these extremes has a voice for every one that hath ears to hear. Once upon a time we recoiled from the lawlessness of sectarianism. But in that recoil there was a danger of going *beyond* the "bounds of our habitation." That is to say, having come out in obedience to the Word, there was a danger of our going to an extreme that is opposed to the Word. But Exclusivism loomed up in the distance, and gave warning, all unconscious to itself, of the danger before us. Thus these two beacon lights—the one on the right hand, and the other on the left—have helped, in measure, to keep us in "the way of truth."

In speaking of Exclusivism we do not fail to remember that there are many devoted children of God in connection with that system, no doubt persuaded that they are doing the will of God in being where they are. Yet we are none the less compelled to speak of Exclusivism as a system that is opposed to the Word. Good men may attract to an unscriptural system; but their presence can never make it scriptural. We must not conclude that certain theories are right, merely because they are held by some who are reckoned great in Israel.

## OPPOSING EVERYTHING.

**T**HERE are believers who oppose everything that a certain brother proposes. The suggestion may be excellent. But, if it comes from a certain quarter, it must needs be resisted. They have made up their minds that nothing good can come out of the Nazareth of opposition to their line of things. Therefore they are constantly objecting and opposing. They seem to be strangers to that largeness of heart that can give even an enemy credit for wisdom by a time. And we know that even a little largeness of heart will enable us to give *a brother* credit for the same thing.

## FAITH STRENGTHENED.

**W**HEN we draw near to ask of God it is needful for us to remember something of what He has *already given*. Past favours must ever be to us the pledge of what our God has yet in store. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32). God has given Jesus. In these few words we have the answer to every questioning of unbelief. Thus faith in God is strengthened. By remembering what God hath bestowed, we are assured that He hath great things yet to bestow. Prayer is to be joined with thanksgiving, as we learn from Phil. iv. 6. Thus, in approaching

to God in prayer, He would remind us, by our thanksgiving, that we are coming to One who hath *already blessed us*. Our God *delights* to bless; and, if we knew Him more in that character, we should know more of that faith which honours God and never goes without its reward.

## NO EDGE TO LOSE.

**A** TENDER conscience is easily disturbed. Even a very little defilement becomes a source of uneasiness to him who walks in the light. He has no rest until there is confession and restoration to God. But it is entirely different with those who do not cultivate a conscience sensitive to defilement. They can get on with a wonderful degree of comfort in circumstances which would be as gall and wormwood to one who walks in the light of God. A sensitive conscience may be compared to a knife with a keen edge. A very little rough usage will take away its edge. A deadened conscience, on the other hand, may be compared to a knife so blunted that no amount of hard usage seems to affect it. It does not lose its edge, for the simple reason that it has no edge to lose! It is to be feared that this is the case with many in the things of God.

HE that is in peace, is not prone to suspect any one; but he that is discontented, is neither quiet himself, nor suffereth others to be quiet.

## UNSTABLE.

“**A** DOUBLE-MINDED man is unstable in all his ways” (Jas. i. 8). Nevertheless, all unstable men must not be included in this class. There are men who have so little of a mind of any kind that they are constantly under the influence of others. With the best intentions to do the right thing, they find themselves liable to violent changes, simply because they take their “views” from some prominent believer. When he changes his opinion, they are compelled to change accordingly. Their instability arises, not so much from internal causes as from external causes. Their principles are moulded by the will of another. Hence the uncertainty of their movements. The double-minded man, however, is quite another person. He has emphatically a mind of his own. Indeed, he has *two* minds; and he can go by the one or the other, *according to circumstances*. He walks by sight and by policy. No one knows where he will be next week; and it is perhaps difficult for him to tell that himself. Eternal principles sway him but little. He is watching the current of circumstances; and *that* current must determine his course. You may ask him to boldly declare his principles, so that you may know whereabouts he is. But you get no satisfaction. He cannot declare his principles. Indeed, strictly speaking, he has none to declare! Such is the double-minded man. You cannot tell where he will be to-morrow, simply

because you cannot tell how the wind of circumstances will blow to-morrow. Hence his instability—an instability which, as Scripture tells us, characterises “*all his ways*.”

## HOW TO PROMOTE LOVE.

**T**HE best way to promote love is to *manifest it*; and if I am to manifest love outwardly it must be burning inwardly. This goes to the root of the matter. What I am in the secret of my heart thus determines, in great measure, the effect of my public testimony. If love is lacking, I consider *myself*—my interest—my position in the church—everything, in short, that concerns *me*. But if love be in the ascendant I consider others,—I study the “common-weal” of God’s people. How shall they be blessed? That is my question—not “How shall I be pleased?” If I am animated by the true spirit of self-sacrificing love, I am willing to be blotted out of remembrance, provided the people of God are made to rejoice in Him.

MANY, instead of *enduring* the will of God, make great efforts to alter their condition; and, as the sick may obtain a little temporary ease from change of bed, they may get a little relief from change of circumstances. But *respite* is not *rest*. It is only in the path of cheerful submission to the will of God that true rest can be found. Nothing but *unrest* can spring from a murmuring spirit.

## SOMETHING THAT EXPLAINED IT ALL.

**A** WORK of revival was supposed to be going on in a certain place. Souls were professing to be saved. There was great interest in the meetings. Praise was ascending to the Lord for thus accompanying His word with power. Tidings of the work had reached far; for it was looked upon as a somewhat remarkable awakening. There was one thing observable about it, however,—a thing which one experienced in the ways of God did not fail to take note of: *there was a great dearth of conviction of sin.* There was a lack of trembling under the shadow of Sinai. The professed converts did not seem to have passed through the valley of humiliation: they had not been brought to see that they had been going straight to Hell. Yet they were now professing to be going straight to Heaven! The experienced brother, to whom we have referred, could not understand it very well. He feared that the hurt of the people had been healed slightly; and he trembled for the future of those who had thus easily and comfortably got “into the Kingdom.” But he charitably trusted that everything was right. Another brother dropped in to see the work; and he could not see very well where the *power* was coming from; for the address delivered by the preacher (the man who was being seemingly used of God) was not of a character fitted to be the means of any awakening whatever. There was something strange about the

work altogether. But perhaps our brother was uncharitable. The seemingly inadequate *means* might be an instance of how God can use the “weak things” in doing a mighty work. But a *discovery* was soon made—a discovery that at once accounted for the superficial nature of the work, while it explained why there was such a lack of power in the preacher’s addresses. *He frequented the world’s sports and the world’s theatre!* Yet, hand-in-hand with these, he was preaching the Gospel of Christ, and professing to lead men and women into the paths of holiness! No wonder there was such a lack of conviction of sin on the part of the converts. How could it be expected that they should be alarmed about sin, when he, the preacher, was patronising the world’s theatre and the world’s sports? How could he be expected to preach in the power of God when he himself was so little under the influence of that power that it failed to separate him from an ungodly world? The preaching of worldly professors may make converts, and seem to produce a revival; but “like” will only “produce like.” We may well tremble for the spiritual children of one who frequents the theatre. If these “children” rise above the level of their spiritual father, no thanks will be due to him. But are we entitled to expect that his professed converts will be *children* at all? We read in Scripture of “strange children” being begotten (Hos. v. 7). Is there not reason to fear that the ranks of profession are being rapidly filled up with these

"strange children"—converts begotten under the preaching of men who go after "strange flesh," whether it be the world's theatre, or some other flesh? There are preachers whose worldliness can only be accounted for on one supposition, viz., that they have never been born again. But there are those whom you feel compelled to admit are God's children, and yet their worldly conformity takes the life out of their testimony. They may preach, and souls may profess; yet the spiritual will detect *something* to show that there is a dead fly in the apothecary's ointment. If preaching is to be in the power of God—if souls are to be truly born again—if real work is to be done for eternity,—there must be a strict attendance to the injunction: "*Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord!*"

### LIGHT DISOWNED.

**L**IGHT may be rejected at the time it is presented to us. Or, it may be received, and held for a while, and *then* rejected. This latter form of rejection is even a more serious thing than to reject light in which we have never rejoiced. He who receives light from God, and walks in that light, thereby testifies that the light is good. Therefore, in rejecting that light he comes under the greater condemnation. In rejecting light to which we at one time bore witness, we simply build again the things we had destroyed, and thereby become

transgressors (Gal. ii. 18). In these declining days one of the saddest sights is the professed believer who has rejected light in which he once rejoiced. In the things of God it is really lamentable to see a going back to the weak and beggarly elements by believers who, in other days, were "as clear as a sunbeam" on the truths they now disown.

### AGAINST GOD.

**A** TRUE apprehension of sin will ever lead us to set it down as committed *against God*. When temptation was presented to Joseph, we find him saying, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and *sin against God?*" (Gen. xxxix. 9). When David had repented of his "great wickedness" we hear him making the confession, "Against *Thee*, *Thee* only, have I sinned" (Ps. li. 4). Some mourn for sin because it has grieved a brother, or damaged the general testimony; while others mourn because sin entails bitter waters. But he who has learned in God's presence something of what sin is, will view it in its immediate relation to *the God of holiness*. The sin in question may be known to others, or it may be locked up in the breast of him who has perpetrated the wicked thing. Yet it is *God* who has been sinned against. It is God who has been dishonoured.

It is another's fault if he be ungrateful: it is mine if I do not give.

## TEACHING BY EXAMPLE.

 F a man takes the platform as a public teacher of God's people we hold that his *example* speaks as loudly as his *ministry*. Indeed, it may be safely affirmed that what he DOES has a far *louder* voice than what he SAYS. Any one can see the force of this. If, for example, a man expounds total-abstinence, and is yet known to partake freely of liquor, people reject him as a temperance preacher. The sound of his *testimony* is drowned by the voice of his *example*. There must be a certain correspondence between the preacher and the thing preached. The world may not always insist upon this. But, in the things of God, it is imperative. In Ezra vii. 10 we read that Ezra had "prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to *do it*, and to *teach* in Israel statutes and judgments." In Acts i. 1 we find a reference to what Jesus began "both *to do* and *to teach*." We thus learn from Scripture that *doing* must come before *teaching*. The preacher, first of all, honestly seeks to manifest the truth in his own walk; and then he declares what God hath said.

When Paul was writing to the Thessalonians we find him saying; "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe" (1 Thess. ii. 10). The apostle and those with him had been living-epistles of the truths they had proclaimed. And so should it ever be. The brother who steps

upon the platform to teach God's saints, virtually says: "Now, I am going to tell you how to walk." How all-important, then, that he should be himself walking in the ways which be in Christ! If his example confirms his teaching, his word shall have its full weight, whatever that weight may be. But if his example be not in keeping with the character of one who professes to teach the saints, the effect can only be that his example will *neutralise* his testimony. When two witnesses, *professing to be in agreement*, give contradictory testimony, their evidence is rejected. The man who professes to stand before the saints as the Lord's messenger, gives a two-fold witness, whether he intends to do so or not. What he *says* is the one witness: what he *practises* is the other witness. These two witnesses *ought to be* in agreement. If they are not in agreement—if the preacher's practice contradicts his teaching—then his utterances must fall flat and powerless, however clear and clever they may be.

In these dark days we must be fully awake to this great foundation principle,—that leading men, whether they be teachers or rulers, must be men who *live the truth*, and whose example you would be *safe to follow*. Yonder is a professed leader among God's people. He is ascending the platform to open up the word for the building up of the saints. But stay. Are his ways and practices such that you can take a young believer to hear him? The young believer (and many others) will naturally conclude

that they will be perfectly safe to *follow the example* of such a fine teacher—to do as he does—to go where he goes. *But will they be safe in so doing?* This is the vital question. If they would not be safe in following the preacher's example, how dare you ask any one to go and sit under his ministry? Some may tell us that we have nothing to do with the preacher's practices, and that it is none of our business although he was building up an anti-scriptural system yesterday, provided he gives us "good truth" to-day. But we entirely differ from such an opinion. We have shown that it is opposed to Scripture; and a very little calm reflection will enable you to see that it is opposed to the simplest principles of Christian philosophy. You cannot separate a man from his actions. If he is doing that which is wrong, you cannot draw an imaginary line between the man and his actions, and say: "We view him purely as a preacher—apart from everything else." It is simply impossible. The man's actions are part of the man: they manifest him—they proclaim what he is. If, therefore, you hold that by his actions he dishonoured God yesterday, on what principle are you prepared to sit under that man's teaching to-day, and be taught at *his* mouth how you are to walk as one separated to the Lord Jesus Christ? If a man's example is not to be followed, how can you go and hear him as a Heaven-sent teacher? This puts the whole question into very small compass. We simply contend for reality and consistency. If the professed

messenger of God has applied one edge of the sword of Separation Truth to his own ways, he may then turn the other edge upon the saints. But if his ways and practices are not according to the truth, how can we go and sit under his ministry as an expositor of the truth?

### ACCORDING TO HIS LIGHT.

**A**FTER reading the preceding article we may be told that there are dear brethren who *believe* in identifying themselves, to a certain extent, with sectarianism, and that their *practice* is in perfect keeping with their principle. They hold themselves free to go here to-day, and there to-morrow; and allow no one to judge them in the matter. To this we reply that such believers may be acting quite consistently with their own principles, and no doubt in accordance with their light. But the real question at issue is this: Is such a brother to be recognised as a teacher by those who have gone forth outside-the-camp to the rejected Lord Jesus Christ? If we believe the brother to be wrong, how can we put him in such a false position as to sit at his feet while *he* instructs *us* in the path of separation to God? This would be doing grievous injury to the dear brother, however good his intentions may be. If he is determined to play fast-and-loose with what *we* believe to be eternal principles, he must be shown that he cannot pursue *that* course and at the same time stand

forth as a ruler or teacher among a separated people. It is altogether a mistaken kindness to hail him as one whom we delight to honour. Instead of acknowledging him as one called of God to instruct us, the faithfulness of love will rather lead us to take him aside and instruct *him* in the first principles of separation unto God.

## LIFE IN THE GOSPEL-MEETING.

(First Paper.)

**H**OW can new life be imparted to the Gospel-meeting? This is a question that is being asked by not a few. The people, in many cases at least, are not being reached; and what few are coming in are almost unimpressed. Even God's people who are "faithful attenders" are often found listless and apathetic. When the question is asked, "How is the Lord's work progressing?" you are frequently told "Well, we can't say *much*—we are getting along *quietly*." In other words, nothing is being done! There must be a cause for this: there *is* a cause. It will do no good for us to take refuge in "the decrees of God" and say, "No doubt it is the will of the Lord." In the spiritual world, as in the natural world, every effect has a cause. If there is a dearth, there is a cause for it; and it is for us to find out the cause—or the causes.

In tracing out some of the causes we naturally begin with the preacher. And we make bold to say at the very outset

that almost everything depends on *him*. He must be a man fitted of God for the work,—the heavenly fire burning in his bones—the love of Christ constraining his heart. He must be a clean vessel—free not only from outward transgressions but from inner corruptions,—a man of good report, and a lover of souls. Such is the Gospel preacher. Wherever you have such men you have a continuous revival.

The preaching will come all right if the man is right who is preaching,—if he is the right man, and in the right condition. There are Gospel-meetings which so drag their weary way to the time of closing, that you simply do not look for results. You would be greatly surprised if there were any. You realize no power in the meeting. You have only a sense of weariness and depression. You have no faith that God has been speaking to souls,—simply because you gravely question if God's voice has been heard at all! Faith must have *something* to raise its expectations. It cannot feed upon nothing. If the word is not with *power* how can you expect it to be heard in *faith*?

On the other hand, there are Gospel-meetings in which the time seems to fly. The preacher is a man of God—"sent" and furnished; and he has a message. Perhaps you were saved many years ago; yet you feel refreshed and "built up," although it is simply the Gospel. You *expect* results. You feel *certain* that God has spoken to souls. This is to you the token that there is more to follow. Your

faith is encouraged and strengthened. If only a few "outsiders" happened to be at the meeting, you are emboldened to seek for more. Nor are you disappointed. You feel that the heavenly fire has caught hold of *you* as well as the preacher; and by some means (how, you cannot tell) the effect of that fire is felt all around.

"What a difference," you say, "between the one meeting and the other!" True; but go a step farther back, and you find it was the preacher that made the difference. The dull preacher made the dull meeting: the powerful preacher made the powerful meeting. Before the Gospel-work can be set on fire there must be men of fire on the platform. And when God's people are awakened up to this great principle they will be able to answer the question, "Why such a dearth of power in the Gospel?"

If a brother has undertaken Gospel-work in direct responsibility to the Lord,—if, for example, he has opened a room or hall in some needy district,—the causes of failure are not far to seek. He has simply to deal with *himself* in the presence of God. He may have mistaken his call, or miscalculated his measure of ability for the work. But, if blame there be, he cannot fasten it on any one but himself. In the case, however, of *Assembly* Gospel-work it may be vastly different. Indeed it is one of the difficulties connected with *Assembly* Gospel-work, that every preacher must *consider* his fellow-labourers in the meeting. There may be several of these,—all professing to be

able to "say a word"—but not all alike gifted—not all alike men of fire—not all alike lovers of souls. It is at this point that the great question arises: "In what manner, or upon what principle, is the Gospel-work to be carried on?" To this we unhesitatingly reply: "Let those occupy the platform who are manifestly fitted of God for the work, and in whose heart the heavenly fire glows." It is not a question of, "Who would like to preach?" We must take far higher ground than that. Our question must be simply this: "How shall we carry on the work so as best to glorify God and accomplish the salvation of the lost?" In other words, "What course shall be for the highest blessing and prosperity of the Gospel-work?" Such is the question that will be asked if love is reigning; for where *love* reigns, *self* dies. "I have as good a right to preach as you," is a statement never heard where there is love. It is only in the atmosphere of love that there is a due recognition of diversity of gift. It is only in such an atmosphere that the true "sons of thunder" shall have free course for their ministry. If the spirit of love wanes, the spirit of envy and jealousy is sure to come in; and in the strife for who shall be greatest you may be sure that the God-sent man will not force his way. A carnal weapon would ill become one whom God has sent.

Difficulty frequently arises through an *unequal yoking* of those who profess to carry on the Gospel-work. *Any* three or four brethren will not do. The question

is: "Has God joined them together in the work?" You cannot *force* fellowship in service. A brother may be quite in his place at the Table, and altogether out of his place on the Gospel platform. Yea, he may be a true overseer, yet no evangelist. It is the Lord who equips His servants, as seemeth good unto Him; and, if we just allowed the Lord to *yoke His servants together as seemeth good unto Him*, we should be delivered from many a difficulty arising out of the unequal yoke in service.

We have thus gone over what seems to us to be the chief points connected with dearth of blessing in Gospel testimony. We have got no further than the platform; but even that is a long way: in most cases it is everything. Let our aim be that God may be glorified in the salvation of souls; let us use the best means within our power to reach that end; let those be made manifest whom the Lord has called to the work; and let the Lord join them in service. *Then* we may, with some measure of faith, count upon God for *signs following*.

### THE CHAIN OF EVIL HABIT.

**T**HE chain of a bad habit is never so strong as when you attempt to break it. Indeed, many are scarcely conscious that they are in bondage until they "test the strength of their chain." They had been accustomed to smile at the idea that *they* were in

bondage of any kind. They accordingly resolved to put the matter beyond a doubt, breaking entirely with the undesirable habit. But ah! it was just at this point they discovered that habit becomes a kind of "second nature." The giant of evil habit keeps very quiet so long as he is well fed. But whenever you attempt to put him upon famine allowance, or to stop the supplies altogether, the slumbering giant arouses himself into action, clamours for his accustomed portion, and makes it clear that he will fight it out to the bitter end.

Believers given to unbecoming practices are frequently heard to say, "I could easily give it up." Could you, my dear brother? If so, there is all the greater responsibility incurred in your continuing it. But test the strength of the chain which habit has forged, and you will find that the chain may not be so easily snapped. We do not say this to dissuade any one from making the attempt; but rather that each one may make a proper estimate of the foe he has to meet. If some undesirable habit has fastened upon us, it is not the will of God that we should be thus bound. The Lord is now saying, as of old, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me." God has called us to a liberty from bondage of every kind. The son of the bondwoman is to be cast out: she is to have no part with the son of the free. If any iniquity is having dominion over me, the time has come when that dominion must cease. But it shall not cease through an exercise of any fleshly power.

The chain that holds me may appear to be a feeble one. In the eyes of carnal wisdom it may not seem "worth while" to call in "all the aids of heavenly power" to effect my deliverance. But if I am truly taught of God—if I am reading my Bible to purpose—I have learned sufficient of the deceitfulness of sin to put "no confidence in the flesh." Ai seemed a very little place to the hosts of Israel. Flushed with the victory of Jericho, they were so confident of success that they said, "Let not *all* the people go up" (Josh. vii. 3). But self-confidence is not faith. After a humiliating defeat, Israel seeks unto God through the valley of self-judgment. Then, at the command of the Lord, the attack upon Jericho is renewed. But mark the contrast with the manner of the former attack. The men sent by Joshua to view the country had returned and said, "Let not all the people go up." But the Lord said unto Joshua, "Take *all* the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai. . . . So Joshua arose, and *all the people of war*, to go up against Ai" (Josh. viii. 1, 3). And Ai was taken.

From all this we learn that however easily overcome a spiritual enemy may seem to be, nothing less than the power of God will avail for our deliverance. From beginning to end, "salvation is of the Lord." Our little enemies, as well as our great enemies, must be taken into *His* presence, and there overcome in the energy of a Heaven-begotten faith. Only thus can deliverance be *real*, and *lasting*, and to the *glory of God*.

## BY-PATH MEADOW.

HEN Bunyan's Pilgrim comes to a point where he is not very sure of his way, he finds a stile close at hand, leading into By-path meadow. The picture here is drawn to the life. When a believer is not sure of his way,—when, in the path of obedience, he gets into difficulty—the flesh or some worldly-minded counsellor is sure to suggest a way out. There is some stile at hand. Satan has a path—ever ready for those who are discouraged because of the way of truth. "Why undergo these trials," he seems to say; "why face these insurmountable difficulties, when by a single step into By-path meadow you can keep clear of all the dangers that threaten you?" To the unspiritual eye this easy path, opening up at an opportune moment, seems a providential circumstance. The stile is looked upon as the Lord *opening a door*. But the eye of spiritual discernment reads the situation differently. Satan and his workings are perceived. The stile is recognised as leading to the dreaded region of departure from God. By-path meadow may offer peace; but, if peace is found there, it is only the peace of death. God never opens a door that leads out of the path of truth.

—♦—

HE who will not give up an opinion in the face of clear evidence that he is wrong, is as little to be commended as the man who is constantly changing his views.

## CARNAL WEAPONS.

**B**y the use of carnal weapons a greater measure of seeming "success" could often be secured in the Lord's work. There is many a modern device used for getting up an interest and "drawing the people." But every carnal weapon is utterly beneath the dignity of a true man of God. It may be a trial to his faith, to see the seeming success of man-devised methods. Yet he can calmly wait upon his God for the Day which shall manifest every man's work, of what sort it is. The man of faith has not learned, and has no desire to learn, how to make the Gospel palatable to the carnal mind.

PRAYER has a tendency to cease when all is going well. Therefore the Lord sometimes permits the day of trouble, that we may be taught anew to pray.

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Vol. V.

## ONE SIDE NEGLECTED.

**I**F we are being conformed to the image of Christ, we may be assured that an *all-round* development of the Christian character is going on. Onesidedness was no characteristic of the Son of God: neither will it be a characteristic of those who are truly learning of Him. If we are beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, the varied virtues of Christ shall have their measure of manifestation in our manner of life. A onesided Christian is one who dwells almost exclusively on one side of truth, and thus cultivates only one side of the Christian character. If he dwells only on "the dark side of truth," as it has been called, his character partakes of the shadow in which he dwells. He sees everything at its worst. To him the present is filled with difficulty, and the future offers no hope of things getting better. He never rises to the point of enthusiasm. He is not looking for a brighter day: therefore he never perceives its dawn. To him "the signs of the times" are only ominous of evil, and that continually. By constantly dwelling in the shadow he has become soured and discontented. He sees only

one side of the great battle ever going on between light and darkness. Yea, he sees only one side of his brethren; and that is the side with the blemishes. His theology is *negative*: he does *not* believe in a great many things. When you ask him to declare himself, and point out what *he* believes will make for revival power and times of refreshing, he is at a loss for an answer.

On the other hand, there are those who see things only on the *bright* side. They care not to take up the great measuring-line of truth and test that which professes to be from above. They tell us they were not sent to judge. They accept everything and everybody "on their profession"; and would almost persuade you that the religious world is steadily marching on to the millennium.

From both of these extremes we must be delivered; and from both of them we *shall* be delivered if we are seeking conformity to the mind of Christ; for there was no unevenness in Him. Our zeal for truth and righteousness may be commendable, while our lack of gentleness and mercy may be lamentable. Many a Christian character is seriously injured by being cultivated only on one side. The Christian character is com-

posed of many ingredients ; and it is at our peril if we allow any of these ingredients to be wanting. We knew a lad who tried to make gunpowder. His materials were good ; but the composition lacked power. He afterwards discovered that a certain ingredient was lacking. So is it in building up the Christian character. We may have many excellent qualities ; yet the absence of one may mar the symmetry of the whole. It is well to carry the sword of judgment, and demand that righteousness take its course. But if we are not as earnestly striving after the meekness and gentleness of Christ, we shall manifest ourselves, like Ephraim of old (Hos. vii. 8), as "a cake not turned,"—one side heated up, while the other is unreachd by the fire. Onesidedness is closely allied to partiality—a thing which God condemns (1 Tim. v. 21 ; Jas. iii. 17, &c.). Onesidedness betrays a *latent self-will*, that makes *its selection* of certain virtues, contending for these with all its might, while others are neglected. It is possible to contend so exclusively for *love* that the truth is practically denied ; and it is possible to contend so exclusively for *truth* that love is lost.

Let our aim be for an all-round cultivation of the virtues of Christ. Unevenness in character will produce unevenness in testimony ; and this can only produce fruit after its kind. A onesided cultivation of character must inevitably dim the eye and warp the judgment. But when the virtues of Christ are allowed to have free course in

our manner of life, the result is a *divine harmony*. Anything else would *misrepresent* Christ, instead of showing forth His virtues. Wherever you have a believer in whose character these virtues are so evenly developed that you could scarcely tell which is the most prominent, you have one who is undoubtedly *learning* of Christ, and *manifesting* Christ, and *alluring* to Christ.

### COMPLETELY DEMOLISHED.

**I**F an old idol is not completely demolished, it has a tendency to come back to life again, and assert its former supremacy. But why was it not completely demolished when we professed to put it to death by the sword of truth? The reason is found in this, that there was a secret hankering after the forbidden thing. While *conscience* said that the idol must be destroyed, *the will* gave only a languid assent ; the result being that the work of destruction was only *half done*. Judgment, like patience, must have its perfect work. If we are persuaded that a clear line of separation must be drawn between us and forbidden ground, let us not fail to draw it. Half-hearted separation implies that there is a *lurking desire* to return to the very thing which we profess to have abandoned for ever!

IN our collective waiting upon God the silence of poverty is to be preferred to the activity of the flesh.

## FAITH AND SELF-CONFIDENCE.

**F**AITH is ever found associated with purity; and wherever you find self-confidence you are sure to find some dead fly in the apothecary's ointment. This finds a striking illustration in the attack made by Israel on the city of Ai (Josh. vii.). Their self-confidence, that *a few* of the people were sufficient to take the city, leads to defeat; and, when search is made, it is found that there is an Achan in the camp! When judgment has passed upon Achan—when Israel is purged from hidden corruption—the people go up against Ai. Cleansed from secret sin,—trusting in Jehovah,—victory is assured. All this is but a picture of what goes on in the life of the believer. Self-confidence is ever the token that the eyes of the understanding are being darkened by unjudged evil; while purity of heart is ever found in company with that faith which honours God and obtains the victory. The explanation of all this is simple. Sin has a *blinding* effect. It brings a film over the eye of our discernment. When conscience is violated, the result must inevitably be a lowering of our moral standard of right and wrong. God is lost sight of. And how can He be trusted if we are not pleasing God, and enduring “as seeing Him who is invisible”?

In the first stages of departure, before a hardening process has set in, conscience paralyses faith. Conscience, in such circumstances, virtually says: “How

dare you ask the Lord to bestow any favour upon *you* while you *know* you are not doing the things that please Him?” Thus, “the sensitive backslider”—if we may use the phrase—is debarred from going to the Lord for special favours. He knows his prayers would not be heard, because he is not walking in the light. His faith is quenched. He knows it; and he knows the reason. But if he do not make haste to turn again to the Lord, he will soon reach a *deeper depth* of departure. And, strange to say, in this “deeper depth” faith will seem to revive! Yea, it often *does* revive in such circumstances; but with this important difference—it has changed its object! Once upon a time that believer's faith was in the living God: now it is largely centred in himself! Self-confidence has taken the place of confidence in the Lord. The hardening process has done its work. A depth of departure has been reached at which conscience is scarcely heard to enter a protest. Preparations are very likely made for the taking of some Ai. The believer in question goes forth, as is his wont, to fight the Lord's battles. But he discovers that something is seriously wrong. There is sin in the camp! He is away in heart from God. Failure is the inevitable result. He now reads that question in a new light: “Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with Thee?” Happy for himself if, like Israel of old, he lay the sword of self-judgment to his heart and ways, and thus find “the valley of Achor” for “a door of hope.”

## “ALL SCRIPTURE.”

**S**CRIPTURE bears the highest testimony to its own divine origin; and this is one of the “hard arguments” that the sceptic has to encounter, in his attacks upon Scripture. The Lord has recorded it upon the page of inspiration that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, &c.” (2 Tim. iii. 16). But another translation of the passage was discovered, viz., “All Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable.” Those who oppose inspiration would no doubt breathe freely when this rendering was given. Yet any one can see that such a rendering is really a very vague and meaningless statement. It implies (and that is its black spot) that *only a part* of Scripture is inspired; and then it says that the portion thus inspired “*is profitable*”—leaving us to infer that the portion not inspired is *not* profitable! Such a translation must inevitably minister to the morbid appetite of those who seem to be never weary of questioning what God has said. The rendering before us is admirably fitted to make doubters, for it declares plainly that only a portion of Scripture is inspired; but it affords not the slightest clue whereby you may decide what part is inspired and what is not inspired! Such a translation carries its own refutation on its face; even if there were not the highest authority for accepting the simple declaration that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

## NO BURDEN.

**L**OVE makes service no more of a burden than wings are to a bird. The service of love is free and unencumbered. To tell of Jesus, out of the fulness of a loving heart, cannot be said to be hard work. It may entail labour—self-denial—suffering. But to proclaim the saving power of Christ is, in a sense, a luxury—at least to those who are enraptured with His beauty. Other themes have their limit; but the love of Christ has none. Other themes have their place in the scale of relative importance. But the great theme of *Jesus and His love* towers high above them all. Therefore, in proclaiming His sacrificial death—in telling forth the glories of His person, and the surpassing beauty of His character, we feel that we are dwelling upon the very highest theme that is known in Heaven or earth! Not only are we enraptured with our subject, but we know that we have a *right* to be so. The story we have to tell is the good tidings of great joy, designed of God for the dethronement of Satan in the sinner's heart. Our good news is nothing less than the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. It is a message of love, from Him whose name is Love; and when we are constrained by His love to tell abroad the glories of the Saviour's name, there is no straining of the fancy—no labouring to produce an effect. In the simplicity of love we tell out our message, and we feel we are bearing no burden in doing so.

## LIFE IN THE GOSPEL-MEETING.

*(Second Paper.)*

**H**AVING followed us thus far, some may be inclined to say: "All very true—if we have the men fitted for the work of preaching Christ to the perishing. But what if, in the assembly, there happens to be none specially fitted for that work? What is to be done then?" To this we reply: Let those fitted *in measure* make proof of their ministry *according to their measure*. In the matter of Gospel ministry we can at least give to the Lord the *best* we have. We cannot be expected to give what is not ours to give. But if God has vouchsafed even a measure of ability for preaching Jesus publicly, then let that ability be used for Him. It is just at this point, however, that a serious mistake is very generally made. The mistake is this: Brethren fitted in a humble measure to preach Christ, are often not content to keep within their measure. They attempt what is manifestly *beyond* their measure. They are perhaps fitted to speak acceptably for five minutes. But, instead of this, they go on, it may be, for half-an-hour-and-five minutes! There is thus a neglecting of the scriptural injunction, "If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth" (1 Pet. iv. 11). The result is,—a weariness to those that hear. If men of five words—or five minutes—ministered according to the ability which God has given, they would be accepted; and we can easily understand how their

word should be with power. But when they conclude—as many seem to conclude—that if they can open their mouth at all they can occupy half-an-hour to profit, they make a serious mistake. You will frequently hear brethren who, for the first five minutes, have a "grip" of the meeting. But it is clear, at that point, that their message is ended. Yet they go on for other twenty minutes, repeating commonplaces, and vainly endeavouring to retrieve their lost hold of the people. How happy for them—how happy for their audience—if they had been content to sit down when their message was delivered! Many an undoubted message has been rendered void through the mere filling up of time by which it was followed. The man with *two* talents need not try to do the same amount of business as the man with *ten* talents. If we had a little revival of truth on the subject of ministering "as of the ability which God giveth," we believe it would do away with a great deal of ministry that prevails to-day. Instead of being a loss, this would be recognised as a distinct gain. Even a very little word from God is better than any amount of *filling up of time*.

This leads us to a most important part of our subject, viz., that the preacher—whether he be a one-talent man or a ten-talent man—must be a *spiritually-minded man* and a *clean vessel*. Dazzling gift will avail nothing, if Christ be not reigning in the heart; and humble gift, if joined with abundant grace, may be the means of a great awakening. It is not

enough that a man has a measure of "gift" for preaching the Gospel. Is he *a man of God*? Is he a spiritually-minded brother? These are questions which have a most vital bearing on his fitness for the work. Some have the idea that personal holiness is not *so* essential in preaching the Gospel as in teaching the saints. But we fail to see the distinction. The preacher should be one who enjoys a conscious deliverance from the dominion of sin; for how can he preach deliverance to the captives while he himself is held captive by something he knows to be evil? We do not believe that men *at ease in Zion* have any commission from Heaven to run with the message of salvation. A man may talk fluently for half-an-hour, and yet have no message from God. Although one preached with power five years ago, that is no guarantee that he will preach with power to-day. Power depends upon present enjoyment of communion—not upon the remembrance of past victories. Brethren are often welcomed on account of their preaching ability, and without any question being asked as to their spirituality. But, if a preacher is manifestly deficient in practical conformity to the mind of Christ, he may be *an orator*, but we hold that he is nothing more. It is a bad sign of a preacher when it can be said of him that if you take away his preaching ability he would not be recognised as a spiritually-minded believer. The man who stands on the public platform should be as remarkable for his spirituality as for his

preaching ability. When God's saints come to the conclusion to insist upon personal holiness in the preacher as strongly as they insist upon his personal ability to preach, we may have fewer preachers, but we shall have more power.

In Assembly Gospel-work *all* the saints must feel their responsibility—not to occupy the platform, but to *commend the Gospel* in their every-day life; so that each one may be a "living epistle" that all may read. Nothing so strengthens a preacher's hands as a company of believers who are practical illustrations of the truths he is proclaiming. And if his hands are professedly held up by those whose lives do not adorn the doctrine, the preacher's testimony must suffer accordingly. This shows that *everything* does not depend upon the preacher; and that in a very real sense *all* are preachers.

Every one who believes he is called to preach is responsible to God for the exercise of his gift. If he is persuaded that he has a work to do in visitation, Cottage Meetings, or such like, we do not see why any obstacles should be put in his way. If he is acting apart from God's call he will find that out; and if the Lord is with him, let us be prepared to rejoice. While we hold that the Lord's servant should be at liberty to serve Him publicly, even in an individual path of service, we have no sympathy with those who claim liberty to associate themselves with the religious systems that are around us. The liberty of God will never lead us from the path of truth.

We have no need, as we have no warrant, to go to any man-devised associations to secure opportunities for service. The world is our parish; and within its ample bounds we shall find a sufficient field for all the service we have to render.

### CHRIST LIVETH IN ME.

**C**HRISt has left us an example, that we should follow His steps (1 Pet. ii. 21). But while our life is to be an imitation of His life, there is a much deeper thought brought out in the words, "Christ liveth in me." We thereby learn that His life will be reproduced in us, simply because Christ *has taken possession*. He lives—yea, and reigns—where *self* was wont to live and reign. I am one with Him in resurrection: therefore He has now become to me "the Resurrection and the Life" (Jno. xi. 25). *His life* in me is now the power whereby I live for Him. Only in so far as He liveth in me can I do those things that please Him.

What carefulness is wrought by the searching thought that *Christ liveth in me!* I am brought to a stand-still. I find that I must remain passive—that "good self" and "bad self" must alike stand aside, that the Lord alone may be exalted on the throne of my heart, and in the path of my testimony. Thus *letting* the Lord take full possession, His presence makes itself manifest; and we know that only as we manifest Him can we glorify His Name upon the earth.

### WHAT DENOMINATION?

**T**HE question is sometimes asked, "What denomination have you joined?" But the child of God has got nothing to do with such a question. The question is rather this: "Into what denomination has God put me?" I am not left to choose in the matter. I have simply to find an answer to the question: "Into what Name does the Lord gather sinners who have been delivered from wrath to come?" If I can find out *that*, then I have found out my "denomination." But—alas for denominational names!—I find that the Lord has not chosen one of these as the great centre of attraction for His people. In Phil. ii. 9 we read that God hath given His Son "a Name which is *above every name*;" and *into that Name* the Lord is gathering His people. I therefore find that my place is with those whom the Lord has already gathered into the Name of His Son. My path is thus clear and simple. I am not called upon to make any selection from among the names of sectarianism. There is one Name that towers immeasurably above all other names—a Name that shall not lose its power throughout eternal ages. That Name is all-sufficient. Into that Name God gathers. We need no other name—we desire no other. Let us seek that the Lord may be able to say of us, as He said of the Church in Philadelphia: "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied *My Name*" (Rev. iii. 8).

## WHERE WILT THOU ?

**I**N Matt. xxvi. 17 the disciples ask the question, "Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the Passover?" They had no will in the matter. The Passover must needs be kept. But *where* was it to be kept? They did not presume to fix upon a spot. They did not even make a suggestion. Their will was surrendered to Him whom they called Lord and Master (Jno. xiii. 13). They simply wanted to know *His* will, in order to carry it out. He told them *where*; and they prepared accordingly. His will was their delight; for loving obedience is ever a joyful obedience.

In like manner not a few of the saints have in these last days come into the presence of the Lord, and asked the question: "Where wilt Thou that we prepare?"—not to eat the Passover, as of old; but to keep the Memorial Feast in accordance with the Master's words: "This do in remembrance of Me." These believers found an answer in the pages of Holy Writ. They discovered that wherever there are two or three, gathered together into the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, *there* He is in the midst (Matt. xviii. 20). Nor have they failed to meet with Him, according to His appointment and His promise.

"Where *wilt* Thou?" As it was in the days of the disciples, so is it now. There must be the surrendered will. It is an evil day for any child of God when he permits the religious world to furnish

him with an answer to the great question, "Where wilt Thou that we prepare?" The self-will of man, or the wisdom of the world, may have devised a meeting-place where the Memorial Feast is professedly observed. But we must have the answer from the Lord Himself. Yea, if we are willing to know His mind, we shall find in His revealed will a full and complete answer to the question, "Where wilt Thou that we prepare?"

## VERY ACCOMMODATING.

**W**HAT new preacher is this?" "O he is the messenger of a new sect that is attempting to establish itself in this place." After we had gathered some more information about the new sect we found that its doctrines were of a most accommodating character. It was quite ready to acknowledge you in full church standing, even although you attend the world's concert to-day and its theatre to-morrow! The new sect allowed the fullest liberty on these points. "Just the very thing that some professors are waiting for," we said to ourselves. No doubt they will declare that they have made some wonderful discoveries in the field of truth. But the real discovery they have made is a "confession of faith" that allows them to have as much of the world as they please, while providing them with all the "privileges of the church," and assuring them that they are in the highest favour with Heaven!

## WENDING HIS WAY HOME.

**A**S Jehoshaphat wended his way home, after the disastrous expedition to Ramoth-gilead, he saw with perfect clearness that the expedition had not been of God at all (2 Chron. xix). The failure of the expedition was doubtless a most powerful argument in bringing him to that conclusion. But we know that he was pursuing a wrong course from the day that he entered the gate of Samaria; and Jehoshaphat might have known that, too. It is clear that he had misgivings—serious misgivings—as to whether the step had God's approval. But he stifled his convictions, probably hoping—as many have done in similar circumstances—that it would come out *all right in the end*. Jehoshaphat at this point stands out as a beacon of warning to all who enter upon a wrong course, or a doubtful course, and trust that a *successful ending* will prove that they had been right all the way. Jehoshaphat discovered *at last* what he might have found out *at first*, if he had been prepared to hear the Lord's voice as to the Ahab alliance. He had no need to err in the matter. He did not go to Ramoth-gilead unwarned. God had spoken. The heaven-sent prophet had delivered his message; and if the alliance with Ahab was wrong, no amount of *success* could make it *right*. This was the lesson which the king of Judah had to learn.

We must not fail to profit by Jehoshaphat's experience. The day in which

we live is one of expedients and policy. *Success*, in the eyes of many, is reckoned the great test as to whether a thing is of God. But we must weigh things in the balances of the Sanctuary. We must view them in the light of eternal principles. If God has already spoken in His Word as to whether a certain course is right or not, then it is at our peril if we seek out another course, in the vain hope that success in our self-chosen path will prove it to be the right one. If, in such circumstances, we happen to be "successful," let us be assured that our success will be our severest chastisement. Let us suppose for a moment that the Ramoth-gilead expedition had been successful. How would that success have affected Jehoshaphat? It would simply have puffed up his carnal wisdom, and strengthened him in his rebellion against the revealed will of God! We thus see that if we are not treading God's path, success will simply lure us farther and farther from that path.

In the present day a very common way of dealing with an "Ahab confederacy" is to say, "Wait till we see how it gets on. If it succeeds, we'll go in with it: if it is a failure, we'll take nothing to do with it." This is the great test applied by carnal policy. But the Word of God knows nothing of such time-serving principles. If God has already spoken as to an Ahab confederacy, or anything else, we do not need to wait to see what the voice of the people is,—as if the voice of the people could make the voice of God of none effect! We

have simply to apply the test of the unchanging *Word*. We do not appeal to the varying wind of popular opinion. "To the law and to the testimony," saith the Lord, "if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. viii. 20).

If we take success for our guide, we shall find ourselves with a very uncertain Bible. But, with the sure word of prophecy in our hand, we can go forward in the calm consciousness that we are treading the path which the Lord would have us to tread. We may not see many signs and wonders; but if, in the absence of these, we are found faithful in standing for God in an evil day, we shall not have run in vain, neither laboured in vain. "Thou hast been faithful in a few things," may not seem a great commendation now; but it will be *the* great commendation in the day when the winds of popular opinion shall have for ever ceased to blow.

### WILL IT STAND THE FIRE ?

(1 Cor. iii. 13; 2 Cor. v. 10; Heb. x. 25.)

**I**N view of the year that is now passing into eternity, let us pause and ask the question, "How much of our service will stand the fire of the coming Day?" for the fire will try every man's work of what sort it is. What need there is for *reality* as saints of God! Amidst the great amount of talk to-day, may our object be to *live Christ*. If we have misspent the year that is past, we cannot get it back to live it over anew.

But we can awake, and with purpose of heart endeavour that for the time to come, whether present or absent, we may be approved of God. Living in Psalm li. 12—the joy of salvation restored, and upheld by the free Spirit of God—the outcome will be the thirteenth verse: "Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee." Then, and only then, shall we be in a condition to serve the Lord among His people, or preach the Gospel to the world.

J. G.

### "TELL JESUS."

**P**ILGRIM, on thy journey,  
Stranger in the land,  
Fearful lest the en'my  
Gain the upper hand,  
Listen to the pleadings  
Of thy Guide within,  
As He gently whispers—  
"Tell JESUS" everything.

All thy fears shall vanish,  
All thy tears be dry,  
As He tells of glory  
Coming by and by;  
Thus the word of promise  
Doth the hours beguile—  
"I am coming for thee,  
In 'a little while.'"

Soon thou shalt behold Him,  
And be with Him there—  
Gaze upon His glory,  
And His throne shall share.  
Yet through nights of sorrow,  
Thus to still thy fear,  
Hark! the Spirit whispers:  
"Tell JESUS"—He is near.

R. S. S.

## COME AND SEE.

**T**HERE is a great deal of truth that cannot be seen unless you "come and see." When the two disciples enquired, "Where dwellest Thou?" the Master answered, "Come and see" (Jno. i. 39). And when Nathanael said, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip gave the same answer—"Come and see" (ver. 46). When Nathanael *came* and *saw*, his prejudices immediately vanished. He saw that it was quite possible for a good thing to come out of Nazareth,—that even from that despised town the great Messiah had come. No sooner does he *come* and *see* than we hear the wonderful confession: "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel" (ver. 49). Philip might have sat down to "argue the point" with Nathanael. But he took a more excellent way. He simply answered, "Come and see." We do not say that argument is always bad. There is such a thing as a godly reasoning out of the Scriptures (Acts xvii. 2). It is to be feared, however, that a deal of discussion on sacred themes is often fruitless, simply because the enquirer is not prepared to *come* and *see*. He wishes to know the way of the truth from beginning to end before he will take a single step. He forgets that new light is only acquired as we obey the light we have already received. It is only as we do His will that we shall "know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."

Again, we see that *in the Master's*

*presence* Nathanael learned what it seemed almost hopeless for him to learn through the testimony of Philip. In dealing with backsliders, or with saints "at ease in Zion," we must ever keep this before us, that we shall fail to deliver if we do not aim to bring them *into the Master's presence*. We may make the truth very clear—we may so bring it to bear upon them as seemingly to leave no avenue of escape. Yet, if they are not brought into the presence of God, our gain is small indeed. A vast amount of time is often spent, and great pains taken, to show to a believer the evils of worldly conformity and the bitterness of departure from God. But he "cannot see it." He tells you there is no cause for alarm. Yet you feel discouraged. You had so planted your batteries of truth that you felt certain he would surrender at the first summons. But he makes no sign of surrender. Indeed, he offers the most determined resistance. And why? Because it is not clear arguments he needs. He has simply to "*come and see*." He must get *into the presence of the Lord*; and the first five minutes *there* will make clear to him what the clearest statements of truth had failed to reveal. Therefore, let us labour to get souls *to God*. We do not say we shall effect this apart from a proclamation of the truth. But, if our aim be to bring saints into the presence of the Lord, we shall be led to use truth fitted to reach that end. True freedom is ever associated with knowing the truth. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"

(Jno. viii. 32). When saints are brought into the presence of God, it is then that they come under the power of the words: "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isa. liv. 13).

After the clearest exposition of truth, why do we so often hear the words: "We cannot see it"? One great reason consists in this, that the believers in question are *not walking in the light*. They are simply stating what is true when they say "We cannot see." Yet how much does that confession involve! If we are not walking in the light, we cannot be expected to see,—even the most elementary principles of separation unto God.

This simple question of dwelling in the presence of God, will be found to account for a great deal of the "lack of perceptive power" that may prevail either in ourselves or in our brethren. There is many a disastrous project that would never have been entered upon had the believer been walking in the light. There is many a life that would have been different and happier to-day, had it not been for the fatal turning aside at a time when the eye was not single for God. How all-important, then, to see that we are experimentally dwelling in the presence of the Most High! And, in dealing with an erring one, how all-important to aim at bringing that one into the Master's presence! David says in Ps. lxxiii. 17, "Until I went *into the Sanctuary of God*; then understood I their end." And, again, he says: "For

with Thee is the Fountain of life: *in Thy light shall we see light.*"

## A RIGHT WAY FOR OUR LITTLE ONES.

**I**N coming up to Jerusalem the remnant are found seeking a right way for themselves and *their little ones* (Ezra viii. 21). It is a healthy sign of our spiritual vitality when we are careful to seek out a *right way* for our little ones. Not a few of God's people seem to have the impression that if they find a right way for *themselves*, it matters little whether their children are in that way or not. But, if we have learned what Separation really is, we will not rest content with merely finding a right way for ourselves. Like Ezra of old, we shall be found taking counsel of God as to a right way for *our little ones*. If, by knowing and obeying the truth, we ourselves have been made free, it surely becomes us to see that our children are trained up in accordance with the truth which we ourselves have learned. What is the right way for *us* is the right way for our children; and it is to their peril and our own shame if we allow them to drift wherever the current of popular religion may carry them. Let parents professing separation to the Name be faithful in this matter; and the God who honours faith will make it clear in a coming Day that eternal issues depended upon our finding a *right way for our little ones*.

## CHANGING HIS MIND.

**N**ATHANAEL was a clear illustration of the truth that we are quite right to change our mind if we are confronted with evidence to cause us to change it. Nathanael had very decided convictions concerning Nazareth. He had evidently arrived at the conclusion that no good thing could come out of that place. But, if he had refused to surrender that conviction, he would never have surrendered to the Lord of Life and Glory! Nathanael, however, was open to be convinced,—a thing which we believe to be true of the whole class of whom Nathanael is but a type. We refer to those who are "Israelites indeed," in whom is no guile. The man of the guileless spirit may have erroneous convictions. He may be harbouring prejudices that are absolutely unwarranted. But he is quite prepared to give them up, provided due cause is shown. Thus the man of the guileless spirit and the man of the self-willed spirit are distinguishable. The Nathanaels are ready to part with long-cherished convictions in the face of sufficient evidence. But the self-willed, when once they take up a prejudice, will stick to it with the tenacity of "seven men that can render a reason." Evidence, seemingly of the most convincing character, has no effect upon *them*. Perhaps they do not care to take the humiliating position of those who have been wrong. Or, it may be, they are so enamoured of their own prejudices that they will receive nothing

to the contrary. Be that as it may, they have made up their minds that no good thing can come out of Nazareth; and whatever blessing is to come to them from Heaven must in no wise conflict with the fundamental principle that "no good thing can come out of Nazareth."

## LOVE.

A few thoughts suggested by "Love envieth not," in *Treasury* for February, 1890.

**L**OVE envieth not—let others rise  
To heights of honour and of praise;  
Love vaunteth not—is not puffed up,  
But seeks to walk in Wisdom's ways.

Love is not easily provoked,  
And seeketh not her own to gain;  
In no unseemly way behaves,  
Nor can with evil thoughts remain.

Rejoiceth not where sin doth reign,  
But in the Truth is ever glad;  
Love beareth all—believes, endures—  
Though much there be to make her sad.

Love never fails: though tongues shall cease,  
And human wisdom pass away,  
Love shall abide, and keep in peace  
The hearts of all who own her sway.

O Lord, let love increase, abound,  
As incense rising up to Thee,  
Till, in the ocean of Thy love,  
We'll bathe throughout eternity! A. M.

THE presence or absence of difficulty in our path may afford us no light as to whether it is God's path. Difficulty and absence of difficulty may be alike a trial to faith.

## FLATTERY AT SECOND-HAND.

**F**EVIL-SPEAKING never has a sharper sting than when it reaches you indirectly,—through some tale-bearer who carries the unsavoury message. In the same way flattery is never more subtle and dangerous than when it reaches you in like manner. A man cannot pay you very marked compliments to your face. He instinctively feels that you would cut him short in the middle. Then, there is a certain unseemliness in praising you to your face, that causes him to hesitate. But, if he has any purpose to serve by paying you compliments, he can gain his point in another way, viz., by praising you to some person who is *certain to tell you all about it!* This is the master-piece of the flatterer's art. It seems so accidental—so unpremeditated. It looks as if the flatterer never intended *you* to hear his words. Yet in due time they reach you. Some supposed friend carries the honey; and it tastes so sweet, simply because you understand you were not intended to taste it at all. How the flesh enjoys the flattery that has seemingly reached you “by chance”! But have a care, my brother. Beware of the honey, no matter by what road it comes. Cut the tale-bearer short, whether he comes as the lion of evil-speaking, or as the bear of flattering words. You may recover from the fiery darts of slander,—yea, and come through the ordeal as gold when it is tried. But how few can withstand the honied words of the flatterer! How

many have been crippled for life by drinking in the compliments of one who had not the wisdom to see that he was inflicting untold injury! True brotherly love never flatters. While lavish in deeds, such love is sparing in compliments. You may well doubt the friendship of the man who comes to you, bearing some flattering report as to your own excellent qualities.

## TO OUR READERS.

**O**UR testimony for another year is now closed. By the good hand of our God upon us, we have been enabled to send out our monthly Message during the twelve months that are past. For whatever the Lord may have wrought through these pages, let Him have the undivided glory. It becomes us ever to remember that we are *only a channel.*

The Lord will reward those who have been fellow-helpers in this testimony.

The present Volume completes the *fifth* year of the “TREASURY”; and if there is any Scriptural significance in the number *five* as being associated with weakness (See 1 Sam. xvii. 40; Isa. xxx. 17; Matt. xiv. 17, &c.), we may say that we were never more conscious of our need of absolute dependence on the Lord, in the carrying on of this work. We have been cheered from time to time to know that our hands are being held up in prayer. Let all such remembrancers continue therein, and faint not, that the Lord, through the humble instrumentality of these pages, may have many a message for His redeemed. And unto His Name be glory in the Church, by Christ Jesus, unto eternal ages. Amen.

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8	I beheld His glory.
9	The power of darkness.
10	The weakening gift and the strengthening grace.
11	Brought back to God.
12	Sowing the seed.
13	Forgiven.
14	Communion.
15	The pastor's spirit.
16	Like Him.
17	In the new creation.
18	Children of the new creation.
19	Polished, hid, well-pleasing.
20	The night of sorrow.
21	Look on the fields.
22	"As" and "where" thou art.
23	The Evangelist.
24	The man of God.
25	To my little place for prayer in the wood.
26	Where is that blessed One?
27	The power of love.
28	The care of God.
29	Thine everlasting Light.
30	"Be not afraid, 'tis I."
	101 The meeting at the well.
	102 The Solemn Day.
	103 Turn and flee.
	104 I come to Thee.
	105 "He told me all that ever I did."
	106 Is it too late?
	107 For me.
	108 The hour is nearing.
	109 Not convenient.
	110 Conversion of Zacchæus.
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