

THE
BELIEVER'S TREASURY.

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I N D E X.

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Believer's Treasury.

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Vol. VIII.

A YEAR FOR GOD.

IN spite of the darkness of an evil day, let us never forget that it is our privilege to be *clear out for God*. Surrounding circumstances cannot rob us of our birth-right—to walk with God, and be burning and shining lights for *Him*. We may *permit* our circumstances to deprive us of our communion. But this is no part of God's purpose. In spite of circumstances—in spite of all the power of Satan—it is the will of our God that each one of His redeemed should be “a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use” (2 Tim. ii. 21). Nothing less can satisfy the great heart of love that beats on yonder throne!

With the sands of 1892 run out, beyond recall, into the great

eternity of the past, and with the untrodden wilderness of another year stretching out before us, it becomes each one to ask the question, “What kind of a new year is this to be, in my experience?” Is it to be a year of blessing?—a year of revival power?—a year in which the flesh shall be mortified, the world overcome, and the Devil resisted in the energy of faith? Is it to be a year of the might of the Risen One in my soul? Is it to be a year at “the backside of the desert” *with Him*, while at the same time a year of precious testimony *for Him* in the midst of abounding iniquity?

To these questions there can be only one answer—at least by all who seek to please the Lord Christ. “Yes, Lord,” responds the longing heart; “I only want

to have a year *with Thyself*." And why should it not be so? Though ten thousand foes arise to hinder, and Satan all his arts employ, "greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 Jno. iv. 4). The Risen Jesus is able to save to the uttermost that blood-bought company who are now on their way to God (Heb. vii. 25). Let us not be discouraged by past failure, nor dismayed at the increasing forces of evil on every hand. Our sufficiency is of God. The voice that stilled the stormy sea (Matt. viii. 26), that cast out the demon host (Matt. viii. 28-32), and compelled even the grave to yield up its charge (Jno. xi. 43)—that voice is potent as of old. That "same Jesus" sits at the right-hand of the throne of God *for His redeemed* (Heb. ix. 24). All power is given unto Him; and that power is unto usward who believe. What an abundant provision is ours! Our portion is nothing less than "all-sufficiency in all things." We are called to be filled, even unto *the fulness of God!*

Knowing, then, these precious realities, shall we stand doubting and fearing in the outer court of popular Christianity? Nay, verily. We must press in—even to the inner court of vital godliness and whole-hearted surrender. It is there alone that there is "bread enough and to spare"—it is there that the fountain of joy never fails, and the light never grows dim. Then, shall not every reader of these lines echo the words, "*A year with God*"? And right well we know that a year *with God* shall be a year *for God*.



"MY CUP RUNNETH OVER."—This is the most powerful answer to an alluring world. The enemy has no room to come in where there is an overflowing cup.

THOUGH Christianity has its forms, he has a poor portion who has forms for his Christianity.

If the eye of faith grows dim, I shall see but a faint glimmer of the glories afar. This is how it comes that worldly-mindedness is never associated with lively faith.

THE EFFECT OF CHARACTER.

EXPLAIN it how you may, "the public" among whom a believer is moving, soon come to form a tolerably correct estimate of his character. Indeed the world *takes its measure* of all the professed believers within the sphere of its observation; and it is often startling to note how accurately the world has gauged its man. This is seen in how it treats the inconsistencies of certain believers. One of these believers, forgetting the dignity of his calling, plays some stroke of worldly policy. The world looks on, observing the whole thing. But the world is not a bit surprised. Why? "O," they say, "that's just like *him*: we never expected anything else from *him*." The stroke of worldly policy is quite in keeping with the estimate which the world had formed of his *character*; and when a man acts "in character" it causes no surprise. But let us suppose that a certain *other* believer plays a stroke of the

same worldly policy; and at once an entirely different effect is produced. "We cannot understand it," the world says; "we are simply astonished—we never expected anything of that kind from *him*." And why is this? It is because "worldly policy" is altogether out of keeping with the estimate which the world had formed of his *character*; and the surprise was caused by his acting "out of character." This explains how it is that a similar offence committed by different men is often passed over without remark in one case, while it is viewed as a heinous offence in the other. The two offences may be alike blameworthy. What, then, causes the difference? It is the *background* that causes the difference; and that background is *character*. If a man's character has left an unfavourable impress on the public mind, his inconsistencies will occasion but little surprise, however much they may be used as a reproach to the truth. But if a man's character is built upon the great

pillars of righteousness and truth, and adorned with the graces of purity and love, a very slight inconsistency will be noted as a remarkable thing.

"UNTO HIM."

TO whom or to what did I come out, when I heard the call of God, and left "my denomination" in order that I might own the one gathering Name of our Lord Jesus Christ? This may seem a very simple question; yet it is of great importance to have an intelligent understanding of even such an "elementary principle." The answer is simple and decisive—"I came out to the Lord Jesus Christ, in obedience to the call, 'Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach'" (Heb. xiii. 13). Mark the two all-important words—*Unto Him*. It was to a *Person* we went out, and not to a *religious system*. If we had come out to a *system*, we might well

have had cause to exchange it for some other system. But, having come out to a Person—even the rejected Lord Jesus Christ, we are well content—yea, rejoiced—to *abide with Him*.

We remember well when we "went forth" to the Rejected One. We had not much light on "Separation truth"; but this much we had learned, and we never needed to unlearn it—that we came out to *the Lord*. We did not come out to "join the brethren," as some say, when describing what we have done. Neither did we come out to a "perfect condition of things." Indeed the *imperfection* of "outside the camp" position had all been duly magnified before our sight, in order to deter us from "taking the step." But then it was neither "brethren" nor "a perfect condition of things" that allured us outside the camp. It was *Himself*. Great preachers—even gifted men—we were compelled to leave behind. We sought *God's centre of gathering*; and we knew that the greatest

preacher on earth was *not* that centre. We found it written of Christ, that "*unto Him* shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. xlix. 10). We read of our gathering together in His Name—the great gathering Name (Matt. xx. 18; 1 Cor. v. 4, &c.). Therefore, *unto Him* we went forth; and we have never had cause to regret that we went forth *unto Him*. We simply sought to own the gathering Name, and to carry out what we found *written in the Word*. This was very simple, was it not? You see, we did not try to invent a new line of things. We simply sought to go upon the lines which the Lord *had already laid down* in the Scriptures of Truth.

Thus going on with God, we found ourselves in unison with *all who were thus going on with God*. It was not an arrangement to agree with each other; for there could be no agreement without *a standard*. As each believer, and each gathered company of believers, was in subjection to God, and seeking in all

lowliness of mind to walk by the standard of that which is written, there was fellowship. It could not be otherwise. We were agreed with each other *because* we were agreed with *God and the Word*. You may say—as some tell us—that we are in a system after all. Very well, we reply; be it so. If you mean that there are certain forms connected with our Church position, you are quite correct. There is such a thing as "the form of godliness." We humbly seek to go by *the Book*, and to keep the ordinances as these have been delivered. If there be any system in the matter, it is God's system—the order of things which He has revealed in His Word.


—•••—

HEART-CONTENTMENT is the true measure of a man's wealth; and we know that no one can be truly content unless he is *satisfied with Christ*.

THE world ceases to be a wilderness to us, just in proportion as we lose the pilgrim spirit.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE.—A light that burns well at home shines anywhere.


MUST BE MORTIFIED.

 BAD habit gets stronger with age and indulgence.

Speaking on this subject a certain philosopher says, "It is hard to transplant an oak at fifty." But another takes ten years off the estimate, and says in words of solemn import: "After *forty*, a man is *what he has been!*" We quote these utterances to show that even the world's philosophers recognise the principle that long-continued indulgence in evil habit builds a wall as of adamant around its victim. As to the *time of life* when a wrong course or habit becomes *chronic*, we need not discuss the point. It will vary in different persons according to the measure of light they are rejecting. To whom much is given, of them shall much be required. One thing at least seems clear, that character is usually formed for life at a much earlier age than forty. This great principle—that habit forms character—is the simple operation of the law

of cause and effect. And let no believer cherish for a moment the delusion that *he* is exempt from the operation of that law. If we are indulging the flesh—if we are forming habits that will not stand the light of God—there must be a separation from the accursed thing. And the separation must be *now*. To suggest delay is virtually to enter into an agreement with the enemy. A drop of water on a polished blade may leave very little mark, if wiped off instantly. But if allowed to remain for days or weeks, how different will be the effect produced! Thus it is with sin. Whether it be in thought or action, the forbidden thing indulged will gradually intrench itself in your moral being; and if not mortified in the power of the Spirit, it will become part of yourself in spite of yourself! How all-important, then, to see that no iniquity is having the dominion, and that I am not acquiring any habit that shall yet involve me in eternal loss!

COMMUNICATION BROKEN.

OME time after Saul had massacred the priests of Nob—"fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod" (1 Sam. xxii. 18)—we find that he "inquired of the Lord" (xxviii. 6); but "the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." The infatuated king evidently did not reflect that in slaying the Lord's priests he had destroyed the great channel of communication with Jehovah. He had, so to speak, cut the telegraph wires with his own hand; and when he fain would have sent a message to Heaven, he discovered to his dismay that there was *no communication*!


We pity the man who was so self-deceived as to imagine that he could wantonly destroy the priests of Nob, and yet expect to get an answer from the Lord, as if nothing had happened! Yet it is quite possible for us to do the same thing, although in a milder form. Our communication

with the throne above may be interrupted by *unconfessed sin*. If the flesh be "indulged while conscience sleeps," the wires of communication are virtually cut; or some worldly alliance may effectually break the "electric current" between the believer and his God. If any of these things are lying unjudged upon our conscience, what will it profit us to seek messages from Heaven as if we were walking in the paths of truth and holiness? Hath God forgotten? "He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?" (Ps. xciv. 9). As an old brother once said, "You need not try to steal a march upon God."

We may persuade men that we are saints of no mean order. But the Lord sees all that is going on—even to the secrets of the heart. We cannot deceive *Him*. We may go down upon our knees, as if we were on the best of terms with the Lord; but if there be "sin in the camp" no answer shall come from "the excellent glory."

What, then, is to be done? The answer is simple: Communication must be restored. But how? By *confessing and forsaking* the thing or things that have broken the communication. All this is plain. It is vain to try to compound matters and come to an arrangement whereby you can be on speaking terms with God while you pursue a path that has not *His* approval.

THE CHIEF DANGER.

 AN unscriptural system of religion may have many things in it that are commendable. And it is this element—the mixture of truth and error—that constitutes the chief danger of an unscriptural system. Its advocates wax eloquent as to its good points, while they are silent as to its bad points. “You cannot deny that *this* is scriptural,” they say; “and you must admit that *that* is in keeping with the Book.” Thus their *sound* doctrines are duly set forth

before the eye of the unwary; and in this way merchandise is made of the simple. But what of the *unsound* doctrines of the system? Generally speaking, you are left to find these out for yourself. If you are one who must have a “Thus-saith-the-Lord” for any step you are called to take in these things, you pause and apply the test of Scripture; when lo! away down in the foundation you find a block of doctrine that *will not stand the light of Scripture!* Very likely upon this block the whole system rests! How needful in these days is the exhortation to *prove all things!* Young believers especially are liable to be carried away by one or two outstanding “good points” in an unscriptural system. To all such the simple warning is needed, “Wait, I say, on the Lord.” Search and see if the foundation pillars of the system will stand the “plumb line” of truth.

—♦—
HE who rejoices at another's fall, rejoices at the Devil's victory.

A CONTRAST.

IT seems that out of the whole company of the priests devoted to destruction (See 1 Sam. xxii.) there was one, Abiathar by name, who escaped the vengeance of Saul and found his way to the rejected David. In connection with this same Abiathar, an interesting contrast comes clearly out in following up the sacred narrative. In an hour of danger, when it was all-important that David should know the mind of the Lord, we find him calling for Abiathar the priest and saying: "Bring hither the ephod" (1 Sam. xxiii. 9). The needed message came back at once from the Lord, and the fugitive king escaped from the hand of his enemy. We thus see, that while Saul sought in vain for the counsel of Heaven, the persecuted David was receiving messages from Jehovah—and these through the very man whom Saul had marked out for death! Truly they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.

SELF-SURRENDER.

WHEN people speak of *the surrender of the will*, we know what they mean. But the surrender of my will is really the surrender of *myself*. You cannot separate a man from his will. When a sea-captain puts the helm into a pilot's hand, the guiding of *the ship* is at once under the control of another. And so it is with the believer. If my will is put into the hand of the great Pilot, it is simply a case of self-surrender. My life is then under His guiding. The whole ship moves under the touch of the Man at the helm. The surrender of the will must not be viewed as an isolated act. It is *included* in the giving of my own self to the Lord (2 Cor. viii. 5). It is embraced in the "living sacrifice" spoken of by Paul when he says: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." 9

WHY ART THOU CAST DOWN ?

WHATEVER advantage Satan may get over you as a child of God—never be *discouraged*. It is the greatest victory of the great enemy when he persuades us to *lose heart*. But it must not be. We are the Lord's—redeemed by His blood—sealed by His Spirit—bound up in the bundle of life with Him—never to be separated from His love. Therefore, because I am His, I turn round to the great Adversary, and say, "You have no claim on me ; I have died and risen in Him who sits on the throne above. I belong to Him ; and back to the great arms of His love I flee." Ah ! beloved, we are fighting a good fight. The tempest may wax fiercer, and the darkness may deepen. Yet it is our privilege ever to say, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul ? and why art thou disquieted in me ? Hope thou in God ; for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance" (Ps. xlii. 5).

DIVIDES THE WORLD.

PAUL gloried in "the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom," he says, "the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14). *The Cross* is thus the measure of the believer's separation from the world. It stands *between* the believer and the world. The world may wave its hand to me, and say, "We want you to join us in this." But how can there be a joining of affinity while the Cross stands between ? If I am determined to join affinity, it can only be done by my going back, and forcing my way *past* that Cross by which the Lord has for ever separated me from the world ! This is solemn. The Lord has made no provision whatever for a return into Egypt. As it was on the Crucifixion Day, so is it now—*the Cross divides the world*. The Lord Jesus *has separated* you and me from the world, beloved. Do we give our hearty *Amen* to what the Lord has done ?

TO OUR READERS.

IN our November number we fully explained why the *Treasury* is now reduced in size and published at a Halfpenny. The short word "To our Readers," in December issue leaves very little now to be said. We reciprocate all the kind greetings we have received, and we note the expressions of regret that the amount of the monthly ministry must be curtailed. We trust, however, that the matter in the new series now commencing, will not be found wanting in that which is of far greater moment than mere quantity—namely, simplicity, point, and arrestive power. We do not care to speak of the letters that reach us, praising God for help received through these pages. But we may be pardoned for referring to two communications just to hand, relating to two believers—one of whom is at the other side of the world, and the other nearer home. The former found, through the *Treasury*, the needed word at a critical time, and saw her own experience so correctly described that it seemed as if the article were written for her alone. The other remarks that in every number he finds something to search his own spiritual condition; and so invariably is this the case that he hesitates to open the paper out—if he is *not just prepared* to be searched! We could tell of remarkable coincidences—the *Treasury* arriving, time after time, with the very message that answered the questionings of troubled hearts. We could also tell of its bringing the *confirming* word—the saints finding in its pages the exact message declared unto them by their own ministering

brethren a few days before. But what we have said will suffice to show to all interesting themselves in this Paper, that so far as can be seen, it has a mission, and that it is not running in vain. For this let us praise God and press on.

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Vol. VIII.

DELIVERANCE FROM THE POWER OF THE FLESH.

DELIVERANCE from the power of the flesh can only be effected by the presence of a *greater* power. In conflict with the forces of evil it is important to remember that the flesh never changes its character. The flesh in a believer is just the same as the flesh in an unbeliever. That which is born of the flesh *is flesh* (Jno. iii. 6). To speak of "getting rid of the flesh, root and branch," simply tends to the worst kind of deception, and plunges honest seekers after the overcoming life into despair at the first appearance of failure. "What, then, is to be done?" you say, "seeing it must be admitted, as a first principle, that the flesh is still

with us." We answer that the flesh must be kept in its true place—the place of powerlessness—by a *higher principle*, even "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," which hath made us "free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. viii. 2).

The tendency of the flesh is to drag us down—to defile—to bring into bondage. The only all-sufficient preventive of this is the operation of a *higher law*; and this law is nothing less than "the fulness of the blessing" experienced in your soul and mine, beloved.

Let us take an illustration from things around us. A man has fallen overboard a vessel, and is in danger of drowning. His natural tendency is to sink. The law of gravitation at once begins to drag him down. But


a life-belt is thrown to him. He seizes it, gets it around him, and at once finds himself floating buoyantly. What has taken place? Has the law of gravitation ceased to act? No. Its tendency is still the same: it has not changed in the slightest degree. But "a higher law," if we may so speak, has been introduced. The air in the life-belt tends to *rise*; and the drowning man, being practically *one* with the life-belt, is kept safely with his head above water, upon the principle that a *more powerful counterforce* has been introduced than the tendency to sink.

This illustration may help us to understand that the flesh can only be resisted and kept under by the presence of a *more powerful counterforce*. For this the most ample provision has been made in "the fulness of God" and the "more abundant life," so clearly revealed in Scripture as the portion of the redeemed of the Lord. A low standard of spiritual life—a contentment with the merest pittance

of heavenly power—may leave us so unequal to the wilderness conflict that we shall find ourselves bemoaning defeat after defeat at the hands of our great enemy—the flesh. "A little reviving in our bondage" will not suffice to make us overcomers for God. The standard of our spiritual power must be raised. Away with these sluices that hold back the waters of heavenly joy! Stand back, ye sentinels of cold formality that block the way into the inner court of the temple! Perish from the tablet of memory every earth-born thought that constant failure must be the portion of an heir of Heaven! Has God not said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people"? (2 Cor. vi. 16). Is it not His great design that we, His people, should ever be led in triumph in Christ—going up through the wilderness, leaning on the arm of our Beloved? Yea, is it not His purpose that in conflict in the heavenly places we should

be more than conquerors through Him that loved us? Thus shall the tide of heavenly joy be ever rising in the soul, and prove itself that "higher law" which shall dominate our whole lower nature—overpowering, in the unction of the Holy One, every enemy of our soul.

THE KEEPING-POWER OF HEAVENLY JOY.

E all know how any particular passion—a great sorrow, for example—may so take possession of the heart of a man as to suspend, for a time at least, the lower instincts of his nature. Everything else seems to be swallowed up in his great sorrow. Such is the power of one great passion that everything of the "baser sort" may take a temporary flight from the altar of the heart. In the heart and life of the Christian this great principle finds its highest fulfillment. In his case the ruling

passion is *the joy of the Lord* in the soul. When *His* love keeps the heart—when that heart is satisfied with His love—is it not the case that the flesh, like iniquity in millennial times (Isa. lx.), is compelled to hide its head? Is it not the case that the sensual and the earthly are to all intents and purposes swallowed up in heavenly victory, while the soul rises into "serener skies"? Ah! there is nothing can truly keep the heart but the great master-passion of delight in the Absent One. Let this "joy of the Lord" wane in the soul, and at once a thousand foes arise, and come rushing in, to claim the throne of the heart. This is the true spot where backsliding begins. Just as the joy of the Lord is strength (Neh. viii. 10), so the lack of that joy is weakness—a weakness so great that the iniquity which hid itself in the noonday of your heavenly gladness, will come boldly out in the twilight of your waning joy, and lead you to unholy altars and forbidden groves!

SELF-DECEIVED.

THE "deceitfulness of sin" is very clearly brought out in Samuel's interview with Saul, as recorded in 1 Sam. xv. 12-26. Saul had received the divine command to destroy Amalek utterly—both "man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (ver. 3). But, instead of carrying out the word of the Lord, he "spared" Agag, and the best of the sheep and of the oxen; and "would not utterly destroy them" (ver. 9). Such, however, is the *self-blinding* effect of departure from the counsel of the Lord, that Saul persuaded himself he had faithfully carried out the instructions of Jehovah! "Blessed be thou of the Lord," he said to the prophet Samuel; "I have performed the commandment of the Lord" (ver. 13). We know how lamentably he had *failed* to carry out that commandment. Yet this is the man who is found boasting of his obedience! We have here a victim of self-deception—a

striking example of "the deceitfulness of sin."

To yield to the promptings of the flesh not only *defiles*, but it *blinds*. It dims the spiritual vision. It hinders us from *seeing ourselves*. Yea, it goes further even than this; for it causes us to see ourselves in a *false light*. The same fleshly compassion which Saul extended to Amalek he extended to himself. The *disobedience*, as we know, was undoubted; the *blinding* followed; and the *self-deception* was complete.

When a believer enters on a wrong course, it need not be surprising if he clings to it with increasing tenacity. *There is no darkness so deep as that which follows rejected light!* Many a believer has entered a forbidden path tremblingly who has afterwards declared the thing to be of God. Saul must needs justify himself; and the louder that conscience cries, "You have done wrong," the louder becomes his protestation of obedience—as if by the boldness of his testimony

to drown the still small voice within!

But inward departure is usually attended with outward manifestation of some kind—if we only had eyes to see. The outward manifestation may be clear to all, or it may take a prophet's eye to discern it. In Saul's case the external tokens of disobedience were plainly manifest to Samuel. He calmly hears the loud professions of obedience, and then startles the guilty conscience of the king by the question, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" (ver. 14). Those sheep and oxen should have been silent in death,—and so should the accursed Agag. Yet he walks at large. What meaneth all this, if Saul has obeyed the commandment of the Lord? When Samuel thus lays the axe to the root of the tree, Saul is compelled to make the acknowledgment, "I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared


the people, and obeyed their voice" (ver. 24).

As it was then, so is it now—the highest professions of allegiance to Christ may be found where there is "a deceived heart" (Isa. xlv. 20). When this is the case, there will be some outward manifestation of the unreality within. There will be *something*—discernible at least by the anointed eye—to tell what is the condition of the heart. The bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen will be heard; some Agag will be seen walking at large—all tokens of unmortified flesh protesting, as with prophet's voice, against the solemn profession, "I have obeyed the commandment of the Lord"!




AN "ungracious Christian" is a contradiction of terms, and an undoubted "false witness." This, perhaps more than anything else, stumbles the worldling, and provides the scoffer with his most powerful argument against the religion of Jesus Christ.

"LET US MAKE."

T is well to remember that "great men are not always wise" (Job xxxii. 9). A striking example of this will be found in the account of the Transfiguration. Peter, lost in wonder at the transcendent sight, exclaims, "Lord, it is good for us to be here" (Matt. xvii. 4). Thus far, no exception can be taken to the apostle's words. It was a blessed experience—it was, without doubt, "good" for them to be there. But in the very next sentence Peter makes a proposal which was clearly not according to the mind of God at all. "If Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles," he said; "one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." The result was, that the heavenly vision at once vanished from their sight, and they saw "no man, save Jesus only." Peter's suggestion—or, rather, Peter's blunder—may teach us that one great among his brethren may be found making great mistakes. Even

after Pentecost, this same Peter had to be resisted to the face because he was to be blamed. A brother may be great in the Church, and deservedly so; but we must not conclude that he is therefore an infallible guide. He may step aside, and act apart from God's leading. Yea, he may repeat Peter's blunder, and say: "Let us make." That is, he may propose to build *without a divine command*.

EARNESTNESS NOT ENOUGH.

THE cleansing of our way must ever be effected by taking heed thereto according to *the Word* (Ps. cxix. 9). It is not sufficient to claim that we are in earnest. When we tell the unsaved that they must be born again, they sometimes reply, "But we are in earnest." "Yes," we say; "but to be in earnest in the wrong path can only lead you the further away from the right one." This same truth applies with undiminished force to the believer who enters on a wrong path.

MY NAME IS WRITTEN THERE.

"Rejoice, because your names are written in Heaven" (Luke x. 20).

THOUGH humble and obscure below,
My name is there in Heaven I know;
'Tis written by the hand of God,
'Tis written with the Saviour's blood!

'Twas there before the day and night,
In beams of God's electing light;
By Jesus' Blood 'twas crimson-dyed
When He for me was crucified!

Who would erase it from that page—
Unsoiled by sin, undimmed by age—
Must Calv'ry's marks from Him efface,
And change eternal Truth and Grace.

'Tis there by Jesus' worth alone,
For worth or merit I have none;
And nothing less than sin in Him
Can ever that inscription dim.

'Tis ever there—O sweet the thought!
The space it fills by Blood is bought;
'Tis there by grace, 'tis there by right,
Unsullied in the Father's sight.

Though I such Love so feebly serve,
And daily more than death deserve,
By Oath, by Blood, by Priestly care,
My worthless name remaineth there.

Let such as know no second birth
Labour to write their name on earth;
My joy is this, that Love Divine
On Heaven's scroll hath written mine!

W. B.

GOLD FIELDS, South Africa,
December, 1892.

CONGENIAL SOIL.

WHEN the fever of division is abroad, it only takes effect where it finds a congenial soil. As to whether the spirit of division will fasten upon a particular Assembly, *that* depends almost entirely on the internal condition of the Assembly; and we need scarcely say that the internal condition of an Assembly depends upon the spiritual condition of each individual in the fellowship—especially of those who take the place of guides. If each one is found seeking, not his own, but the things that are Christ's, division will find no footing there. We may set that down as a settled point. But if there be internal strife and jealousies—that is, if there be hearts *away from God*, the spirit of division has a strong encouragement to take hold. The operating cause may come from *without* the Assembly; yet it is the response of a kindred spirit from *within* that works the havoc.

CAUSING DIVISION.

PERHAPS you are familiar with the argument used by those who leave an Assembly gathered to the Name, in order to form a new fellowship. They say, "*We* did not *cause* the division. We *made* a division, certainly; but it was those we left behind who *caused* it. They compelled us to separate. Therefore, the blame rests with *them*."

It is very easy for brethren to seek to justify themselves in this way—rolling the whole responsibility on those they have left. But the question remains, "*Did* they cause the division?" You must not assume the thing that has to be proved. If you have taken the solemn step of separating from your brethren, the weight of proof lies with *you*. There may have been certain things which, in your judgment, needed to be put right. But is separation from the Assembly the God-appointed remedy? Is a divided judgment the signal for division? Is it not rather the

signal to get down upon our faces before God? You say you bore long with certain brethren. But do you forget that these same brethren may have borne long with *you*, and that the Lord has borne long with you both? You say they were extreme in a certain line. But you forget that they look upon you as extreme in another line. You are determined that *truth* must take its course. But why are you not as determined that *grace* must take its course? Did not both of these come by Jesus Christ? You say you exhausted every argument. Did you try "coals of fire" on the heads of those who were not enemies, but brethren? Did you immerse your arguments in love? Did you come so far down that you found common ground on which you could stand and say, "O Lord, we do not see eye-to-eye: in Thy light let us see light"? Is there not many an "argument," dear brother, which may not have been exhausted?

To draw the sword of division


involves a solemn responsibility. And the lamentable thing is that the extreme act of severance seems to be usually taken when the *condition* of the separating brethren is such that ungracious words are spoken, and un-Christ-like things are done. Yet we are told that they go "in obedience to the call of the Lord Christ." But how can you hold it to be the call of the Lord Christ, if it be not obeyed in the spirit of the Lord Christ? And yet again—how can that call be *His* call which is heard by *pre-concerted arrangement*? The call of the Lord Christ is individual—not collective; and no man, or company of men, can say to the believer that on such a day and hour the call shall come.



THE calmness of faith is ever found associated with the calmness of a good conscience.

It is only they who mourn an absent Lord that can truly know Him as the present and abiding One.


EXTREMES.

N interesting contrast in Saul's history comes out in connection with the sparing of Agag (1 Sam. xv. 9). He there seems to possess a wonderful degree of mercy—at least of a kind. He will not hew the king of the Amalekites into pieces, albeit the Lord had commanded this to be done. Yet this is the same Saul who not long afterwards could slay, in cold blood, fourscore and five of the Lord's priests at one time! (Chap. xxii. 18). To-day he is so merciful that he will not draw the sword upon Agag; and to-morrow he is so revengeful that he sheds the blood of the innocent—even the priests of Jehovah. Let us therefore not misunderstand his compassion for Agag. It was a mere fleshly compassion for one whose hand was "against the throne of the Lord." The extent of Saul's mercy is seen in the massacre of the priests.

We may learn here that fleshly compassion will produce ex-


extremes that are alike opposed to the mind of God. Such compassion will spare whatever is of a kindred spirit with itself, while it shows no mercy to those who dare to thwart its purposes. Let us beware of violent extremes. These are not from above. They are born of the flesh; and, while to the superficial observer they may seem to be opposed to each other, they really spring from one and the same root, namely, *departure from God!*

POURED IN.

T is needless to exhort saints to *manifest* a right spirit, if the right spirit *is not there* to make itself manifest. If grace be not poured in (see Ps. xlv. 2), it cannot come out. This accounts for many ungracious words to be heard even in "Christian" intercourse. That which is *in* comes *out*. How important, then, to learn of the "patient, spotless One"—to be aglow with His love—to be filled

with His spirit! Let it be ours to see that grace is poured *into* our lips; and there need not be much anxiety as to what comes *out*. Wherever the gracious One keeps the heart, we may be sure that "gracious words" will proceed out of the mouth.

OUT OF COMMUNION.

HENEVER the heart is estranged from the path of communion, it speedily becomes a prey to the restlessness of the flesh—a restlessness that is ready, if not to receive, at least to tamper with any "new thing" that may arise. Hence the paramount importance of keeping the heart with all diligence, seeing that out of it are the issues of life (Prov. iv. 23). If the heart be not kept in the love of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we need not be surprised if it go after "strange flesh"—either in moral or in doctrinal departure from the ways which be in Christ.

"WHO IS THAT?"

"**W**HO is that?"—referring to a brother who had just called.

"One of the finest men under the canopies," I replied.

"Oh! what can he be?"

I gave the desired information.

I may add here that he does not see eye-to-eye with me. Indeed I have felt it needful, on more than one occasion, to take up the pen and call attention to what I believe to be the errors in his "confession of faith." But the brother is "one of the excellent," in spite of his creed; and I cannot but love him. He is far stronger in the essential virtues of true godliness than in the "peculiar views" that mark him off from "the many" of his brethren. To breathe the air of Heaven—to be adorned with the Master's spirit—is testimony that cannot fail of its effect, although we may be called to avoid the theories with which that testimony happens to be associated.

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Vol. VIII.

THOU ART FAIRER THAN THE CHILDREN OF MEN.

“**T**HOU art fairer than the children of men” (Ps. xlv. 2). Such is our estimate of Christ while we tread *the path of communion*. Unbidden the thought arises; and unbidden it finds expression in the words—“Thou art fairer than the children of men.” We have here the tribute of love—weak and faltering, it may be, yet a love which has been kindled at the altar of Heaven, and which rises unconsciously to the source from whence it sprang. The object of the heart is there—a dazzling object—even the risen Jesus; an object of glory and beauty—One who, though we see but through a glass darkly, is perceived by the eye of faith and

love to be “fairer than the children of men.”

Ah! it is this that keeps the heart—to be abundantly satisfied with the Man who sits on yonder throne—to behold the moral glory of His person—to scan the *surpassing beauty of His character*. Let us go round Him, if we may so speak; let us view Him from every point, and, like the queen of Sheba of old, we exclaim, “The half hath not been told.” In the days of His humiliation the enmity of man found no responsive echo in that great heart of love. The prince of this world came and found nothing in Him! Having loved His own which were in the world, He loves them to the end (Jno. xiii. 1). What constancy is there! His is love that is stronger than death—love that shall still be

beginning when the sun with age shall be wan, and worlds have ceased to be! And He is there, upon the throne above, waiting that supreme moment when His redeemed shall be where *He* is, that they may behold His glory! Then shall He see, in its fullest sense, of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied—and so shall we! What a transcendent thought for weary hearts! We shall be satisfied when we awake with His likeness; for we shall see Him, and shall be like Him—even like unto Him who is “fairer than the children of men.”

In the words, “Fairer than the children of men,” we have a *comparison*, and in that comparison we have a *choice* declared. The children of men are brought in, and at once dismissed as unworthy to be compared with the glory which is revealed in Christ. Perhaps the children of men had once been bidding for a share of the heart's affections; and it may be that a wistful eye had been cast upon the more refined of the world's allurements.

But all these are now outshone, and have grown pale before “the glory of that light” (Acts. xxii. 11). The greater has swallowed up the less. The heart is captivated; and, in the gladness of beholding the altogether lovely One, the believer bears testimony that the children of men need bid no longer for a place in the heart. There is One who is fairer than them all. There is One who *has* satisfied—who *doth* satisfy—who *shall* satisfy, even unto ages eternal! And who is like unto that One? Who shall compare with Him who is the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely? In Him the soul has found its rest. In Him we have an object that satisfies the deepest longings of the heart. In Him we have the perfection of purity, and beauty, and love, and power; and though He be now unseen to mortal sight, yet by faith's far-reaching eye “we see Jesus.” Yea, it is ours in some measure to say with the apostle of old, “*And we beheld His glory!*”

FORGETTING OUR HEAVENLY CALLING.

THE moment we forget our heavenly calling we begin to walk as *men*. And, when we walk as men, we *strive* as men, and use hasty words as men, and generally speak and act as men—and not as *saints*. To remember what I am as a child of God, has a most powerful influence in causing me to *act* as a child of God. At the gate of the Samaritan village (Lu. ix. 52) our Lord had to remind His disciples who they were. He had to point out the dispensation to which they truly belonged; and, in so doing, He showed how utterly out of keeping with that dispensation was their proposal to call fire down from Heaven.

The Master's look of reproach (Lu. xxii. 61) cut Peter to the heart, because it reminded the erring apostle that he belonged to *Christ*, and was separated from the world by a heavenly call.


When Israel, in prophetic

times, were exhorted to return to the Lord, it was on the ground that they were *His* (Isa. xlv. 22)—a great truth which they were ever prone to forget. We read of those who have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins (2 Pet. i. 9); and we have the exhortation, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen" (Rev. ii. 5). It is thus clear that restoration to God is associated with our remembering that we are a heavenly people—called with a holy calling—children of God, and followers of the pure and spotless One.

In these days of bustle and activity—yea, and of strife—it becomes us to stand still in the midst of it all and ask ourselves the searching question—*Have I forgotten my heavenly calling?* Am I speaking and acting as a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus? By what spirit am I actuated? Is it by the spirit of Christ, or by the spirit of fleshly power? How shall I know? I shall know if I retire to the desert place, to meet with God. Many


sounds are filling the ear, and many sights the eye. All these must be shut out. I must have a meeting *with God*; and in His presence I shall learn my whereabouts, and find out if I have forgotten that I am *risen with Christ*.

SYCHAR, AND THE NUMBER SEVEN.

T has often been remarked that certain *numbers* have a wonderful significance in Scripture. We all know, for example, that *six* denotes unrest and incompleteness, while *seven* is the Scriptural symbol of perfection. This is seen in the six days of creation, followed by the seventh, the day of Sabbath rest. Even in the interview at Sychar's Well (Jno. iv. 5-26) we think the significance of numbers may be seen. When the woman's conscience had been startled by the Master's words, "Go, call thy husband," she answered, "I have no husband." To this our Lord

replied, "Thou hast well said, I have no husband; for thou hast had *five* husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband." We thus see that five husbands in succession had sat, so to speak, upon the throne of her heart; and now a *sixth* (in this case an unlawful suitor) was engaging her affections. Yet she was not satisfied. Hers was a great unrest. There was still the aching void within. What was needed? We answer—a seventh. That *seventh* now stood before her. And as her dawning faith peered through the coming years in quest of that long-looked-for Messiah who should answer the deepest longings of her soul, the welcome words fell upon an ear prepared of God, "I that speak unto thee am He." The perfect number *seven* had been reached—the perfect One had come; yea, was already reigning in that once desolate heart. And in her sweet experience the six days of groaning creation had passed away, and the Sabbath Rest of God had come!

THE GUIDES.


N Heb. xiii. 7 we read of those who are *the guides* (marginal reading). But what is a *guide* in the Church? He is one who points to Christ—allures to Christ—leads to Christ. He is not a mere theoriser. It is not enough that he can expound abstract truth, and say what he thinks should be done. He must lead the way himself. A man may be able to define points and split theological hairs, and yet be no true guide of the flock. What is wanted is men who can lead the saints *into the presence of God!*

When Nathanael wanted to have a discussion as to whether any good thing could come out of Nazareth, Philip answered, *Come and see* (Jno. i. 46). Philip then guided Nathanael *to Christ*. What a powerful argument that was! What a lesson we have here for all who would be guides of the flock! He may not be much known on platforms; but he is without doubt a Heaven-


sent "guide" who leads saints into the Master's presence. It saved Philip a great amount of argument; and we who seek to help saints will effect a similar saving if we do likewise.

Many are willing to enter into a long discussion as to whether any good thing can come out of some particular Nazareth, while they are not at all willing to be led into the presence of God. Yet this is the point at which a true guide will aim. When Saul, sword in hand, was determined to pursue the enemy (1 Sam. xiv. 36), then said the priest, "*Let us draw near hither unto God.*" THAT was the first thing to be done. What Nathanael needed, and what many eager questioners to-day are needing, is to be brought into personal contact with Christ. In *His* light they shall see light. Blessed are they who are guides in this great work,—who point to Christ by the word of their testimony; who allure to Christ by manifesting His spirit; and who guide to Christ by walking *with Him!*


IN THE EVIL ONE.

 GREAT contrast is set before us in 1 Jno. v. 19. "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the Evil One" (Revised Version). The simple knowledge, wrought in our experience by the Spirit, that we are *of God*, will enable us at once to perceive where the world really is. It lieth in the Evil One. This effectually settles the question of separation from the world. What communion can there be between the world, which lieth in the Evil One, and those who are of God? You will find the same thought in 1 Jno. iii. 1—"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: *therefore* the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." The world does not even seek to join affinity with him who knows the manner of that love which has brought him into the family of God by a heavenly call and a heavenly birth.

IF GRACE REIGNS.

HEN some new question arises in a gathered company of believers, there is little danger of trouble if *grace reigns*. Where there is a good foundation of *grace* it is wonderful how soon believers are found to bow to that which is of God. On the other hand, wherever there is coldness of heart the truth does not find so ready an entrance. Indeed, it is very questionable if truth will find an entrance at all in such circumstances—unless it be truth fitted to deal with the condition of the heart. In other words, the heart must be first prepared. We are satisfied that this will explain a good deal of diversity of judgment that may prevail. Let hearts be right with God, and the big half of the difficulty is solved. If hearts are not right with God, *that circumstance alone* will prove the greatest difficulty. A prepared heart must ever be the forerunner to the reception of truth.

HIS PATH IN THE GREAT WATERS.

HE foundering of the steamship *Trinacria*, with the loss of nearly all on board, including three devoted female missionaries, is one of those inscrutable events that cause strange searchings of heart. It seems that all three were going out to labour in connection with a Mission in Gibraltar; and, although they were not moving in "our circle," they were followed by many prayers, and their progress was watched by many loving hearts. They were almost the only passengers on board the ill-fated ship, and never reached their intended haven. They were engulfed in the surging waves, and their voices suddenly hushed in death. What does it mean? We cannot tell. "As for God, His way is perfect" (2 Sam. xxii. 31). "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known" (Ps. lxxvii. 19).

When we remember how the

lives of devoted brethren personally known to many of us, have suddenly been cut short by the deadly fever in Central Africa, we feel that we can only stand still and worship. At present we only know in part. But when that which is perfect is come, we shall understand much that is now mysterious. Let us rest assured that our God makes no mistakes. It is infinite love and wisdom that ever hedges up the way of His redeemed. It may seem to us inexplicable that a bright and promising life should suddenly close while as yet it is only noonday, reckoning after the manner of men. But this is simply because the finite cannot comprehend the infinite. Each day has not the same duration in the kingdom of grace. We live not in years but in deeds. The Master of the vineyard may see that our work is done and that our even-tide has come, although the sun of our life may seem to be high in the heavens. It may be trying to our faith when the words of the poet find

a startling fulfilment amid the standard-bearers of the Lord—

“And some were young, and suddenly Beheld life's morn decline.”


Yet known unto God are all His works. The day is coming when we shall see that He hath done all things well. Let it be sufficient for us to know that our way is ordered by infinite love. “What I do thou knowest not now ; but thou shalt know hereafter” (Jno. xiii. 7).

UNDER AUTHORITY.

THERE was one man concerning whom our Lord said “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel” (Matt. viii. 10); and it is significant that this man was accustomed both to *command* and to *obey*. “For I am a man under authority,” he said, “having soldiers under me : and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and he cometh,” &c. He knew what it was to *command* ; he also knew what it

was to *obey* ; and this experience had clearly something to do with his faith. It has often occurred to us that brethren accustomed only to *command* may find themselves at a loss for want of the experience of being accustomed to *obey*. In the domain of the Church, no matter how high a position we may occupy, it is well for us when we can say, like the Roman centurion, “I am a man under authority.” Alas for those who acknowledge no spiritual authority, and to whom no one dare say, “What doest thou?” While we are to submit ourselves to those who “are the guides” (Heb. xiii. 17), we are called to be in subjection one to another in the fear of God (Eph. v. 21), to bear one another's burdens (Gal. vi. 2), and to exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day (Heb. iii. 13). Such are the foundations of true dependency. Wherever these abound, there cannot be independency ; and the experience thus gained shall be found to strengthen a heaven-begotten faith.

ALL HIS OWN WAY.

 It is not good for a man to get all he wants; and, in the circle of Church-fellowship, it is not good for a brother to have things all his own way, even although *he* is perfectly certain that *his* way is the Lord's way. It is often a needed discipline for us to be crossed and thwarted as to the course *we* think should be taken. The man who is always allowed to carry his point and have *his* line of things adopted, is in all likelihood a self-willed individual. And his self-will is probably due to this, that he has not had the *experience* of being *opposed* in the administration of rule in the Assembly. There is a *blank* in his experience; and the filling up of that blank, though a painful process, is perhaps the very discipline that he most of all stands in need of.


The brother who is accustomed to have things all his own way is almost certain to become impatient and irritated at the

first appearance of opposition to his line of things. His undisciplined spirit refuses to be under restraint. He has come to look upon his own ideas as bound to be the right thing. The result is, that when his brethren rise up to offer honest opposition he cannot understand it. They tell him plainly, "We are prepared to resist you, because we are persuaded your actions are not in keeping with God and the Word." He has not come this way heretofore. The lesson is new to him. He rushes at once to the conclusion that *the rule of God* is being opposed. But he has no need to rush to any such conclusion. His brethren are manifestly contending for what they believe to be according to the truth. What does the brother do? If he is a wise man, he will calmly take the matter into the presence of God and accept the new experience as a heaven-appointed discipline for his eternal blessing. If, however, he is determined to have his own way at any cost, he will likely

poise as "a martyr for the truth's sake," and seek some path where he can have as much of his own way as will make his new position tolerable.

The brethren in the Assembly who oppose my line of things may be right in their opposition, or they may be wrong. Nevertheless, in either case, the opposition is fraught with lessons of eternal value to me, if I can only read them. There is a clear call for me to stand still and wait upon God. Therefore, let no fleshly haste dim my eye, and so prevent my seeing what the Lord would teach me in this *crossing* of my path. Time will make everything manifest, provided I have patience to wait. If the brethren opposing me are wrong, I shall lose nothing by waiting on God; and if it turns out that they are right, I shall learn—what I might have suspected before—that it is quite possible for me to be mistaken, and that the ship may keep upon its true course although *my* hand be not at the helm.

THE HOUR OF TRIAL.

HE same difficulty that is the trial of one man's faith may be the manifestation of another man's unbelief. The two men—let us say the two Christians—meet the difficulty. One recognises it as a "trial of faith," and keeps on his way, to the glory of God. The other says to himself, "Surely this is a sign that I am not in the right path: I'll turn back." You thus see that the same difficulty caused very different effects. What, then, made the difference in each case? It was occasioned by the *different spiritual condition* of each of the believers in question. It was not occasioned by the difficulty in their path. The difficulty was common to them both; and it only made manifest a difference in heart-condition which had been there before the difficulty arose. External events are often blamed with producing effects that are really due to *internal* causes. It is important for us

to note this, and thus distinguish between two things that differ.

The same difficulties met the whole twelve men who went up to spy out the promised land (Numb. xiii.). Yet what different effects were produced! The towering walls and the men of giant stature only served to strengthen the faith of Caleb and Joshua, while the same obstacles had a most demoralising effect upon all the others. Trial, in one case, drew out latent unbelief, while in the other it strengthened a faith that was resting on God.

In the case of Ruth and Orpah (Ruth i.), the same testing time came upon them both—the moment of separation from their mother-in-law. We all know what followed. Orpah went back to her people and her gods, while Ruth clave to her mother-in-law, and found herself in the “royal line,” of which, as concerning the flesh, Christ came!

Momentous consequences may be involved in the decision we make at a trying time. And, when we reflect that the decision

will very largely depend on our own condition of heart, how important to see that we walk in the light of God!

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Believer's Treasury.

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APRIL, 1893.

Vol. VIII.

THE AHAB CONFEDERACY.

(*First Paper.*)

THE careful reader of Scripture cannot fail to see the striking contrast between the opening verse of 2 Chron. xvii. and the corresponding verse of 2 Chron. xviii. Each verse not only begins a new chapter in the book of Second Chronicles, but marks a new chapter in the history of a human life; and these chapters are pregnant with lessons of eternal value for us upon whom the ends of the age are come.

Jehoshaphat king of Judah started well. No sooner had he ascended the throne than he "strengthened himself against Israel." In the light of after-events this statement has a peculiar significance. Why did he strengthen himself against *Israel*?

Because Israel was in apostasy from Jehovah; and Jehoshaphat felt that he could have no righteous affinity with Israel as a people, or with the wicked Ahab as their king. He saw clearly that true separation unto God involved separation from those who had forsaken the law of the Lord (chap. xi. 1). He therefore takes a bold stand for God at the very first, and makes no secret of the fact that he is strengthening himself against Israel. Then follows the inspired commendation, giving the undoubted stamp of divine approval to Jehoshaphat's action—"And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim; but sought to the Lord God of his father, and walked in His commandments,

and not after the doings of Israel" (chap. xvii. 3, 4).


The picture is beautiful ; and, even applying it to present-day experience, we cannot fail to perceive that it is a picture drawn to the life. See yonder young convert, rejoicing in the new-found joy of a Saviour's love. What a decided stand he takes for God ! He boldly declares his colours, and confesses Jesus as Saviour ; and his testimony is with power. By a kind of intuitive perception he understands his position, and strengthens himself against the Israel of ungodly associations and the Ahab of evil companionships. In a word, he comes right out for God. The Israel of old associations see this clearly, and recognise him as one whose weight and influence will be entirely against *their* manner of life. Ahab understands the separated man at once, and does not even propose to join affinity.

He who comes out clear on the Lord's side is a marked man, and thus saved from no end of trouble in being ever exposed

to the blandishments of a Christ-rejecting world. This fate is reserved for those who dwell on the borderland that divides the Church from the world. They have sufficient love for the world to prevent their being clear out for God ; and they have sufficient respect for "a Christian profession" to prevent their being clear out for the world. Their position is not to be envied. We do not believe that they can truly enjoy either God or the world. They linger on the border, and cast a wistful eye—but not to "Canaan's happy shore." Rather is their gaze directed down the sand-wastes towards that Egypt from which they professed to be for ever separated by the blood of the everlasting Covenant ! They have chosen the place of danger ; and the result is, that one after another they fall a prey to the wiles and flatteries of the world. It is vastly different, however, with the believer who makes a "clean cut" from old associations, and strives to keep as far away

as possible from the dangerous borderland. When such a stand is taken, the world knows its man at a glance and leaves him alone, saying, "It is no use: we need not waste time on *him*."

DIFFICULTIES IN A WRONG PATH.

HILE I shall meet difficulties in treading God's path, I must not conclude that my path is bound to be the right one because it has difficulties. I may find very great difficulties in the path of departure from God; and it is just at this point that spiritual discernment is needed to distinguish between things that differ. Brethren may enter upon a wrong path, or act apart from the call of God, and seek to persuade themselves that the difficulties they encounter are merely the trials of faith. But in such circumstances the spiritual mind will interpret the difficulties in quite another way. Jonah evi-


dently found it an easy matter to enter upon a wrong course—a ship being ready to sail at the critical moment and in the desired direction. Circumstances at first seemed favourable. But it was not long till the storm arose; and well did the self-willed prophet understand the meaning of that storm. Happy will it be for us if, even by a thorny path, our God teaches us to examine our motives in the light of His presence, and to lay the sword of self-judgment to our ways. Wherever there is the call of God, there will be manifest tokens of some kind to confirm that call; and wherever 'there is no such call, the tokens will not be wanting that we run unbidden.

—♦—

IF you investigate the matter you will generally find that "not of one mind" springs from "not of one heart"; while "not of one heart" is caused by our seeking to attune our hearts into unison with one another, instead of having each attuned to the heavenly standard.

CHARACTER SKETCH.

AN ISRAELITE INDEED.

 JAMES S— was a striking illustration of the Nathanael character—“an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.” This, at least, was the impression he left on *me*. I came in contact with him occasionally, and had him under my roof for a night ; and, if ever there was a man of God, James was one. He had no airs—no assumed spirituality. He talked about the goodness of the Lord and the ways of the Lord in such a natural and easy way that you were captivated at once. You felt you were in the presence of a man who was not acting a part, and that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth was speaking. He had the stamp of reality about him ; and *that* is ever as *charming* as dissimulation is *repelling*. There was no *whine* in James's Christianity—no lugubrious tones—no mournful cadence thrown in to produce an

effect. He manifestly *enjoyed* the Lord's presence ; and his quiet, *godly testimony had a wonderful effect*, without any effort on his part. He did not claim to have attained to what is known as “the second blessing,” neither did he profess to have reached “perfection's sacred height.” If he *had* made such a profession I should have been compelled to conclude that there was something in that theory after all. But the very man who would so well have adorned that doctrine, actually disowned it ! James was content to *shine*, rather than call attention to the brilliancy of his own shining. And he shone—“with a calm, pure light.” He had no affectation of a spirituality that was beyond his experience ; and he did not pretend to be so engrossed with the things of Heaven that he could not converse on the affairs of every-day life. He was *a man* in the highest sense, and did not pretend to be *an angel* in any sense. Yet he was ever ready to give the conversation the needed

"turn," so as to admit of a heavenly application. He was not one who dwelt on "the dark side of truth." He was a living exponent of bright and joyful Christianity. Did he preach? Yes; at least, he occasionally "said a word in the Gospel"; and it was a word that *arrested* and *attracted*. Perhaps it was *the man* as much as the *preaching* that attracted to Christ; for we must not forget what was recorded of Barnabas—"He was a *good man*, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith; *and* much people was added unto the Lord" (Acts xi. 24). The messenger who is living in the power of his message will not labour in vain; and when the books are opened we shall perhaps be surprised to find that in service for God on earth the personality of the preacher rather than his preaching has been the most powerful factor in determining the results of his ministry.



To parley with temptation is to yield to sin.

CARNAL SECURITY.

THERE are no believers so difficult to deal with as those who are manifestly away in soul from God, and yet ready to take high offence at the merest hint that there is anything wrong with *their* spiritual condition. To talk to them as if they were living in "the third heaven," would lead to a certain amount of dissimulation on your part, and perhaps tend to blind them to their true condition. To go to the root of the matter, and enquire how the soul is prospering, is undoubtedly the straightforward way, although you run the risk of bringing down a storm upon your own head. This, however, is a small matter compared with the recovery of a believer from the path of departure from God. Better run the risk of a storm than leave a brother in the deceitful calm of carnal security. He needs to be wakened up. It is not well that a guilty sleep should remain undisturbed.

"AND BE SATISFIED."

"**T**HE meek shall eat and be satisfied" (Ps. xxii. 26).

Others eat and are *not* satisfied. There is no difference in the provision which God has made. The difference is in those who eat. Happy are they who are satisfied with the food which God's altar supplies. These shall be satisfied—yea, *abundantly satisfied*—with the fatness of the Lord's house. But there are those who eat, and are *not* satisfied. They have but a poor appetite for heavenly food; and they must needs go down in "the way of Egypt" to seek to satisfy the longings of the soul.

Israel in the wilderness were not satisfied with the bread of God's providing. "Our soul loatheth this light bread," they said (Numb. xxi. 5). There was *no lack of provision*. The failure was not on God's part. It was simply a matter of carnal appetite cavilling at the food which had come from Heaven! Thus is it still. There is no lack


of heavenly provision for all the wilderness journey. But are we prepared to eat—and be satisfied? Do we habitually sit at the Master's feet, and so learn of Him who is *meek* and lowly in heart that we become conformed to His image, and thus fitted to *enjoy the bread of God*?

A MIGHTY BULWARK.

THEY have a mighty bulwark who have God and a good conscience in the day of trial. If you are not certain of your ground—if you have a sinking at the heart, not being sure if some step you are about to take is clearly of God—the arm of your purpose will be weakened by a sense of self-condemnation. You may seek to strengthen your failing resolution by high-sounding words. Yet, like Israel who followed Saul trembling (1 Sam. xiii. 7), you go forward with a heavy heart.

—♦—
THERE is no lash so severe as the lash of an accusing conscience.

"BE YE RECONCILED."

F strange doctrines it may be truly said, "Still they come." Among the latest—at least in the domain of Church-truth—is the extraordinary theory that the words of 2 Cor. v. 20, "Be ye reconciled to God," are addressed to *believers* who are in a bad state! We almost hesitate to take up space in dealing with such far-fetched interpretations of Scripture. Yet the fact that such things are taught and received, must be our warrant for referring to the matter here.

The new theorists hold that because the Epistle (2 Cor.) is addressed to "the Church of God which is at Corinth," *therefore* everything in the Epistle *refers* to believers. But it is just at this point that they fall into a serious error. In chap. v. 19 we have the reconciling of the world introduced; and verse 20 tells us what the word of reconciliation is which Paul and his fellow-labourers took to the world.

"Now then," he says, "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us: we pray in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." You have simply to observe that *the world* is introduced in verse 19 (a thing the advocates of the new theory entirely overlook); and the word to that world is clear and unmistakable, "*Be ye reconciled to God.*" All this is in perfect unison with Rom. v. 10, which says: "For if, when we were enemies, we were *reconciled to God* by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." In plain words, every believer in Jesus *has been reconciled to God* by the death of Jesus; and the voice of inspiration makes that *the very reason* why we shall "much more" be saved by His life.

The ministry of reconciliation is *only* for the world. How could it be otherwise? It is *enemies* that Scripture speaks of being reconciled. This is clear from Rom. v. Yet the new theorists would have you believe that the

Church of God at Corinth were put in the position of enemies, and that the apostle was beseeching them to be reconciled to God!


It is simply amazing that there are children of God who can receive such teaching as if it were a veritable revelation from Heaven. But it is only another illustration of the startling truth that one stage of departure from the plain teaching of Scripture simply paves the way for another and a deeper departure. When the believer enters on such a path, the strange doctrine of to-day is followed by one more strange to-morrow, until he is found building again the things he once destroyed. Among those who take the words, "Be ye reconciled to God," and apply them to believers, there are dear brethren who a short time ago would have resisted such teaching with all their might! Yet to-day they are rejoicing under its shadow. Why is this? Why has the so-called doctrine only been discovered *now*? It seems clear to

us that it has been "discovered" *for a purpose*; and we do well to be suspicious of theories that are "discovered" for a purpose. Who, within the last ten years, would ever have dreamed of treating the saints as the enemies of the Lord, and applying to them the words, "Be ye reconciled to God"? But the time came when certain brethren resolved to take a certain step; and, in order to make their case as strong as possible, there was introduced this new doctrine, which we may call "The reconciliation of the saints." So far as we have learned, it is a doctrine utterly unknown to the Scriptures—yea, it is *opposed* to the Scriptures. It is surprising that brethren can be found to propound it; and it is no less surprising that brethren can be found to embrace it. But it may be that this is characteristic of the tendency of the times—a tendency to be carried away by divers and strange doctrines, and to place implicit reliance on the assertions of great teachers who

happen to belong to our "school of thought."

The lesson for us in this new theory is plain—"Take heed what ye hear," and beware lest any man beguile you from "*the simplicity that is in Christ.*"

"BLESSING."


E hear a great deal in the present day about "blessing." "I have got a wonderful blessing," says brother So-and-so; "the most remarkable blessing I ever remember to have experienced." To this we can only say, "Praise God"—*if* the blessing has the manifest tokens of having come *from Him*. We thus speak because there is a great amount of professed blessing that does *not* bear the marks of a heavenly origin. Our God ever leads "in the way of righteousness"; and if we have received a blessing from *Him*, the fruit thereof will be manifest in our seeking honestly and determinedly to do

the *right thing*. The blessing that comes from God will lead us to love righteousness and to hate iniquity. Such blessing will begin with a cleansing of the inner court of my own heart. It will then extend to the circle of my own house; and then it will make its presence felt in the great world beyond. What goes by the name of *blessing* may make me very happy, while it leaves me very careless as to present duty. But the blessing that comes from above will cast its searching light upon the so-called little things of every-day life. Such blessing is the death-blow to selfishness, while it braces up the whole man with a godly determination to *do the right thing* in the sight of our brethren and the world. Speaking after the manner of men, it is certainly important to see that you have got the right kind of "blessing."

THERE can be no enjoyed blessing apart from obedience. We cannot drink the cup of communion and yet tread the path of self-will.

BE YE CLEAN.

"Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord"
(Isa. lii. 11.)

 BE ye clean that bear
The vessels of the Lord ;
Be pure in heart, all ye that tell
The riches of His Word.

See, serving one, that thou
Art thoroughly cleansed within :
No tamp'ring with defilement's touch—
Beware of secret sin !

What do these idols there,
Where God should reign supreme ?
Forbidden thoughts, and 'creeping things,'
Ah ! these are not of Him !

Yet thou wouldst herald forth
The tidings of His love,
And tell how Christ can save from sin
And bear to realms above.

Or, wouldst thou seek to stand
Before the saints of God ?—
To guide them in the truth, and show
The path the Master trod !

Yet all is vain if thou
Lack purity within ;
'Tis there God looks : what does He see ?—
The stains of unjudged sin ?

If such there be, then hark !
That voice is sounding clear,
"'Tis holy service this : be clean,
All ye who enter here."

Let those who act for God
Be men of single eye,
And garments with the fragrance sweet
Of ointment from on high.

'Tis only such who shall
The holy vessels bear ;
'Tis they alone can touch God's Ark,
And say, "The Lord is there."


Then let "*the inner court*"
Be cleansed from every stain :
Thus shall "a holy priesthood" bear
"The Ark of God" again.

And thus shall many see
The hidden glories shine,
And trust in Jesus' saving Name,
And worship at His shrine.

Such shall our eyes behold
When is fulfilled that word—
"*O be ye clean, all ye that bear
The vessels of the Lord !*"

MAYBOLE, 13th March, 1893.

SAUL'S ARMOUR.

 F David had gone forth arrayed
in Saul's armour to encounter
Goliath, we do not believe
that he would have overcome the
giant. The simplicity of faith ever
stands out in clear contrast to the
vain show of fleshly power. Saul's
armour may do for *Saul*: perhaps
he could fight in no other. But such
armour would only hinder the man
of faith. He is trusting *in God*—
not in means : therefore the simplest
means will suffice.

GOING BACK TO THE RELIGIOUS WORLD.

WHEN a believer sets out joyfully upon the path of separation to God, and in a short time leaves that path and goes back to the world's systems of religion, he has either failed to "count the cost," or he is about to learn by sad experience that it is a bitter thing to depart from the Lord. It would seem that external circumstances had more effect upon him than the call of God. He discovered that the path of truth is a path of trial and difficulty. He had not counted on this. Then he would have to suffer reproach for the name of Christ, and be prepared to be reckoned "peculiar." The path of worldly religion has no such difficulties. To do "as everybody does" would save him a great deal of annoyance; for there is no reproach to suffer if you simply fall in with the popular current and "do your religion" according to the world's pattern. But whenever the *call of God* is heard in power, the believer endures "as seeing Him who is invisible" (Heb. xi. 27). Circum-

stances may be against him; and the religious world may point its finger of reproach at him. But he has heard God's call, and counts himself "happy" to be reproached for that Name which is above every name (1 Pet. iv. 14).

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Believer's Treasury.

No. 129.

MAY, 1893.

Vol. VIII.

HALF OF THE BLESSING.

N the present day, among many of the Lord's people, there is an increasing desire for a closer walk with God—sometimes called “entering into the fulness of the blessing.” We must all rejoice when we witness this soul-thirst for the Lord Himself. We have no reason to doubt—yea, we are glad to believe—that not a few of the saints are entering upon a “new lease” of spiritual power. But there is a tendency to run away and publish the matter when we have only received *the half of the blessing*, if we may so speak. There are believers who have entered upon a new experience of the lovingkindness of the Lord. They have been with Him in the secret place. It is evident that


they have got “a blessing.” But they have not waited on the Lord for “grace to know how to use the grace they have received.” They rush off to tell their brethren, what a wonderful blessing this is. It is described as nothing short of “a second Conversion.” Perhaps they had been asleep for a long while—complaining that the revival pace was rather quick. But now they find no pace to be quick enough. They have suddenly outdistanced their brethren in the heavenly race, and seem inclined to show a kind of commiseration for those who —“faint, yet pursuing”—have not entered, like them, into the fulness of the blessing. But *have* they entered into that fulness? This is the real point before us. We are satisfied that they may have entered into a

deepened spiritual experience ; but there is every reason to fear that they have not waited on God for that side of the blessing which *begets the lowly mind*. How often has real heavenly blessing been misused and lost through a want of being *balanced* by the grace of *humility* !

A man may suddenly come into the possession of a fortune ; and of this the people around him may be firmly convinced, although they may have to deplore the use he makes of his newly-acquired riches. Wealth is one thing ; and the wisdom to make a proper use of it is quite another thing. All this is true in the spiritual world. Many a believer has had an undoubted blessing from the Lord, while he has manifested how ill-fitted he was to use that blessing aright. There is a saying that "it takes a steady hand to carry a full cup." Nor is the "fulness of the blessing" any exception to this rule. We must remember that "with the lowly is wisdom." And, if we have not the wisdom

to make a proper use of "the blessing," we may rest assured that we have not got the blessing in its fulness. Scarcely have we entered some special "valley of blessing" than these weak hearts would fain get "lifted up" and persuade us that we are "somebody" now, if we never were anybody before. Therefore, away we run to publish our new experiences, as if we were the sole custodians of the secret of abiding communion. But if we had not been in such a hurry we would have learned that there is a valley of *humiliation* as well as a valley of blessing ; and that it is only as we tread both of these that we can truly show forth the praises of the Lord. Let us thank God for the longing after an enduement with heavenly power ; let us praise Him for whatever measure of His presence it is ours to enjoy ; but do not let us stop short of that *fulness* of blessing whose "burning and shining" shall be the most powerful witness that we have been *in the mount with God* !

GRACE TO USE THE GRACE WE HAVE RECEIVED.

T was the prayer of one of the old Puritans, "Lord, when Thou givest us more grace, give us also the grace to know what to do with the grace we get." This prayer reveals a profound acquaintance with the workings of the human heart; for a little grace, like "a little knowledge," may prove "a dangerous thing." The mere knowledge of truth apart from the knowledge of our own nothingness, will only tend to exalt us to a pinnacle of spiritual pride. And what is known as "a blessing," or "increase of grace," will produce a similar effect unless there be "grace to use the grace" which the Lord gives. The old Puritan felt the tendency to get "lifted up" at every accession of spiritual strength. He was convinced that at no time do we more need the aids of heavenly power than immediately after we have had some new revelation of the goodness of the Lord.

Perhaps the most striking instance of this tendency of the natural heart is the case of the apostle Paul himself. We do not know what were the revelations seen and heard while he was caught up to the third heaven (2 Cor. xii. 2). But this much we do know, that *lest* he should be "exalted above measure" through the abundance of the revelations, there was given unto him a thorn in the flesh. The even balance of his character was thus maintained, and humility found to flourish in unison with the highest communion.

No one desires "the thorn"—Paul prayed even thrice that it might depart. Yet the thorn may be the needed discipline for the true development of our Christian life and character. "Grace sufficient" shall more than counterbalance the thorn; and the thorn (whatever form of chastening it may assume) will beget the lowliness of mind that shall prepare us for yet deeper experiences of "the knowledge of God."

NO DEFINITE SCRIPTURE.

WHEN a brother was asked for some plain word of Scripture as his authority for joining a certain church-fellowship, he replied, "*You have the whole Book for it.*"


This answer was significant. It showed clearly that he had no definite Scripture to go upon. He might have a chain of reasoning; but a "chain of reasoning" is not a "Thus saith the Lord." If an anxious enquirer asks the question—"Is there any passage of Scripture that warrants me to believe that a man can be saved and know it?" what would you say? Would you tell him that he has "the whole Book for it"? No. You would at once take him to certain passages of Scripture where assurance of salvation, through believing on God's Son, is clearly set forth.

In like manner, when a believer asks for Scripture why he should join himself to a certain religious system, the advocates of that system should be able to give

him a plain "Thus saith the Lord" for the step they urge him to take. To refer him to "the whole Book" is a virtual confession that their system has no definite Scripture to stand upon. When a religious system or church cannot justify its existence by a simple appeal to "that which is written," we are safe to conclude that it is not according to God. Both in the plan of salvation and in the constitution of a church, the Lord has a simple and "unencumbered plan." The wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. In carrying out God's order of things you will find "Thus saith the Lord" and "the simplicity which is in Christ." In man's order of things you will find much reasoning and theorising and wresting of Scripture. But, apart from these marks, man's system may almost be recognised by its want of *simplicity*.

THE measure of our love to Christ is the measure of our hatred of sin.

SPOILED IN THE NURSING.

HY is it that many promising young converts "stand" only a short time, and then find their way back into the world? This is one of the most important questions in connection with the Lord's work. We do not see that you can dispose of the whole matter, as some do, by saying that the professed converts had never been converted at all. While this is no doubt true in a great many cases, it must of necessity leave a good deal of backsliding unaccounted for. We are convinced that many a young convert is *spoiled in the nursing*; or spoiled, it may be, for want of nursing. The great cry is for "souls"; and when we get them, is it not often the case that they are allowed very much to shift for themselves? As well might you expect a child to grow and prosper on the principle that it must look after itself as best it may. The work of the Gospel is no doubt a great work; and

we do well to give it due prominence in our testimony. But it seems to us that there is not sufficient prominence given to the great work of shepherding, visiting, and in a hundred-and-one ways manifesting our interest in those who may have been lately brought to the Lord. It is vain for us to attempt to justify ourselves by complacently remarking that "*if they are the Lord's they will stand.*" This is nothing more than a solace for a bad conscience. Although they *are* the Lord's they may have many a stumble through want of godly care on our part. Yea, many a child of God goes with a halt all his days, simply because, like Mephibosheth, he has been "lamed" in the nursing (2 Sam. iv. 4). Let us be clear as to this, that while our God has ordained that the Gospel be preached, He has also ordained that those born into His family be cared for, and tended, and helped in the ways of God. If you hold that this great work may be dispensed with, you have just as good a

right to dispense with the preaching of the Gospel; for He who enjoins the one enjoins the other. Peter had a threefold word from the Master as to *shepherding* (Jno. xxi. 15-17); and John says, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 Jno. 4). There is no need that our zeal for souls should slacken. We simply want a corresponding zeal in caring for souls after they have turned to the Lord.

Service in the Gospel is no doubt a more dazzling work than the obscure labour of visiting a young or weak believer, and dropping a word in season. But we hold this work to be every whit as important as standing on a platform and addressing a great audience. Indeed, the one department of service is the complement of the other; and, when we are truly alive to the importance of the *nursing*, we shall find that professed converts will yield a much higher percentage of *real cases* than they often appear to do at present.

Thus far we have referred to local brethren in an Assembly. But let us enlarge our field of vision, and take in "labourers" who have gone forth for the sake of the Name, taking nothing of the Gentiles. In almost every case the labourer is styled an *Evangelist*. No doubt he may be to some extent a teacher, and have also a shepherd-heart for the saints. But it is rare indeed to meet with a labourer who is *not* a Gospel preacher, and who comes simply to build up the saints—to instruct—to warn—to lead into the path of a deeper communion. Yet who will deny that this is a great work, and a much-needed work in many Assemblies? Gospel-work may be engaged in, and is doubtless often engaged in, when the true need of the saints is some "man of God," such as we have been describing, to prepare the way of the Lord and make a highway for the King in the hearts of His people. But then we must have "big meetings," and we must have "souls," and we must have

preachers with the true Gospel "gift"! Yet who can tell but we should reach our "desired haven" as speedily, and have more enduring work for God, if we were as eager for the experience of an overcoming life as we are to see successful work in the Gospel! Perhaps we have been putting that last which should be first.

A NEW ATMOSPHERE.

THERE are certain regions in the East where Europeans can dwell for only a few years at a time. Their physical system at length becomes so enervated by the trying climate that they must come home for a season to recover their former vigour. But there is more that needs to be recovered than their bodily strength. The *moral tone* must likewise be brought back. Coming into constant contact with the duplicity and falsehood so peculiar to the Eastern character, these

Europeans find (or others find it for them) that their *moral standard* has come down. They have been influenced—unconsciously it may be—by the atmosphere they have breathed so long. They have lost, to a considerable extent, the fine perception of right and wrong with which they had set out from the Western world. To remedy these evils—to restore the wasted energies of body and mind—it is needful to set out for home, to breathe for a time their native air. You may try to effect the needed change by laying down certain laws as to health, and delivering a powerful exhortation to raise the moral standard. But all is vain, so long as the European remains *where he is*. His first and crying need is *a new atmosphere*. He must *come home*.

Apply this illustration to the life of the believer, and you at once perceive a principle that has a most powerful bearing on his walk and testimony here. When believers get away in heart from God, they at once begin to

seek companionships that will correspond with their spiritual condition. *Like* ever draws to *like*. Thus it comes that those in the path of departure from God are found seeking "kindred spirits"—perhaps even the world itself—to satisfy their heart. Coming into constant contact with so much that is opposed to God, we need not wonder that their standard of spirituality comes down. The believer, in such circumstances, at once enters on a process of being *conformed*—not to the mind of Christ, but to the spirit of the world! Truth at one time perceived with the most perfect clearness is now seen through a glass darkly—or perhaps denied altogether! You wonder at the change. You seek to warn and to exhort. But your words seem to have no effect. What is needed? *A new atmosphere is needed.* The dear brother needs in a very real sense to *come home*—to breathe again the pure air of conversion's happy day! He is in a "far country" just now; for worldly associations

must ever be a far country to one who is truly born of God. We must allure him back to the spot from which he set out. The atmosphere he breathes is wasting his spiritual energies and dimming his spiritual vision. "Gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not" (Hos. vii. 9). O for a single hour of that glad time when the joy of God filled his soul and overflowed his cup! And in the light of that single hour he would see at a glance what days of argument fail to show him now!

If such a path be yours or mine, beloved—whatever we may appear outwardly to men—there must be a *coming back to God*. We need not try to keep up even the appearance of spiritual vigour if we are harbouring that which God has forbidden. If in our experience a new atmosphere is needed, then—whatever the cost—let that new atmosphere be ours. The Lord may be asking of us, as He did of Adam of old, "*Where art thou?*" Are we ready to answer?

THE AHAB CONFEDERACY.

(Second Paper.)

WE are told in 2 Chron. xviii. 2 that "Jehoshaphat *went down* to Ahab." This is noteworthy. We do not read that Ahab even offered to meet him half-way. There is no hint that the apostate king of Israel made any attempt whatever to raise himself to a higher level, and thus "fit himself," so to speak, for fellowship with the king of Judah. Ahab kept the even tenor of his way. If there was to be any affinity, Jehoshaphat must *come down*. We know that he came down; and it was a sheer descent all the way. Once upon a time he "strengthened himself against Israel," as if conscious that fellowship in *that* direction would be as disastrous to his own soul as it would be dishonouring to God. But now he deliberately "goes down" to pay a "friendly visit" to the very man from whom he had once maintained a godly separation!

As it was then, so is it still. It is the child of God that *goes down* to the world: you never find the world bringing itself up to the believer's level. The world keeps the even tenor of its way. If there is to be any affinity between it and the believer, *he* must *come down*. The world absolutely refuses to move an inch. But if the child of God descends from his eminence and comes down to the world's level, the world will be very glad to see him. It is a one-sided bargain in every sense of the term. The world yields nothing: the believer yields everything. The world refuses to *ascend*—indeed it is unable to ascend, just as water cannot rise above its own level. The believer must *descend*. And in that descent he suffers loss—eternal loss; while the world makes no gain whatever by the compact. It is simply a case of *loss* all round. Yet some believers speak as if their joining worldly associations would have a reward in the "good effect" thereby produced upon the world! But

the world remains unchanged. That which is born of the flesh remains flesh. No doubt a Christ-like walk in the midst of a Christ-rejecting world will not be without its effect. But that will only be the case as the believer treads the path of righteousness, and maintains his character as a witness for God. The moment he joins affinity with the world he closes his own mouth as a witness; and the world then turns round and says, "See what a good man we have on *our* side!"

Although Lot joined affinity with the people of Sodom, and rose to be a great man there, we do not read that the slightest effect was thereby produced upon that city. He was not *in the path of righteousness*—he was not there as *a witness for God*. Therefore, we do not wonder that in the hour of Sodom's extremity his testimony was rejected with scorn, while he himself was only "saved, so as by fire."

In Ahab's case we also fail to perceive any tokens of "improve-

ment" by his association with Jehoshaphat. The presence of the king of Judah hindered not the development of evil in Ahab's character, just as it retarded not the wheels of judgment that were so soon to overtake him. Even in Jehoshaphat's presence he orders the solitary messenger of Jehovah to be taken to prison, while the four hundred false prophets are honoured as if they had been the anointed of the Lord!

From all this we learn that joining affinity with the ungodly implies a *going down* upon our part, a quenching of our own testimony, and a sowing to the wind, anon to reap the whirlwind. Nor do we find any compensation in the effect which such affinity produces on the world that lieth in the Evil One. It will be found to remain the same, perhaps with this exception, that through a Jehoshaphat alliance it has only become more firmly entrenched than ever in its rejection of divine testimony. An ungodly alliance can never yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

SOLID BUILDING.

WHILE the brethren at — were carrying on their Gospel testimony, a young man professed to be converted. He seemed a clear case; but it was observed that he was not coming out to the open-air meetings. "Not very bright on the subject," we said; "we fear something is wrong." But nothing was wrong. One night he suddenly joined the open-air meeting, which was held exactly opposite a certain public-house. Our young brother at once took off his cap and gave his testimony. Pointing over to the public-house, he said: "I used to spend a great deal of my money over there; and when I was converted to God I owed ten shillings for drink. I determined not to stand at an open-air meeting till that money was paid. I have now cleared the debt, and I am here to tell what God has done for my soul."

One of the Lord's labourers, when relating this incident at a recent believers' meeting (subject "The Christian as a Builder"), remarked that this was "good solid building—twenty shillings to the pound." We give our cordial "Amen" to our

brother's words. If the practical side of truth be thus honoured in our testimony, we need not doubt that it shall have power and prevail.

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Believer's Treasury.

No. 130.

JUNE, 1893.

Vol. VIII.

"FAR, FAR ABOVE."

E sometimes sing of our being

"Far, far above

The restless world which wars below."

But, as a matter of actual experience, those who seek to walk in the light of God will find that they must rise above a restless *church* as well as a restless *world*. We may have turned our back on the world, and yet find much unrest within the domain of the Church. These last days are proving stormy times; and he who would preserve his soul in patience and retain the keen edge of his spirituality, must often, like the Master, retire from the multitude. It is only in His own immediate presence, where "the light of earthly glory dies," that we can see with a single eye,

and ever take *God's* side apart from all the claims of the flesh. It is only there that we can weigh things in the light of the sanctuary, and be as the men of Issachar of old (1 Chron. xii. 32)—men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.

In order to act for God in a time of strife, we must rise *above* the strife—so far above it that the sound thereof dies away upon the ear, and nothing is heard save the "voice from the excellent glory." Thus removed in spirit from all the disturbing influences of earth, we are prepared to hear what God the Lord will speak. When

"Not a sound breaks on the stillness,
Not a form invades the scene,"—

when we have said to the world, to our brethren, to service and to

strife, "Stand ye there while we go yonder and meet with Him whom our soul loveth"—O, it is then that we are ready to be taught of Him; it is then that we get the needed word for the trying time!

Once in Israel's history, when it was a time of difficulty and murmuring and discontent, suddenly one man stepped forth and "stilled the people" (Numb. xiii. 30). That man was Caleb. How did he possess the power thus to sway so many hearts? Because he had *power with God*. In spirit he had risen above the strife and unbelief at that time rampant in Israel. He had the mind of God; viewed everything in the light of God; and thus *wrought with God* in spite of difficulties on every hand.

In the experience of a church, any man, however carnal, may stir up strife, and carry it on, and enlarge its borders. No heavenly weapon—no holy unction—is needed for such work. But to "still the people"—to cause the billows of strife to roll backward


—needs men of the Caleb spirit, men who have been in the wilderness with God, and who have risen on the wings of faith far above the din of conflict and the strife of tongues.

May the great Dispenser of the heavenly fire and the heavenly peace make each of us a true Caleb—a stiller of the restless spirits of our brethren. May we indeed hear His voice alluring to the wilderness (Hos. ii. 14); and thus shall we learn that our highest blessing, as well as our highest service in these times of trial, is to rise in spirit to the region of the eternal calm.

The true deliverers of the Church in a dark and trying hour, are those who learn the mind of the Lord in the desert place, and go forth thence to bear witness for Him in the power of that heavenly anointing. The deep calm of a spirit thus stayed on the Lord is a tower of strength in any Assembly of God. While the arm of fleshly power may seem for a time to prevail, it will yet be found that the heavenly

wisdom was with those who went forth to meet with the Lord in the wilderness. It shall yet be seen that the calmness of faith in God, and the manifestation of the Christ-like spirit, have been the most powerful factors in working out the purposes of His eternal glory.

DISCERNING OF SPIRITS.

F the various "gifts" of which Scripture speaks, we hear little about the gift called "discerning of spirits" (1 Cor. xii. 10). It has seemingly been taken for granted that this gift has passed away, along with "miracles," "tongues," &c. But we certainly feel inclined to agree with the old and experienced believer who some time ago said to us that he considers the "discerning of spirits" to be an undoubted "gift" still clearly recognisable in the Church. It may not exist in the same *measure* as of old ; but there seems no reason to doubt its existence.

Indeed, upon no other ground can you account for the somewhat remarkable perceptive power manifested at times by certain believers. We freely admit that a goodly measure of this perceptive power is to be explained on the principle that "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him" (Ps. xxv. 14), and that "he that is spiritual discerneth all things" (1 Cor. ii. 15). Yet, in every-day experience it is simply astounding what spiritual dimness of vision is often discovered in those whose devotedness to *Christ* cannot for a moment be questioned.

We knew one such dear brother who was rejoicing over a recently-professed conversion. A servant of God happened to arrive in the town at that time, and was at once introduced to the new convert. But, instead of expressing his joy, the man of God turned round to his friend and said : "*This man is not saved*, my dear brother." His friend was not pleased at the seemingly hard judgment. "Very well," said the

Evangelist, "we had better have prayer, and perhaps the Lord will make things clear." The "young convert" took it upon him to close the little prayer-meeting. But it was so manifestly the prayer of a man "in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity" that our brother who had rejoiced over the supposed conversion was constrained to bring the prayer to a sudden stop! He was fully convinced. Yet it evidently took him days to discover what another had perceived in a single glance of the eye!

Of course it is not always wise thus to tell out what we may perceive or "feel" in our innermost soul. Indeed, we consider that the case we have mentioned was exceptional in that respect; and we are convinced that those who have the deepest discernment of men and things are generally the most wary in telling out all that is in their heart. But in this matter they must wait upon God to learn whether it is a time to speak or a time to keep

silence (Ecc. iii. 7). Israel at large may not be prepared to see what is plain to the anointed eye. Where it is not so much a question of chapter-and-verse as a question of spiritual discernment the "seer" may need to wait until the Lord Himself makes manifest that which is not *of Him*. Yet circumstances may arise in which a discerning one will feel bound to declare what he perceives—or what he fails to perceive. For example, it has not infrequently happened that a "new arrival"—a fomentor of strife, under the guise of a professed messenger of God—has had his true character so accurately *gauged* by one or two discerning brethren, that he has been summarily rejected; and after-events confirmed the wisdom of the step.

We have known of cases in which some new preacher captivated "everybody"—except *one man*; and that solitary brother did not hesitate to declare that in *his* judgment the new "ambassador" had *never been sent of*

the Lord. A fine spiritual perception detected a certain *unreality* about the man who had taken the town by storm. And he who thus refused to join in the chorus of acclamation, had to suffer the cold look of suspicion and be treated as one who had "no sympathy with the work." But it was not long until every supporter of the new prophet in that place had to make the sad confession that the "solitary believer" was right and they were all wrong!

If, in the progress of a church or in the work of the Lord, you apply this principle of "discerning of spirits," you will find many things made plain which would otherwise be mysterious. A lack of oneness of mind may seem to be a most unaccountable thing, while it may simply mean that there are some who *see* what others *fail to see*. This may be due to a diversity of spiritual condition. If, for the reasons mentioned in 2 Peter i. 9, we are of those who "cannot see afar off," we need not be surprised if we

are not of one mind with our brethren who walk in the light. If, however, we are of those who walk in the light, there is no reason why we should fail in oneness of mind, even although some may have a far higher endowment of the discerning gift than others. Many a believer, unable of himself to determine the true path in a difficulty, will yet approve the true path if it is pointed out to him. It will *commend itself* to his spiritual apprehension. That which is *of God* will ever commend itself to the spiritual. "He that is of God heareth God's words" (Jno. viii. 47).

Let it be ours to *dwell* where we can *hear*. Let us be ever found treading that path in which we can perceive the leading of God. Thus shall we be able to distinguish between things that differ, and to receive that which cometh from above.

—♦—
THE real victory of faith is to trust God in the dark and through the dark.

"SO IS HE."


AS a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. xxiii. 7). This is a rule that applies to saint and sinner alike. It does not say, "As a man *preaches*, so is he"; or "As a man *professes*, so is he." Both professing and preaching may be in the highest heaven, while as to actual experience the man may be far away in heart from God. The state of a person's *heart* declares what he is. He has only to know his own thoughts in order to know who he is.

Let us cease from measuring ourselves by the extent of our service, and flattering ourselves that we have a good reputation among our brethren. Let us rather sit calmly down and ask the question, "How much of God is in my professed zeal?" Let us shut out external things, and apply the test to our own hearts. What are the thoughts thereof? *Man* may see much seeming earnestness on the *outside*: does God see reality *within*?

ROOM FOR GOD.

COME away," said a certain company of believers to a servant of the Lord; "come away—there is room here for you to speak." "Ah," he replied, "I do not want room for myself: I want to see *room for God*." This was powerful testimony to that religious body. The Lord's servant laid the axe to the root of the tree, and applied a test far more searching and comprehensive than the mere question, "Is there room for *me*." What although there may chance to be room for *me*, if there is not room for *God*? "Room for me," may be very flattering to human vanity; but there must be room for God, if *His* name is to be glorified. There is a danger in being satisfied when we find room for self; instead of setting self aside, and asking if there is room for Him whom we call Lord and Christ. There may be room for *man* in the midst, while there is not room for *Jesus* in the midst.

VENGEANCE ON NABAL.

HILE David was a fugitive from the persecutions of Saul, there was at least one occasion on which we find him seriously departing from the path of faith in the living God, and seeking to carry out—not the will of the Lord, but the will of David; and this for the mere purpose of personal revenge. It is true that he was mercifully hindered from carrying out his purpose. But none the less was the purpose in his heart. Yea, he had set out to accomplish it. But grace intervened, through human instrumentality; and David was delivered. Yet the whole incident reveals one of the dangers to which the man of faith is exposed; while it stands out in marked contrast with *another* incident in David's life, in which he was exposed to the scourge of a tongue more trying even than that of Nabal. Yet in that later day, the Lord's anointed manifests no spirit of resentment.

He gives a command, it is true; but the command is to put the sword into its sheath, and leave the evil-speaker in the hand of God (2 Sam. xvi. 11). But we must turn to the incident more immediately before us.

We learn from 1 Sam. xxv. that when David was in the wilderness of Paran he received a severe personal slight at the hands of one called Nabal, to whose flocks and possessions David and his men had been "a wall both by night and by day" while they abode in Carmel. When asked for a trifling favour in return for all this kindness, Nabal turned round (ver. 10) and said, "Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? There be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master," &c. When these words were reported to David, he at once gives the command, "Gird ye on every man his sword." At the head of nearly four hundred men, he sets out for Carmel. But for what purpose does he set out? Simply to avenge the

insults heaped on his head by the churlish Nabal. *David* has been touched; his pride has been wounded; and, without pausing a single moment to "take counsel at the mouth of the Lord," he resolves that he will be avenged, and that right speedily.


We thus see the man of faith completely off his guard. The lash of Nabal's tongue has roused the man whom all the persecutions of Saul have failed to move. These persecutions, recognised as "a great trial," were taken into the presence of the great God. David was thus enabled to present a beautifully unselfish spirit to all the scheming and hatred of the king of Israel. But Nabal's stinging words are not viewed as "a great trial." It is not therefore considered "worth while" to take them into the presence of God. Indeed, David is completely taken unawares by the suddenness of the attack. It is wounded pride that cries out, "Gird ye on every man his sword." The man of faith has for the moment forgotten that

he is treading the path of faith. *His own honour* is at stake; and, instead of leaving the Lord to avenge His anointed one, he seizes the sword of vengeance himself!

Whenever we forget our heavenly calling and begin to "walk as men," we become greatly concerned about "our honour"—as David did while under the scourge of Nabal's tongue. If a personal slight is offered to *us*, if some cutting remark is passed upon our testimony or our character, how prone we are to give cut for cut, or perhaps to turn round to the Assembly and say, "Gird ye on the sword of discipline"! In other words, "I'll have my revenge—I'll bring him before the Church; and out of the Church's hands he shall not pass until he has paid the uttermost farthing of humiliating confession." It is easy for all this to take place, while the "inspiring motive" is nothing deeper than a fleshly concern for our own honour, although we may loudly claim

that our zeal is in the interests of truth. Would our "zeal for the truth" burn so intensely if the scourge of some Nabal-like tongue, instead of falling upon us, had fallen upon brother So-and-so? Very likely we would have allowed brother So-and-so to look after his own honour. All this shows that we were not moved to action by a desire to see the honour of God vindicated, but simply to see that our own credit did not suffer. He who has his eye on God will not be found first in his own cause. If he has received some personal slight, *that* will be the very reason why he should leave his brethren or the Lord to vindicate his good name.

TO MINISTER CHRIST.

 If you are one who stands up occasionally to say a word in the Assembly, see that your aim is simply the *edification* of the saints. Do not be drawn away by side-issues. There are


lonely hearts to cherish—there are weary hearts wanting a word of cheer—there are careless ones needing the trump of alarm—all are needing to be fed. Let your purpose be to unfold the beauties of Christ, and to bring the saints into the conscious presence of the Man of God's right hand. Leave it to others to dazzle the mind's eye by their seeming mastery of truth, or to tickle the ear by eloquence of words. Be it yours to allure to Christ—to *unveil* Him, so to speak, and then to stand aside, so that His glory may be seen. This is what weary hearts are longing for—to behold Him who is fairer than the children of men. *He* is the great satisfying portion of the soul. See that you preach *Christ*—see that you minister *Christ*. Yonder, down the meeting, is a young brother whose mind cannot follow painfully-drawn-out theories. But his eye will lighten up and his soul will be refreshed if you point out a few of the beauties of Christ. He can understand *that* kind of teaching. After one such

little glimpse of the hidden glories he will go away strengthened anew for the great battle of life. Thus shall you be, according to your measure, "a good minister of Jesus Christ." And in reaching that simple-minded believer you will assuredly "minister grace" to many besides. What is clear to the simplest mind will be clear to all. Do not be of those who leave the young and simple-minded believer without his "due portion," while they engage in an ecclesiastical duel over questions that "edify not." Therefore, while valiant for the truth and ready to contend for the faith, let us give heed to the things whereby we may edify one another. In seeking to help by a word of ministry let us remember that we can only help the saints as we are enabled to minister Christ and bring our hearers consciously into the presence of God.



BEFORE there can be *blessing* there must be *cleansing*. They who will not have the one shall not have the other.

IS IT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WORD?

T is recorded of a certain philosopher (so-called) that he did not measure a religious movement by its relation to eternal principles, but by the effect which it produced on the popular imagination. That is to say, if a religious movement succeeded in drawing out the wonder and applause of the crowd, it was reckoned good and desirable; while, if the movement failed to commend itself to the popular taste, it was set down as of no value. You thus see that "God and the Word" are never brought into the question at all. The philosopher does not ask if God has spoken. He does not ask what God has said. He simply wants to know if this religious movement, or any other, commends itself to the popular taste. If it thus commends itself, he accepts it; if it does not commend itself, he rejects it. In the application of this test, where does *God* come in? He does not come in at all. He is shut out.

"Very sad," you say; "he must have been a very benighted philosopher who thus tested a religious movement without appealing to God

and the Word." Quite true. But look around you in the religious world to-day, and you will find the *very same test* being applied to every ecclesiastical system that may arise. Yonder is a religious movement, evidently designed to appeal to the popular imagination. It possesses various attractions fitted to draw the carnal eye. There is a great sound, and pomp, and outward show. Not a few believers stand looking on, as if undecided whether to patronise the movement or not. What are they waiting for? They are waiting to see if the movement is going to *take* with the people. If it *takes*, they will patronise it. If it does not *take*, they will join in the chorus of condemnation. It never seems to occur to them to ask the simple question: "Is this in accordance with the mind of God as revealed in the Scriptures?" Will the movement stand the measuring line of *the truth*? Or is it opposed to what God has revealed in His Word? When we thus apply *God's* test, we do not need to wait in order to see if the thing is going to *take* with the people. If a movement is according to the truth, it matters not although the multitude reject it with all their heart;

and, if it is not according to the truth, the approbation of the multitude cannot make the movement of God.

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"BY FAITH."

Notes of an address on Heb. xi., by R. M. M.

THE unfolding of God's purposes in the past ages, as revealed in His dealings with men, have brought great and material changes, so far as the nature of the *Calling*, the position of the *Inheritance*, and the manner of the *Testimony* of His saints are concerned. Even the world in which Abel, Enoch, and Noah acted their part, perished; and with it an age of time passed away. Yet these three, being dead, are yet speaking; and they form the first three links in that wonderful chain which binds saints of every age to each other and to the throne of God—that chain of faith which shall hang for ever around the

Son, more precious unto Him than the glory of His throne. For when time has run its course—when the glories of earth have faded for ever, and God has said, "Behold! I make all things new"—the sacrifice of Abel, the walk of Enoch, and the work of Noah cannot be forgotten—not even amidst the riches of that inheritance their faith has made them heir to, or the glory of that city their eye caught a glimpse of, as they looked up from their tent when, as strangers and pilgrims, they sojourned on earth.

Abel, Enoch, and Noah pass off the stage of time, and on to God; but only to be followed by other actors moving amidst new and different scenery. Yet inscribed on the banner of each is Faith, *Faith*, FAITH; and round their names are wreathed the

triumphs they have won. What does it matter now what garments they wore while passing through this wilderness world—whether these were the sheepskins and goatskins of poverty and rejection, or the stately robes of kings? That which now fits them for the paradise above is “the righteousness of God”; and the jewels that shall adorn their person and cause them to shine for ever and ever are the works that faith has wrought. Their weapons might be humble—ram’s horns and earthen pitchers in the day of battle. Yet it was *faith* that won the victory. And although we, who to-day are serving under the same Captain, cannot have the sling that David held or the jawbone that Samson used, one thing we may have; and, if like them we are to triumph, one thing we *must* have—the *faith* by which those Old-Testament heroes won their triumphs.

Our calling is as different from David’s as David’s was from Noah’s; and our service as different as was the building of an

ark from the slaying of a giant. Yet it was *faith* that built the ark, and it was *faith* that slew the giant. So, the different calling—“the better thing” which by the grace of God is ours—can never take the place of, or diminish our need for, the *faith* by which God’s mighty men triumphed in days of old. Nay rather, are not those names recalled, and those deeds recorded, for the very purpose that we, by them, may be taught that it is in *God Himself*, and not in calling or privilege, that our trust and boast must be? And if those who lived in the dim light of shadows, and handled the things which were not the very image of the true, and who had to die in faith not having received the promises—if those are raised up and set in order as an army of witnesses, surely we who handle the gold of which they had but the promise, and walk in the light of full revelation, should let our lamp burn the brighter, and our faith in God abound the more. But have we not to say, as we

seek to plant our feet in the prints they have left, that concerning faith they were men "of great stature"—yea, "there were giants in those days"!

Faith must have an object; and while the Holy Spirit delights to set in array this noble army, each saying in turn, "This is what the Lord has wrought through me," it is that He may place at their head as Captain of all, "JESUS," and turn our eyes away from those twinkling stars of a bygone dispensation, to gaze upon the Sun in its strength; for in Him we see the perfection of every grace and the embodiment of all that ever we shall be.

"Now of the things we have spoken, this is the sum." "Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, des-

pising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. xii. 1, R.V.).

BETWEEN TWO EXTREMES.


THE Truth, in its onward progress, has ever had to contend with the hindering influence of brethren having a strong tendency to carry things to *extremes*. Some might be found at the extreme *left*; others at the extreme *right*; but the trial of faith was none the less to those who sought, humbly and stedfastly, to contend for *all* sides of the truth. At the same time, it must be admitted that where extreme views have been held in a gracious spirit, these may have helped, in many cases, to a due balance of truth in an assembly's testimony, while drawing out a goodly manifestation of Christian forbearance. But a thing that is even more trying than a few extreme men on either side, is the possibility that the man on the extreme left to-day may be-

come the man on the extreme right to-morrow. Perhaps he had for years contended for a certain line of truth ; but he at length discovered that it would not stand the test of Scripture. No sooner, however, does he make this discovery, than in his eagerness to flee from one extreme he rushes into another — *clear past* his brethren who have been calmly seeking to keep to the middle of the scriptural path all the time. For years they had been far too extreme in one direction for *him*. But now he is constrained to lecture them as to what he considers their “extreme” in another direction.

Now, we think we should always be ready to receive light, remembering that we only “know in part.” We have no fault to find with a brother because he believes he has occasion to change his mind ; for the man who never changed any of his opinions never corrected any of his mistakes. At the same time, the man who is found rushing from one extreme to another

must be prepared to exercise a large degree of patience in seeking to commend his views to his brethren. *They* had to bear long with him : *he* must be ready to bear likewise with *them*. He must be prepared to out-live the suspicion which naturally attaches to a violent change of opinion, and be willing to admit the possibility that having erred in one extreme he *may* be in error in this other extreme. We do not say he is necessarily wrong ; neither do we say that he is necessarily right. What we say is, that if he has got light from Heaven which it took him perhaps years to see, he must “tarry” for his brethren, and seek “in meekness to instruct” even those who may oppose themselves. The truth is generally found to lie between two extremes ; and he who is a wise man will ever remember that even the *right* nail may be struck so determinedly and so persistently on the head as to *split* the board it is intended to hold in its position !

THE GREAT-HOUSE THEORY.

 GREAT strain has of late been put upon that passage, 2 Tim. ii., which says (ver. 21), "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour," &c. Indeed, a special theory has been built upon 2 Tim. ii., commonly known as the "Great-House theory." In recent times, when certain brethren decide to leave an assembly with which they have for years been identified, they point to the twenty-first verse as not only their warrant but their command to "out-purge" themselves. Will their theory stand the light of Scripture? This is the question to which we mean now to address ourselves. Simple-minded believers are being exercised about this "Great-House" theory. It is being forced upon them. Those who expound the theory have the whole process of reasoning worked out; and we do not wonder that humble brethren, seeking to go on with God, are

confused by the plausibility and boldness of its claims. We have been asked if no word is going to appear in the *Treasury* on this subject; and, in order to meet what we believe to be the need of the saints at this time, these lines are penned. We have no particular position to uphold—no system of theology to defend. We simply wish to see light in God's light, and to be helpful to our brethren as we ourselves have been helped of God.

WHAT IS THE THEORY?

Let us first ask, What is the theory as to the alleged command to "purge out"? It is simply this: In 1 Tim. i. 20 Hymenæus and Alexander are handed over to Satan. But it is held by the Great-House teachers that the church (at Ephesus) did not actually put away these false teachers, for they are found in the *second* Epistle of Timothy (ii. 17). Seeing, then, that the church at Ephesus had failed (as alleged) to carry out the apostolic injunction concerning these two

men, the purge-out theory is, that the church at that place had degenerated into "a great house"—*Christendom* in short; and that the call of God now was to the faithful believer to purge himself from these—that is, from the "vessels of dishonour," such as Hymenæus, &c.; *so that* the man who thus purged himself out might be a vessel unto honour, and not unto dishonour.

Such, briefly stated, is the Great-House theory. At the very outset we may say that it is by no means a *new* theory. It is exactly of the same age as "Exclusivism." Indeed, the Great-House theory is one of the foundation pillars of that system. Many years ago, when Exclusivism was more of an aggressive force than it is to-day, nothing was more common than to hear 2 Tim. ii. 20 expounded and applied, in the remotest detail, to everything outside the Exclusive commonwealth. Then followed a time of calm—a time in which Exclusivism had to conserve all its energies—not to

carry on aggressive effort *without*, but to make a desperate attempt to resist the forces of disintegration *within*. But the attempt, as we know, was vain. Exclusivism fell a prey to the laws and theories of its own making; and not the least of these was the theory of the *Great House*. The theory *now* being advocated is, to all intents and purposes, the same as the old Exclusive theory. The only difference seems to be, that it is *applied* to a much larger circle. The new expounders of the Great-House theory apply it to all who are outside their fellowship—which means all who refuse to accept their ecclesiastical system.

THE GREAT-HOUSE THEORY TESTED BY SCRIPTURE.

HAVING pointed out what the Great-House theory is, we will now proceed to examine it in the light of Scripture. We find that it rests upon certain assertions that have

yet to be proved. The theory *assumes* that the men handed over to Satan (See 1 Tim. i. 20) were never actually put out of the assembly; and 2 Tim. ii. 17 is quoted in proof of this. But 2 Tim. ii. 17 does not prove anything of the kind. The Apostle is exhorting Timothy to "shun profane and vain babblings," and, by way of bringing in an "object lesson," he refers to "Hymenæus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already," &c. Timothy would readily understand the reference to these beacons of warning. Yet the advocates of the Great-House theory *conclude* that these two heretics were still in the fellowship at Ephesus! They may well tremble for a system, the chief pillars of which have to rest upon such a daring inference as this!

Many a time and oft has the question been asked, "What is *the Great House* of 2 Tim. ii. 20?" But do you find "*the Great House*" there? No. You

find "*a great house*" referred to; but *the* "Great House" (Christendom) must be *put into* the passage before you can take it out. The apostle is simply taking an illustration from the things of the world. In "*a great house*"—such as a mansion-house—there are many vessels—"not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour." Now, we hold that there is no warrant to set the gold and silver vessels on one side, and the vessels of wood and earth on the other side, and say that those of the precious metals are to honour, while the vessels of humbler material are to dishonour. In a great house *all* are *needed*, although all have not the same prominence. The humble pail in the scullery is as truly needful as the silver vessel on the dining-room table. The one is a vessel "to honour," and the other a vessel "to less honour"—the evident import of the passage. Compare Rom. ix. 21, where the same words, "honour,"

and "dishonour," occur; and where, as in the passage before us, it is clear that the word "dishonour" cannot have any moral culpability attached to it.

What, then, are we to purge ourselves from, according to 2 Tim. ii.? The Great-House advocates say we are to purge ourselves from the vessels of dishonour—from Hymenæus and Philetus; in short, we are to purge ourselves out of the "Great House" altogether. But stay. There is no command to purge ourselves from the vessels of less honour—earthen though they be. Has not the Lord been pleased to put the treasure into earthen vessels? (2 Cor. iv. 7). Then, as for Hymenæus and Philetus, there is no warrant whatever to suppose that they were in the Church at Ephesus at that time. What, then, is the import of the words, "If a man therefore purge himself from these"? What are "*these*"? We answer, the things which the apostle had just commanded Timothy to *shun*—"profane and vain babblings,"

&c. (ver. 16). It is remarkable how that the apostle again and again exhorts Timothy in the same strain. In the first Epistle (i. 4) he is warned against "fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying," &c. In verse 6 we have "vain jangling"; while in chap. vi. we have "questions and strifes of words" (ver. 4), and "perverse disputings" (ver. 5), with "profane and vain babblings" (ver. 20). Then, in the chapter more immediately before us (2 Tim. ii.), the apostle warns against striving about words (ver. 14), and again exhorts to shun profane and vain babblings (ver. 16). At verse 21 the same thread is caught up again—"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour," &c. Now, we think that all this must be plain, even to the simplest-minded believer. When we allow Scripture to explain itself, all is clear. But when we have a system to defend we must needs import things into Scripture which are not there,

and draw inferences without a warrant, in order to make Scripture square with our system. Even in the simple word "purge," the advocates of the Great-House theory have felt a difficulty. It fails to carry with it the thought of persons *purging themselves out*—simply because that thought is not in the passage. A new word, "*out-purge*," had therefore to be coined to meet the difficulty. But there is no difficulty whatever, if you simply accept the meaning which the passage plainly bears on its surface.

We hold, as firmly as our brethren of the Great-House theory, that the call of God to come out from Christendom is clear; and that no one can be charged with schism who separates from that which is not built upon scriptural principles. At the same time, having gone forth unto the Lord Jesus Christ without the camp, we must hear *His* call before we leave the path we are treading. And we do not hear that call in 2 Tim. ii.

So far as we can see, the bur-

den of 2 Tim. ii. is an exhortation to personal godliness, with special notes of warning against "questions and strifes of words," &c. Yet it is evidently used as a rallying-cry in ecclesiastical battles. Surely there never was a Scripture more completely divorced from the purpose for which it was given!

ONLY ONE WAY BACK.



WHEN sin has separated between us and our God, we need not try to get back into His presence as if nothing had happened. Saints under the dispensation of grace though we be, we must never forget that we have to do with a God of *truth* as well as of *grace*. Righteousness and judgment are still the habitation of His throne. There is only one way back to His holy presence, namely, by *humiliation* and *confession*; and the depth of our restoration will just be in proportion to the depth of our confession.

HEART-WORK.

IF the heart be not kept with all diligence (Prov. iv. 23), it is vain that we keep diligent watch in the external court of outward behaviour. It is true that we are to walk in wisdom toward them that are without (Col. iv. 5); but that can only be done to the glory of God in proportion as we are keeping *the heart* with all diligence. Neglect of the inner life has always been the forerunner of shipwreck in outward testimony. Battles may be fought as to points of external order, while some unmortified affection is laying waste the heart! We discuss external points with *man*—which may be easy: in dealing with our own heart we have to do with *God*, which is not so easy! We naturally shrink from the one, while we are only too ready to rush into the other. Yet it is only as we are *real* in the presence of God that we shall be found true witnesses in the presence of men.

A SOLITARY WITNESS.

IT is one of the oldest things I remember; yet I remember it as if it had been yesterday. I was a mere lad at the time, and “a stranger to grace and to God.” Yet a wonderful fascination drew me to the corner at the Head of the Street, where Tom ———, a journeyman joiner, was wont to take his stand when his day's work was over, and preach Jesus to any that were willing to listen. It was the “day of small things” in every sense of the term, and very few hung on their step to hear the solitary ambassador of God; for such I never doubted him to be. Of course my ideas of holy things were not then very well-defined; but I felt certain that Tom had some very real and vital connection with Heaven itself. It was not so much what he said, as his manner and spirit, that arrested me on my way past. I looked upon him as a man raised far above the common level, and dwelling in an atmosphere which did not fall to the lot of ordinary mortals. I may have formed too favourable an estimate of Tom; yet to me there was “no iniquity in Jacob.” His utterances were aglow with heavenly fervour; his words seemed to me to burn with seraphic fire. Yet many passed by, remarking as they gave a wag of the head, that it was “only Tom.” He was set down as “a religious man,” with

a cast of mind "liable to extremes." But, graceless as I was, I felt him to be one of those of whom the world was not worthy. What made his testimony more remarkable was this, that spiritual death then reigned in the whole town. So far as I could see, he was the only public witness for Christ in the open air. He generally stood absolutely alone—no one even to start his hymns. But, as he came of a musical family, he was at no loss in this respect. One of his favourites was Newton's well-known hymn,

"I saw One hanging on a tree
In agonies and blood."

As near as I can calculate, that will now be fully thirty years ago. Yet who shall tell what seed was then being sown in my young heart, although the preacher might see very little manifest fruit of his labour? He left this country for the other side of the Atlantic shortly after the time to which I refer: and I never saw him again. But I have heard that the heavenly fire has never ceased to burn in his soul, and that he still goes on telling of Jesus.

The reflections I make on this old reminiscence are these:—(1) The man with the heavenly fire burning in his soul will not run in vain. His message will accomplish the thing whereto the Lord has sent it. (2) Let all who stand in "streets and openings of the gates" to witness for Christ, remember that the passers-by have a very exalted

opinion of what a heavenly ambassador ought to be. They take him to be a man who habitually dwells in the suburbs of Heaven—one whose heart and ways are of a kindred purity with the message he heralds forth. If the world knows that this is not the case, or if they have reason to suspect it is not the case—they simply set down the whole performance as so much "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal."

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UNGUARDED TRUTH.

HE great revival tide of more than twenty years ago effected at least one great purpose. It brought the truth as to the believer's *standing in Christ* into a fuller and clearer light. For a long time the Gospel had, by many at least, been seen through a glass darkly. They considered it "presumptuous" to be sure of salvation; and a kind of mixed Gospel—half grace and half law—was being proclaimed, even in what professed to be evangelical circles. But the onward rush of the revival tide a quarter of a century ago carried away a vast quantity of the bulwarks of tradition; the result being, that the Gospel was proclaimed in its fulness, while believing ones entered immedi-

ately into the blessed enjoyment of *perfect peace* with God. This arose from the proclamation of the simple truth, carried home by the Spirit, that the believer is *in Christ*, and shall not come into condemnation simply because *Christ* shall not come into condemnation. In other words, the believer has *died* with Christ, is *risen* with Christ, and is *eternally one* with Christ. It is wonderful what a revolution was wrought through the proclamation of the Christian's *standing in Christ*. This "Gospel of death and resurrection" brought peace to many a troubled heart. Young converts entered at once into "the fulness of the blessing"; while "old" converts, surprised at their own blindness, were endowed with new power, and soared away upon the wings of liberty.

No new revelation had been received from Heaven. "That which was written" was proclaimed in power and received in faith; and in a very real sense the words of the poet were fulfilled—

"Jehovah hath triumphed;
His people are free."

We are still reaping the fruits of that Revival. Further "discoveries" have been made in the same field of truth; and to-day in evangelical circles there is not a clearer doctrine proclaimed than that which relates to the completeness of the believer's standing in Christ. For all this let us praise God. Yet, while we hold fast the truth pertaining to our personal *standing* in Christ, let us see that we do not *mix it up* with our *condition* as children of God. It seems to us that in this matter, as in others, the proverbial "pendulum" has swung to an extreme. Once upon a time the truth of the believer's standing was used for the purpose of confirming a trembling saint—one, it may be, who dreaded

the thought of sin and longed to be "all for Jesus." But now-a-days it is to be feared that the truth of the believer's standing is being used for *comforting* Christians who are *away in heart from God*, and "strengthening" those who are tampering with iniquity! "Do you not know," says the unguarded preacher of "standing" truth—"do you not know that *in Christ* we are as *near* to God as it is possible to be? He sees no spot in us—none whatever: we are as pure as Christ is pure," and so on.

Now, as far as family *relationship* to God is concerned, that is all true. But it is unguarded truth. It is not rightly-divided truth. See yonder backslider, as he sits and sleeps under it. He had expected to be searched. He had trembled, lest he should be found out. But, as he feels the unguarded doctrines of grace poured like oil on his head, he ceases to tremble. Glad to be assured he is in such favour with Heaven, he settles down into ease in Zion, saying to himself,

like Agag of old, "The bitterness of death is past"!

Yonder sits a believer who is tampering with evil—with unconfessed and unforsaken sin upon his conscience. Do you mean to tell us that God sees no spot in that one? Undoubtedly He does. He sees great spots. He has a controversy with that child of His; and so serious is the controversy that, for the time being, the communications between the throne of God and that brother's soul are blocked. You may preach smooth things to him. You may tell him that in the person of Christ he is as near to God as Christ is. But it will not mend matters. You are not reaching his disease. What you say is quite true as to his family *relationship* to God. But he does not need the truth as to that relationship expounded as if he were a sincere soul scarce out of the billows of legal bondage. What he needs is truth that will search him and cause him to quake in his inmost heart—truth setting forth the demands

of God's holiness upon a people who have been redeemed with no less a price than the blood of His own Son. Then why should we use language fitted to lay the flattering unction to his soul that all is well, while there is a lie in his right hand? Let the truth as to our standing in Christ be used, not so much as a "comforting" doctrine as a God-given *lever* to raise the saints into a life of holiness becoming their heavenly calling; and we shall surely have "signs following" that a revival of vital godliness is going on.

RELATIONSHIP AND EXPERIENCE.

WE must ever remember that *relationship* is one thing and *experience* is another.* What may be quite true of a brother's relationship to God may be entirely false when applied to his experience. For example, you and I are children of God by faith in Jesus

Christ. This being so, we are *in Christ*—accepted in Him. Our relationship to God is that of *sons*. Our *title* is perfect. Nothing can be added to it; nothing can be taken from it. Our family relationship is complete and unchangeable. That was the case the moment we believed on Jesus. It has been so ever since. It shall be so through never-ending years. This is a most precious and blessed truth. But it will not afford me the slightest heavenly consolation if I am away in heart from God. Yonder, for example, is the heir of an ancestral estate, far from his father's house, and wasting his substance in riotous living. What will it profit him to boast that he is as nearly related to his father as it is possible to be? It will profit him nothing. And as little will it profit us to boast of our position in the heavenlies in Christ, if we are in "the far country" as to heart experience.



It is a mark of grace to set the face like a flint in spite of repeated failures.

"I HAVE BEEN AWAY FROM GOD."

HE was a stranger in the town and had turned up at the Gospel meeting. A sympathetic glance in his eye seemed to tell me that he knew something of God's love. "Are you saved?" I asked. "Yes," he replied; "but I have been away from God—I am a backslider."

How soon the ground was cleared! There was no beating about the bush. He was a backslider; and he knew it, and owned it up at once; although not one among us could have contradicted him had he claimed to be walking with God.

If similar candour were the rule, it is to be feared that not a few in "full communion," as the church-phrase goes, would be constrained to confess, "Although I have been attending to all the outward forms I have been away from God—I am a backslider." Honest confession ever heralds the coming day of restored communion.


GRACE TO RECEIVE IT.

THERE can be no doubt that many a brother who "says a word" in the Gospel could get a valuable hint or two, if he had only the grace to receive it and be thankful. But we fear it is the fewer number that are ready to be helped in this matter. You do not experience any difficulty when you pay a brother a *compliment*—when you tell him that he delivered a powerful address—a veritable message from God, and that you have no improvements to suggest. But when you point out that he devoted twenty-five minutes to the disease of sin, and scarcely five minutes to the Gospel of Christ, it is a different matter. You are at once accused of being nothing better than a fault-finder. A similar fate awaits you if you hint that the brother is getting into a drawling, "ministerial" tone of preaching; while you commit an unpardonable offence if you insinuate that he is in the

slightest degree lacking in spiritual power. Some preachers, again, take great offence if you tell them they are too long, and that they should cut down the length of their addresses by a half at least. They cannot understand how *they* can be long; and they therefore set you down as acting out of some personal antipathy toward themselves. To all this we have only to say, "Happy is the man who hears instruction's warning voice," even though it be only the voice of a "rank-and-file" brother, telling him that his address of three-quarters-of-an-hour would have been excellent—if it had just been *twenty-five minutes shorter*. But then it is only the few that are prepared to accept a word of counsel in that direction. And, seeing this is the case, it need not be surprising that many a word of counsel that could be spoken is never spoken. It is not easy to help a brother who takes high offence when you point out something that is manifestly

hindering his own usefulness. Happy are they who have found by experience that "faithful are the wounds of a friend," and who are even ready, as saith the old Latin proverb, to "learn from an enemy."


THE TEST OF OBEDIENCE.

N connection with Gospel work it is well to remember that *winning converts* may not be at all the same thing as *winning souls*. You may secure additions to the company of professors without securing additions to the company of the redeemed. False profession is one of the most prevailing evils which have to be contended with to-day. There is one test, however, which the mere professor will not stand; and that is the test of *obedience to the Scriptures*. We do not say that the convert of yesterday can be expected at once to know and carry out all that Scripture requires. But in a true convert there shall certainly be the will-

ing heart and the teachable spirit. The great mark of one truly born of God is, that he only wants to know the will of the Lord in order to carry it out. On the other hand, the great mark of a mere professor of religion is that he wants to get to Heaven at "the cheapest possible rate." When you bring him face-to-face with the Truth he becomes restive at once. And the remarkable thing is, that you will likely find him yielding the most implicit subjection to rules and ordinances which the Lord has never commanded, while he refuses to bow to the most elementary requirements of Truth.

If we are not subject to the Lord, it matters little whether we are carrying out our own will or the will of another. At the best it can only be the *will of man*. The believer's true calling is not only to *hear* the sayings of Christ but to *do* them. When there is the *hearing* without the *doing*, that searching word comes in: "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

EVOLUTION.

T seems that a well-known college "professor" has been lecturing on "Evolution" to "learned and appreciative" audiences. The philosopher who propounded the theory that man is simply an improved descendant of the monkey, was supposed to be very far "advanced." But this "learned professor" goes farther than this, and attempts to teach that, in the course of evolution, man was originally a fish! Indeed, he points out that occasionally one of the human species has been known to show the "gill slits"! When a man of the world, pure and simple, boldly attempts, by philosophy falsely so-called, to undermine divine revelation and pour contempt on the book of Genesis, it is not at all noteworthy. But the remarkable thing about this evolution preacher is, that he is a professor of a Presbyterian body in Scotland, and is reported to have made quite a stir among students by his "Gospel" addresses. We wonder what kind of Gospel he preached. When we saw University students applauding his utterances, and the world generally patting him on the shoulder, we had


our suspicions that his "Gospel" was not the grand old Gospel of *Ruin* by the Fall, *Redemption* through Christ, and *Regeneration* by the Spirit of God. These suspicions are now being verified. He is coming out in his true colours, as a full-fledged evolutionist. Yet this is the man whom the religious world delights to honour!

There is no "Fall" in *his* theology. It is all an *ascent*. But an ascent from *what*? From the mote that dances in the sunbeam—from some "germ" in the lowest strata of life—upwards, till "fish" is reached, then four-footed animal. Then, the professor assures us, man "assumed the erect position." But when did that take place? He cannot say. Is it in accordance with the Scriptures? No. It is completely opposed to the Scriptures. The Scripture account of the Creation is clear and uninvolved, and perfectly consistent with the forms of life now found on the earth. On the other hand, the evolution theorists present you with a tissue of the wildest assertions and surmises. They leave huge gaps unbridged in their process of reasoning; while the whole drift of their argument is to prove that the

God-given record of creation is a myth! Yet such men are supposed to preach the Gospel of Christ, and have conferred upon them the highest honours which the religious world can bestow!

This same Evolution professor also published a book professing to throw great light on the faith of the Gospel. But we do not wonder that it was reviewed as "The most wonderful thing in the world — the Gospel, *with the Gospel left out.*" At the very time that thousands were hanging upon his lips, and lauding him to the skies, those who knew the Gospel perceived that the Gospel *he* preached was not *the* Gospel of God; and some of them boldly testified accordingly. These witnesses were no doubt set down as narrow-minded, and "not worth paying attention to." Yet their testimony is now being confirmed, and that by the very man whom they refused to recognise as a Heaven-sent ambassador. When such are the men that are sitting in "professorial chairs," moulding and fashioning the minds of "divinity" students, one need not wonder at the scepticism that is issuing from the modern pulpit, and holding high carnival in the religious world.

CONDITIONAL CONFESSION.

HEN you hear a brother say that he will confess he has spoken in the flesh if So-and-so also confesses, you may be sure that there is as yet no God-wrought repentance in his heart. If you have been truly humbled before God it will not matter to you whether "the other man" confesses or not. If *he* makes up his mind that he will not "humble himself" to confess to *you*, that is no reason why you should dishonour God, and thus lose the forgiveness and cleansing that follow true confession. If yours is the "contrite spirit" you will not wait to see what the other offender is prepared to do. You will do the right thing before God; that is, you will make full and honest confession that you have spoken in the flesh. If your brother, in like condemnation with yourself, refuses to make confession, that will be to his own shame and loss. His victory is only a victory for the flesh.

DOING "ABRAHAM" WITH THEM.

LET us do *Abraham* with them." So said a few brethren in a certain Church-dispute. It was well understood, by some at least, what was meant by "doing *Abraham* with them." It referred to that incident in the patriarch's life in which he says to Lot: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between thee and me. . . . If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left" (Gen. xiii. 8). Abraham's *faith* shines out as clearly in this little episode as in any other part of his wonderful career. It takes nothing less than *faith in the living God* to turn round and say, "Let there be no strife—take your choice of the land, and I shall be perfectly pleased with what is left." It is only in the absence of such faith that we are found calling in the aid of carnal weapons to establish what we call "our rights." In

such circumstances we meet Lot on his own ground, and contend with him in a kindred spirit with himself, and for a kindred purpose. When we have reason to fear that we have not God with us, it is then that we must needs stand up most strongly for ourselves. But Abraham had no call thus to act. He was already acting, by anticipation, in the spirit of that Scripture which says that the Lord "shall choose our inheritance for us" (Ps. xlvii. 4).

Lot proceeded to choose his portion of land. But even nature might have suggested the seemliness of giving Abraham his choice *first*, or at least of proposing some arrangement for an equal division of the land. Yet nothing of this kind entered Lot's calculations. Abraham's graciousness was "lost" upon him. Lot's eye takes in the well-watered plain. He makes his selection—no doubt as good a selection as the carnal eye could have made. He "looked after number one," as the world says; and as for the other man (Abraham) he must

"look out for himself." He then declared his choice. Yonder it is—stretching away in the distance, and fair to the outward eye "as the garden of the Lord" (ver. 10). But what is Abraham to do? Lot cared nothing as to that. But there was One who cared. There was One who had been looking-on all the time—One who had witnessed the whole interview. And now that One made Himself manifest to the eye of faith. After Lot had departed to take possession of his self-chosen inheritance, the Lord said unto Abraham, "Lift up now thine eyes." Lot, in obedience to the promptings of his own selfishness, had lifted up *his* eyes (ver. 10). In contrast to this we have Abraham waiting calmly on God, and lifting up his eyes at the bidding of Jehovah.

We need not pursue the narrative. We know that he who allowed *the Lord to choose for him* had an inheritance and possessions far excelling those of the man who secured the well-watered plain of Jordan. Indeed,

the time came when Lot lost all his possessions in a day, with his own liberty as well, and was indebted for their recovery to the very man he had over-reached in the division of the land! But even this new manifestation of grace was lost upon Lot; and his sun goes down in obscurity. At the last moment he is delivered from the burning Sodom—saved as by "the skin of his teeth"! Meanwhile Abraham—strong in faith, giving glory to God—goes from strength to strength. Nothing of the grasping or over-reaching finds a place in all his ways. How beautifully he preserves the dignity of character which so well befits one who is trusting in God, and of whom the Lord had said, "I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing"! To do "Abraham" with our brethren will no doubt be trying to the flesh. Yet God will be honoured; and this all the more from the fact that "the Canaanite and the Perizzite" are still in the land (Gen. xiii. 7).

"IF" AND "PERHAPS."

THE confession of our faults one to another must never proceed on the principle of *preserving our dignity*. A great deal that goes by the name of confession is really no confession whatever. "*Perhaps* I was wrong," says a brother; "but he roused me to it, and in fact *he* is the one who should confess." Then another form of confession runs thus—"If I have wounded any one's feelings, I am willing to *withdraw* what I have said." These *ifs* and *perhappes* clearly mark out the man who will not see where he is wrong, and who perceives that it will be good policy to go through as much of the *form* of confession as will keep his testimony from suffering in the eyes of his fellow-believers. If, however, confession is truly wrought in *the heart* it will not search about for every "extenuating circumstance" it can lay its hand upon. It will go right down into the dust and say, "I have sinned."

PRAYER ANSWERED.

THERE is nothing more refreshing to the child of faith than to receive a definite and unmistakable *answer to prayer*. The world knows nothing about this; for the world does not stand upon praying ground. But he who has to do with God in secret has proved by experience that He is the *Heaver* of prayer. What victories have been won, and what promises have been obtained, in the closet! The outside world knows nothing of these wrestlings with God in the secret place. Yet daily is faith proving that the Lord is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

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ABOUNDING PROFESSION.

N the progress of the Lord's work you may have observed that the difficulties of to-day are, to a great extent, different from what they were a number of years ago. In the days of our early Christian experience there was a *sheer indifference* as to eternal things. Dead formality held the field. Professions were few, and often far between. But, as a rule, they were *sound conversions*. Every professed convert had to stand upon his own feet. There were no "props" to hold him up if he had not the life of God in the soul. There was no "inspiration of the crowd" to keep him in his place in the ranks. The world was against him; and even the religious world gave him the

cold shoulder. Like Rutherford of old, he had to wrestle "'gainst wind, and storm, and tide." In those days if a man had not the root of the matter in him it was a well-nigh hopeless task to play the part of the hypocrite—that is, in *revival* circles; for in these there was so much that was withering to the flesh, and so little wherein the flesh could glory.

But a great change has taken place within these past years. We have not now to contend so much with sheer indifference to the Gospel, as a rush of *religious profession* unaccompanied by *holiness of life*! The Devil has been forced to change his tactics. He opposed revival work until he saw that opposition would no longer avail. If he could not prevent converts being

made for God he saw that the progress of the Gospel could be most successfully hindered by *counterfeit* converts. But even "counterfeit converts" cannot readily be made unless there be something to draw the carnal eye—something in which the flesh can rejoice. The old revival atmosphere had too much of the savour of Puritanism about it. Its demands were too exacting—its lines were too straight—its atmosphere was too trying to the flesh. Therefore, the great and wily adversary brought in the needful "attractions" to draw the carnal eye. One innovation succeeded another *gradually*—so as not to cause alarm by a sudden descent. But, although gradual, the descent has been none the less sure. No sooner was one fleshly device established than another was ready to be introduced. The world and the world's methods—anything to draw a crowd—have been transferred to the arena of Gospel work in many so-called evangelical circles to-day. With

these inventions for "making the Gospel palatable" (!) we need not wonder that the spiritual temperature has come down—so far down that the bold and jaunty professor—an utter stranger to the new birth—can pass himself off as "out and out for the Lord"; while he says to himself, "This atmosphere is not at all too hot *for me*: I enjoy it immensely." Yes; and we have no reason to doubt it. But transplant that same flourishing professor to some spot where the work of the Gospel is carried on upon scriptural principles, sustained by spiritual power, and what would be the result? He would very soon cry out, "I cannot stand this: let me away from here!"

The Gospel of carnal attraction has been so mixed up and associated with professed work for God, and the hosts of profession have so increased, that we have no less a difficulty to contend with *now* than we had in the days when utter indifference faced us on every hand. But the present condition of things only reveals

a change of front on the part of the great adversary of souls. Yet our help is in God. The Master's "well-done" in the coming Day will not be awarded to those who, in avowed service for Him, most closely followed the world's pattern and invented the most outlandish methods to cause people to wonder. It will be those who sought, with single eye, to build according to the divine pattern, that shall at last receive the divine commendation. Blessed are those servants who can truly say,

"With heavenly weapons I have fought
The battles of the Lord."

Therefore, let us continue "steadfast, unmoveable" *on God's lines*. No matter although the religious world may consider us tame and old-fashioned as compared with the modernised style of Gospel work. Let the message of salvation be proclaimed in faith and power, and it shall do its work,—not recommending the sinner to "try" the Gospel because it is "nice to be going to Heaven," but causing him to eat the bitter


herbs of conviction of sin, anon to pass into the blessed experience of conversion to God. Let us remember that the old Gospel is still "*the power of God* unto salvation to every one that believeth." We want no modern inventions for making the truth palatable to the carnal heart.

UNEXPECTED TRIAL.



It is the *unexpected* trial that is more likely than any other to upset us. Trial that is foreseen may be prepared for; and, before it reaches us, we have entrenched ourselves in the promises of God. But the *suddenness* of some petty and irritating trial invests it with peculiar power. We were not expecting an enemy from *that* direction; and, after we have been worsted, we say to ourselves, "Who could have foreseen such a thing?" True; but we do not need to foresee. What we need is so to "*abide in Him*" that the Wicked One shall touch us not.

A TOKEN OF REVIVAL.

NE of the first indications of coming revival is the growing belief, in the heart of the child of faith, that revival is at hand. This conviction takes possession of him, he knows not how. He has been waiting on God as to a revival time; and he has been tasting the "first-fruits," in the shape of revival in his own individual experience. He has been hungering and thirsting after righteousness; and he is being filled. The blessing has already commenced. Of this the child of faith is assured. There has been an enlargement of heart; there has been an increase of faith. He has laid hold upon God, saying in the language of Jacob, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me" (Gen. xxxii. 26). When it is noon-tide of revival power in the believer's heart it is comparatively easy, so to speak, to trust in God for a great shower of blessing. Gideon had certain dealings with God in secret (Jud.

vi. 36-40), from which he drew the certain inference that a great deliverance for Israel was at hand. It is still the same in the experience of the individual believer. Secret victories in the wilderness ever and anon give promise of coming triumphs for the people of God (1 Sam. xvii. 34-37).

When the man of faith thus "assuredly gathers" that times of refreshing are near, his expectation is not easily disturbed. Strong in faith, he gives glory to God, even in the face of barren and perhaps hostile circumstances—like Abraham of old, who "believed God," considering not "the deadness of Sarah's womb" (Rom. iv. 19). Nor is the faith that looks for great things from the Lord ever disappointed. The Author of that faith shall see that it is not in vain in Him. He cannot deny Himself. He ever abideth faithful. Thus, faith calmly waits the dawn of morning, and has tokens of approaching day, although to the eye of sense no streak of dawn appears in the Eastern sky.

"STRONG IN FAITH."

WE remember reading the words of a Spanish orator in referring to the *faith* of Columbus as pertaining to the world which lay beyond the Western sea. "Columbus was so firmly convinced," said the speaker, "of the existence of the new world, that if there had been *no* new world God would have caused one to rise from the bosom of the ocean, as a reward for so great faith." We know that this is an unwarranted conclusion, and nothing more than a fine poetic touch; for faith, there, was simply faith in what was believed to be *a fact*, and not in One known to be *a person*. Yet, if you transfer such language to the things of God and the domain of living faith, you will perceive a divine principle standing boldly out. Faith, even as a grain of mustard seed, if it cannot call forth a world from the bosom of the deep, can at least "remove mountains." And who knows but the victories of

faith in the moral sphere are even greater than the calling of a continent to emerge from the depths of ocean! Is not the conversion of a sinner—the new-birth of a soul—as stupendous a work as the creation of a world? Is it not the case that the child of faith is ever seeing miracles of grace—veritable "wonders of the Lord in the deep," and these oftentimes in answer to simple, believing prayer?

POPULAR CURRENTS.

BEWARE of getting into any of the popular currents that are now carrying so many professed believers off their feet. You may only mean to enter the current *a little way*—perhaps with the avowed intention of *regulating* it. But just as sure as it is the world's current it will *master you*; and, once you are firmly into the rapids, you will be left without the power—perhaps without the will—to get back to the solid ground of godly separation! Therefore stand not in the way of the ungodly. Why should you hazard the risk of eternal loss?

"SAINTED."

YOU may be aware that the Church of Rome makes certain members of its communion "saints" *after* they are dead. These are then spoken of as being "sainted." This is altogether different from *God's* way. *He* makes you a saint the moment you believe on Jesus ; and those who pass away without trusting Him cannot by any possibility be made saints after they are dead. According to the Roman-Catholic doctrine you do not become a saint through simply believing on Jesus ; and it is only a select few who are so favoured as to be made "saints" after they die ! We need scarcely pause to point out how utterly opposed all this is to the Scriptures of Truth. Yet you find even undoubted children of God so bound by the rags of Rome that they speak of "the *sainted* M'Cheyne," and the *sainted* somebody-else. But *when* was M'Cheyne *sainted* ? He was *sainted* the moment he believed

on Jesus ; and he is not more really a saint *now* than he was before he "went home." Yet the word "sainted" is used by many with special reference to "a good man" *after* he is dead—as if by some mysterious process he became a saint immediately after death, and never was one before it. They would not think of speaking of a *living* believer as "the *sainted* Mr. So-and-so." According to their theology there are no saints *living* on the earth—they are all *dead* ! Yet God's people, as a whole, are time after time addressed and referred to as "*the saints*" (Acts ix. 32, 41 ; xxvi. 10). Believers are "called saints" (Rom. i. 7 ; 1 Cor. i. 2). Then we are exhorted to distribute to the necessity of saints (Rom. xii. 13)—an utterly meaningless exhortation if *the saints* are all in Heaven !

We were somewhat surprised recently to observe a Christian weekly periodical speaking of "the revered and *sainted* Mr. B——"—a minister of Christ now gone to his heavenly rest.

This is the more remarkable as the paper in question is a strong opponent of the Roman-Catholic system. Again we would ask, *When* was the brother *sainted*? After he "fell asleep"? No. Then why select the term "*sainted*" as being specially applicable to him *now*? The coal-carrier who was born again yesterday is as really a saint as the most gifted servant of Christ, living or dead.

In some circles we rather think that it is only Christians *eminent for their piety* who are spoken of (after their decease) as "*sainted*." But this invidious selection of a few out of many simply makes "confusion worse confounded." The expression "*sainted*" then implies that all others were *not* *sainted*, although Scripture plainly declares that all believers are saints by divine call!



It is not given to many of God's children to hold a great audience spell-bound by their ministry; but it is the calling of all so to walk that the world may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.

NOT READY TO HEAR.

WHAT a vast amount of Christian teaching is *lost* (speaking after the manner of men), simply because hearers are not in a condition to hear God's voice! They reject the sincere milk of the word for no other reason than a lack of *appetite for heavenly food*. But they do not admit this. If they did, there would be some hope of their returning to the Lord. They find fault with the teaching. It is set down as being too plain-spoken on the one hand, or as having too little "life" in it, on the other hand. Or, it may be, the *messenger* is objected to. But, however the excuses may vary, the determination seems to be one—and that is, a constant resisting of everything that would allure the soul back to the path of abiding fellowship. In vain the finest feast of heavenly food is spread before one who has lost the appetite for the presence of God and the joys of heavenly communion.

WHAT MEETINGS CANNOT DO.

YOU need not depend upon *Meetings* to keep up your supply of spiritual vigour.


Meetings are very good, so far as they go. But they only go a certain length. They cannot take the place of secret communion. Neither can they maintain my spiritual youth, if I am neglecting God in the closet. It is *there* that the foundation for each day's building must be laid—it is in that hallowed spot that the battle of each day must first be won. Meetings cannot exercise faith for me; meetings cannot “mortify the deeds of the body” for me; meetings cannot do the work of “the desert place” for me. I must meet with God in secret. I must hear His voice. I must have that strength that comes through *waiting on Him*. Thus, and only thus, shall meetings yield to me their legitimate fruit.

We have no sympathy with those who look lightly on the privilege of meeting one with another. The fellowship of saints

on earth is far above any price that earth can pay; and the value of such fellowship may be seen in the significant words of Heb. x. 25, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.” Even in that early day there were those (and the Lord took note of them!) who deliberately absented themselves from the gatherings of the people of God. We do not at all lessen the force of the divine exhortation as to the assembling of ourselves together, when we say that the believer who attempts to *live* upon meetings must lay his account for suffering loss at the judgment-seat. He who depends, for his spiritual nourishment, upon the “bite” he may contrive to pick up at the various meetings of the Lord's people, will have a very flickering and uncertain Christian experience. When meetings are peaceful and happy, he will be getting along tolerably; but when trouble and disagreement arise, he will not know which way to turn. His experience

will vary according to the ebb and flow of external circumstances. His stability depends not upon that inward "garrison" peace which springs from faith in a present God. Hence his alarm and despair when the "waves of trouble" rise. Therefore, let each one of us learn to let our expectation be from *the Lord*. Men may change, and circumstances may change; but there is One who changes not; and we are called to walk *with Him*. Happy is he who can ever say, "*All my springs are in Thee.*"


PARTIALITY IN JUDGMENT.

T is wonderful what an effect our surroundings have upon our eyesight. If we have made up our minds to "stand or fall" by a certain church party, we are prone to point out the weak points of yon brother who *opposes us*. We put him in the scales, and find him to be a man of no weight whatever. His honesty is suspected;

his spiritual discernment is questioned; his partisan character is held as established. But if *the same brother* had only cast in his lot *with us*, what a difference it would have made! Is there not a possibility that we would have set him down as a very steady-going believer, and dared any one to question either his character or his abilities?

You may differ with a brother as to his principles of church order. But you are bound to respect his integrity if you see him wielding the sword of judgment without fear or favour. The mere fact that a man is "on our side" does not transform him into an angel of perfection. It will not prove we are in the right, but it will certainly show a godly desire to have a conscience void of offence, if we are ready to *reject* a man's offer of help who is not treading the path of righteousness. If ours is the "single eye," we shall make it clear that we wish no one to *stand in the breach for God* except those whose testimony will *commend the truth*.

IN THE LEADING OF GOD.

T the Breaking-of-bread Meeting, when one of the silent pauses seems to be unduly prolonged, it is then that we specially need the anointed ear to catch the leading of God. I must not conclude, because there may have been a prolonged silence, that *that* is the signal for me to let my voice be heard. Am I in the leading of God? That is the question I must ask myself. The mere length of a pause does not constitute a call of God to lead the saints in praise or prayer. I must be in God's hand, and conscious that I am led of Him. He may lead another, not me, to break the silence. But, if God leads, there is really no break: there is continuity—a leading out unto Himself. A pause in which nothing seems to be done, may be one of those “sweet moments rich in blessing” which are the portion of the lowly and adoring heart. “Anybody” or “anything” will not do to break such a silence.

Subjection to the Father of spirits is needed here—a subjection that will teach us to be ready to do, or not to do, according as the Lord by His Spirit shall seem to appoint. Thus, with the eye anointed to perceive the leading of the Lord, the opening of our lips shall be acceptable; and the meeting through our little “tribute of praise” shall go “from strength to strength,” until the general experience shall be, that “this is none other than the gate of Heaven.”



HE who treads a forbidden path and yet says, “My conscience does not accuse me,” is bearing witness that the sentence has gone forth, “He is joined to his idols—let him alone.”



LOVE, in obedience to a fundamental law of its being, *delights to serve*; while PRIDE, in like obedience to fundamental law, *delights to reign*.



THE testimony that has no savour of Christ was never inspired by Him whose Name is as “ointment poured forth.”

LETTER AS TO "UNGUARDED TRUTH."



BROTHER, writing us concerning the article, "Unguarded Truth," in last *Treasury*, says, among other things:—

I am sure that such truths need enforcing and scattering far and wide; for where I find one dear saint of God labouring hard to walk uprightly and in the fear of the Lord, under legal bondage, I find at least thirty who are pillowing their hearts and consciences on "the most blessed and precious fact" that they are "accepted in the Beloved," while they seemingly forget that "*God is light*," and that in Him is no darkness at all. Jehovah is still the righteous Jehovah who "loveth righteousness." Justice and judgment, and righteousness and judgment, are still the habitation (foundation) of His throne (Ps. lxxxix. 14; xcvi. 2). I find, in many cases, that when the precious truths concerning our standing in Christ are put forth they are received with apparent joy; but when wholesome teaching with regard to practical holiness is propounded, it is received as truth that fits *someone else*. In other words, many receive practical truth for *others* instead of for *themselves*. Yet our God has said, "To *this* man will I

look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word" (Isa. lxvi. 2). We may profess as we please, that we rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh; but there can be no joy in the holy and glorified Christ of God apart from *the path of holiness*. "Rejoice in the Lord, *O ye righteous*" (Ps. xxxiii. 1; xxxii. 11; xcvi. 11, 12). It is in His light only that we see light (Ps. xxxvi. 9), even as it is in His presence only that there is fulness of joy (Ps. xvi. 11). It is only as we walk in the light as He is in the light (1 Jno. i. 7) that we have fellowship one with another—with the Father, and with His Son, and with each other. May ours be true, soul-awakening, practical holiness in every-day life. Yours, &c.

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"NO WAR IN THOSE YEARS."

T is written of Asa, during a certain period of his reign, that "he had no war in those years; because the Lord had given him rest" (2 Chron. xiv. 6). What remarkable years! No sound of war in all his borders! For ten years (ver. 1) he had rejoiced in rest—even the rest of God; for we are expressly told that *the Lord had given him rest*.

Now, it seems to us that in these ten years of Asa's life we have a beautiful figure of those times in the believer's experience when the spiritual enemies of the soul are so completely overcome that there is the sense of *abiding rest*—even the rest of God. It may be that for a time a fierce conflict had been waged with old besetting sins. The powers of

Hell seemed to beset us on every hand, and—as if foreseeing the coming rest of God—united their forces to resist our entrance into those "peaceful years." But, through the power of Him who is now appearing in the presence of God for His redeemed, we were "more than conquerors." Then in our experience did that word receive its spiritual fulfilment—"The land had rest from war." In other words, we found that we had a higher mission on earth than to spend our days and use up our energies in ceaseless conflict with the lusts of the flesh. We do not forget that there is a sense in which we are ever in conflict with our spiritual foes. Yet if that conflict be—as our God designs it should be—a *victorious* conflict, ours shall none the less be the God-

given rest, set forth in beautiful figure by that wonderful decade in Asa's life, of which it is written that he had *no war in those years*.


Having noted the fact that ten years of unbroken peace were enjoyed by Asa, king of Judah, it may be well to enquire as to the circumstances which went before this reign of peace. Ten such wonderful years were not going to spring up in some mysterious and unaccountable way. As "the curse causeless shall not come" (Prov. xxvi. 2), so "the blessing" will generally be found associated with certain "causes." In Asa's case we are not left to speculate as to how the years of peace came about. We are plainly told that when he began to reign he "did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God; for he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves; and commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment"

(2 Chron. xiv. 2-4). We do not therefore wonder at the years of peace that followed. Peace—if it be a God-given peace—will ever be found associated with *righteousness*. "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable" (Jas. iii. 17). In Asa's case righteousness and peace kissed each other (Ps. lxxxv. 10). He commenced by *doing the right thing before God*. He at once proceeded to carry out the will of God, so far as he knew it, by taking away the altars of the strange gods, breaking down the images, and cutting down the groves. He waged a determined warfare against that which he knew to be opposed to the mind of God. Thus, in its true sense, he acted out that Scripture which says, "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord" (Ps. iv. 5). His faith was not a mere *effort to believe*. It was the calm confidence of one who *already believed God*—one who had honestly sought to carry out His will, and who was now about to

prove that the Lord is verily "a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. xi. 6). The ten years of peace occurred quite naturally, so to speak. Asa's reign was founded upon righteousness. Victory over all his enemies was so complete that a great "rest" pervaded the kingdom. And as it is with a kingdom so is it with the soul. In our own spiritual experience are we enjoying something of this "rest of God"? Or do we find ourselves worsted, time after time, in conflict with the powers of darkness? If so, we may be sure that there is a cause. It is vain for us to expect spiritual victory—it is vain to look for God's rest in our experience—if we are sacrificing at forbidden altars, or drinking at forbidden streams. The foundation of an overcoming life must be laid in righteousness and judgment. We must draw forth the sword of self-mortification from its scabbard, and lay it to our ways and our doings. We need not expect to enjoy God's rest in the soul, and yet walk in

the light of our own fire, and feed upon the husks of a Christ-rejecting world. There could be no rest of God for Asa and his kingdom so long as forbidden altars remained—witnesses that Israel was bowing down to other gods than Him. And there can be no Heaven-bestowed rest in your soul and mine, beloved, apart from self-judgment in the secret place. We may pray for that rest, and sigh for it, and weep for it; but it shall not come. It comes unbidden; and neither prayers nor tears can hasten its arrival by a single hour. In obedience to eternal law, the rest of God follows upon the heels of *judgment*—judgment of my ways and thoughts—mortification of that which I know to be of the flesh. There is no "short way" to this God-given rest. It flows from an uncompromising resistance to what I have learned to be "against the throne of the Lord," and an unflinching hewing down of groves and altars "to other gods than Thee."

UNTIMELY CRITICISM.

HAT a pity it is that certain believers do not adopt a more excellent way of putting a brother right when he happens to make a misquotation in an open meeting! It is, as a rule, most unseemly to rise up as soon as the brother has sat down, and then proceed to point out that Scripture does *not* say, "I know *in* whom I have believed" (2 Tim. i. 12); and that Jno. i. 12 does *not* say, "To as many as received Him," &c. This may display a little knowledge of Scripture; but it displays more—it shows a lamentable lack of the "courtesy of love" in the one who thus ruthlessly exposes a brother. It is quite true that misquotations should be pointed out; but, as there is "a time for everything," we cannot see he has chosen the right time who rises upon the heels of a speaker, to lay bare his inaccurate quoting of Scripture. "Did you observe yon misquotation?" said one brother to

another as they wended their way home from a meeting. "Yes," was the reply, "but to have risen and pointed it out *at the moment* would have been a bigger mistake than the one that was made. We can rectify it quietly, *a little later on.*" This, in almost every case, is decidedly the better way.

What a deadening effect has often been produced on a meeting by the presence of some critical brother, known to be ready to rush in and expose any unguarded expression he chanced to hear in prayer or ministry! Perhaps the silence is oppressive; but no one cares to break it, for no one cares to come under the dreaded "dissecting knife." To produce such an effect on a meeting is, to our mind, a more serious injury than an occasional slip by the tongue of true devotion. But in this, as in so much else pertaining to church relationship, *love* doth not behave itself unseemly (1 Cor. xiii. 5). If there is a "more excellent way," love will be sure to take it. But

if the lamp of love be burning low, the knife of self-complacent criticism will be reckless as to the gashes it leaves behind.

NOT ON THE ROLL.

IT is a significant thing that the name of *Joab*, the captain of the host, does not appear in the roll of "David's mighty men." In 2 Sam. xxiii. 8, we read that "these be the names of the mighty men whom David had." Then follows the wonderful catalogue. But you search in vain for the name of Joab. *Officially* he is mentioned elsewhere. In 1 Chron. xxvii. 34, we are told that "the general of the king's army was Joab." This passage, however, only tells us Joab's *position*. It does not refer to *personal worth*. The language here is strictly official. Joab is described as general of *the king's army*. But when the mighty men are referred to, they are spoken of as the mighty men whom *David* had. In the list of

these mighties, one would naturally expect to find the name of that man who held the highest official position in "the king's army." But although the bold and unscrupulous captain of the host might be great in Israel, and seem to be a man that could scarcely be done without, yet when the day came for *writing up the roll*, Joab's name is left out. It was one thing to hold an official position in Israel; and it was quite another thing to bring joy to the heart of David.

Joab's history may help us to understand the Master's words when He said, "Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first" (Matt. xix. 30). And Joab's history may also serve to remind us that official position in the Church will of itself count for very little with Him whose eyes are "as a flame of fire." In the days in which we live, there is a very strong tendency to what has been well called *the idolising of gift*. If a man is a ready speaker—if he can deliver a high-sounding

harangue on some passage of Scripture, he is far too generally hailed as a prophet of the Lord. The ability to speak fluently for three-quarters-of-an-hour seems to be, in the estimation of many, an unquestionable passport to greatness in Israel. But we must first know what the man is *great* in. Is he great in the Christ-like spirit? That is what we want to know. Does his supposed gift include a goodly endowment of "bowels and mercies," with the tenderness and compassion of Christ? If so, it is well. But if not, then he lacks the highest essentials of greatness as a man of God. We must take heed that we do not bow down to mere officialism—it matters not whether it be humanly-ordained officialism or self-constituted officialism. We have fallen upon an evil day if the mere ability to quote Scripture and deliver an address entitles a man to be reckoned a messenger of the Most High. Is the anointing oil upon his head? Has he been immersed in the

spirit of Him whose virtues he professes to herald forth? Or is it the case that *if you take away his preaching ability* you would have so little left that he would never be even heard of as *a man of God*? Questions such as these must be answered satisfactorily before we can be assured that the professed "gift" has come down from the ascended Lord. And happy shall that day be for the Church when she shall have the heavenly anointing to perceive the true sent-ones of God, and to rejoice only in that which comes *from Him*!



It is quite possible for a man to be abundant in service, professedly for God, and yet to serve so completely under the eye of man, that if no one were looking on, the work would be given up. This is the true mark of the time-server—of one who cannot go on steadily, except under the eye of human approbation. Of all such it may truly be said, "They have received their consolation."

THEY FOUND IT WRITTEN.

WE recently listened to an account of the Lord's work in a distant land, from which we were refreshed to learn how individuals in remote places had been saved through reading the Bible, without any intervention of man whatever. Those simple believers had never seen an evangelist. No servant of God had been known to be in that region. And not only were they *saved* through the instrumentality of the written Word, but through *the same instrumentality* they learned the principles of *gathering to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ*. When a servant of the Lord—himself gathered upon divine principles—"discovered" those humble believers, he found them gathered to the one great Name—keeping the weekly feast of remembrance, and seeking to build up each other on their most holy faith. They had learned these things from the Word; and their teacher had been the Holy Spirit of God.


Now, we wish to point out, in connection with an incident such as this, that God's "simple, unencumbered plan" of church-government approves itself in this—that it may be learned from the Word alone, with no other guide than the Spirit Himself. It is at this point that every man-made system fails. Men—even men great in the Church—may invent a form of church-government, and may seem to have certain passages of Scripture to support their theory. But, before you can even understand the windings of the new system, you must have one of its apostles to explain its mysteries, and lay down the process of reasoning by which it is upheld. If you were to hand the Bible to a few simple-minded believers, to find out upon what principles they are to be gathered as children of God, they would never hit upon the man-invented system. In order to find that out, you need more than "God and the Word"; or, rather, you need something *else* than "God and

the Word." You must have the "help" of a certain teacher of the new "faith" (or someone taught of him) before you can embrace the new thing. And *this* is one of the very strongest proofs that the system has never come from above. Man-invented systems of church-government are distinguished from the Scriptural order in this, that in man's system you have to be initiated into its mysteries; while in that which is according to God the fundamentals may be learned from the Word by the humble believer for himself. In the present day certain systems have sprung up which owed their birth to the inventive brain of one man; and if that man had never been born, there is not the slightest evidence that the system he founded would ever have seen the light. In other cases a new ecclesiastical system owes its existence to a few leading spirits, who have elaborated the theory to its remotest detail. But if you take away the few apostles of the new faith, what would you

have left? You would have a body without any elements of cohesion. Disintegration would at once set in. Yea, recent church-history has shown how disintegration may set in, even while the leaders and teachers of the system were all standing at their posts! How different from all this is the "system" that is according to God, if we may so speak! The wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. It has come from above; and it is characterised by "the simplicity that is in Christ." Men great in the Church may come or go. Yet *the Word* and the great Teacher—*the Spirit of God*—still abide. Though "tongues may cease and prophets fail," our path is clear. We have gone forth "outside the camp" to the rejected Lord Jesus Christ. In weakness, it may be, yet we trust with a true heart, we seek to own that Name which is above every name, and to carry out that which we find written in the Scriptures of Truth. We thus do not attempt to invent a system, or

to build up a system already invented. We simply fall in with that which we find clearly revealed in the Word. And we rejoice to know, that without any human intervention whatever, the redeemed of the Lord, in the dark places of the earth, are being taught of Him *the selfsame principles* which we are seeking to carry out.

DWELLING ON HIS OWN ATTAINMENTS.

 AM always suspicious of a brother when I hear him dwelling upon his own attainments in grace, and seeking to impress you with the thought that he is enjoying spiritual experiences to which *you* are an utter stranger. He may be an excellent enough brother, and he may have entered upon a closer walk with God ; but his constant proclaiming of what *he* is, and the heights to which *he* has ascended, simply *detracts from* what might otherwise be a beautiful Chris-

tian character. It is just the old snare—spiritual pride following upon spiritual promotion, and thus neutralising the promotion ! The brother may not see this ; but others can see it for him. Glib talkers are not generally careful observers. The man who monopolises the conversation, and gives a most glowing account of the heights of joy to which he has risen, fails to observe that he is quietly being taken-stock-of by some brother who may have very little to say. The man of spiritual discernment very soon *measures* his friend of the “great swelling words” ; and, if he feels called to speak, it is *not* in the line of what “*I*” have attained. The man who is *going on with God* in the secret of his heart may be recognised by two marks. He *extols Christ*, and he *manifests the spirit of Christ*. He shines, without calling attention to his shining. He leaves others to find out if the true light is there. He leaves others to perceive the odour of the heavenly ointment. There may, it is true, be times

when he is constrained to say, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul" (Ps. lxxvi. 16). And this is only as it should be; for praise is comely for the upright (Ps. xxxiii. 1); and it is well when we are found saying, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together" (Ps. xxxiv. 3). But he who is taught of God has learned that Christian testimony, in its truest sense, embraces far more than this. Alas for our separated character if no one takes knowledge of our virtues except when we bear witness to these ourselves!



IF a believer's companionships do not proclaim the man, they at least show the direction in which he is drifting. People are never found "gravitating" towards those with whom they have no affinity.

IN the hour of persecution and trial he possesses great consolation who hath the testimony of a good conscience.

ONLY AN ARMOURBEARER.

IT is instructive to observe that Nahari the Beerothite (2 Sam. xxiii. 37), Joab's armourbearer, appears in the roll of David's mighty men. Joab's name, as we have already shown, is not there. Once upon a time he had been the most prominent man in the whole of the king's army; while his armourbearer seems to have been entirely unknown to fame. But days of service come to a close, and the time arrives for *writing up the roll*—beautiful type of the judgment-seat, where all must be manifested, and where every man shall receive according to his works. In the writing up of David's mighties the name of Joab is conspicuous by its absence; while that of Nahari the Beerothite (never heard of before) is found in the place of honour. What a contrast is here! But there is more than a contrast. There is the highest incentive to devoted service for Christ. Your name, beloved child of God, may

be unknown in Israel; you may be "only an armourbearer"—obscure, forgotten, and never even mentioned in connection with public testimony for God. But be not discouraged. *The roll is not written up yet!* If, with singleness of eye, you seek to serve the Lord Christ, rest assured that such service shall not be forgotten by Him with whom "a cup of water" (Mark ix. 41) shall not lose its reward.

The Master's "well-done" will not be proportioned to the brilliancy of our service—not even to its seeming success; but to the purity of the motive with which we have made it our aim to *please Him*. The day is coming when the Lord's "hidden ones" who trod the path of lowly service, shall shine forth. The day is nearing when they shall be acknowledged in the presence of an assembled world. Against that day is being treasured up each word of love—each look of sympathy—each act of silent sacrifice and patient suffering, for Him we seek to serve while

passing through this wilderness below. Therefore, encourage your hearts in God, ye obscure "armourbearers" in the service of the King. There is room on the great roll of the faithful for all who are willing to be *all for Christ*. Dazzling abilities may have weight with men; but it is the devotion of the heart that counts with God.

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Believer's Treasury.

No. 135.

NOVEMBER, 1893.

Vol. VIII.

URGENTLY WANTED.

THERE need be no doubt as to the real state of things;—what is urgently wanted, brethren, at the present time, is a *Revival of spiritual power*. A correct ecclesiastical position will not save us. On the contrary, the fact that we are gathered upon divine principles is the very reason why we shall assuredly come under divine judgment, if we fail to have God's power *within* as well as His form *without*. Our being in "the right place" will only add to our condemnation if we are found in the wrong condition. Having gone forth "outside the camp" to the rejected Lord Jesus Christ, we find ourselves in a position of remarkable privilege. But at the same time it is a position of

responsibility no less remarkable. Indeed, our responsibility is in exact proportion to our privilege.

Israel of old furnishes us with a striking picture of this great principle. God had separated them as a peculiar treasure unto Himself; and *because* He had so separated them, we find that they were, above all other people, exposed to His judgment, if they departed from Him. They might make their boast that they were the chosen seed, that Jerusalem was the place where the Lord had set His name, and that unto them had been committed the oracles of God. Yet all this availed them nothing if there was not *separation in heart* to Jehovah. And not only did their great privileges avail them nothing, but these very privileges exposed them to judgments from

which the surrounding nations were in great measure free. In other words, "God's order," as it is called, could not save His ancient people; and neither can God's order save those who now profess to have gone forth to honour the rejected Name. We must have *God with us*, brethren—not a God afar off, but God present in power—the true "glory in the midst" of His people.

The Ark of God—symbol of the divine presence—could not save Israel; and was never designed to save them, apart from the abiding presence of the Lord. They said, "Let us fetch the Ark . . . that, when it cometh among us, it may save us" (1 Sam. iv. 3). But it failed to deliver; and Israel had to flee that day before their enemies. It was one thing to have the Ark of God, and it was quite another thing to have *the God of the Ark*. They had the one: they had not the other. Therefore, instead of victory there was shame and confusion. Has this startling

incident from a bygone dispensation no voice for us, upon whom the ends of the age are come? Verily it has. We have the truth of God with us; but we must have something more than the truth of God with us. We must have *the God of truth*—the Lord present in power, captivating the heart—controlling the affections—making the gathered company of the saints instinct with heavenly life. Moses felt all this when he said, "If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (Ex. xxxiii. 15). The symbol of the presence of God was already there. But that was not enough for Moses. He must have *Jehovah* in the midst, and nothing less. And we too, beloved, must take heed to the deadly snare of getting satisfied with "God's order," and settling down into a cold, clammy formalism, while boasting like the Jews that unto us have been committed the oracles of God! While we praise His Name for having led us forth "outside the camp," let us not flatter

ourselves that mere ecclesiastical position is any guarantee of devotion to the person of Christ. There may be outward conformity to the ordinances of God, while in the inner sanctuary of the heart there is the abomination that maketh desolate the most imposing outward testimony. What we want, in order to stem the tide of growing worldliness, to reach the sources of secret corruption, and clothe us anew in the beauties of holiness—is a *Revival of spiritual power*. And for such will all the godly pray?



BEWARE of the delusive comfort that springs from a sudden resolution to have a “new plan” of living for God. It is a common device of a bad conscience to attempt to atone for the past by making the most profuse promises for the future. But it is not promises of amendment that our God requires. These, even at the best, can only prove a temporary salve to an accusing conscience. Let us lay the sword of judgment to our ways, and prove the sincerity of our repentance by at once beginning to do *the right thing*.

FALSE HUMILITY.

THESE is a false humility which has been well described as “a making of ourselves small while we think ourselves to be great.” This affectation of humility can avail nothing with God, and we question if it will long impose upon man. He who tries to conceal his pride by a cloak of humility is sure to expose his true character at some unguarded point. There is no mistaking genuine humility. “How is it acquired?” you ask. We reply, “In the school of Christ; *and only there*.” It is learned unconsciously, in company with Him who said, “Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.” You need not try to manufacture humility. You may produce something bearing a seeming resemblance to the coveted “grace”; but, when you have passed your production through the crucible of the presence of God, you will find nothing left save the whine of dissimulation.

BEARING THE HOLY VESSELS.

“**B**E ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.”

But, you say, you could not very well be done without; and you have been so long a prominent man in the meeting that it would not do to stand still all of a sudden. It matters not, brother. If you are not honestly seeking to walk in the light of God, and mortify the flesh, and be separate from the ungodly, it will be a thousand times better for the saints and your own soul that you *set down the holy vessels*, and let the Lord look after the honour of His own Ark! He never leaves Himself without a witness. He will find those who shall bear the holy vessels, even though they have to be brought from “the backside of the desert” (Ex. iii. 1). Therefore, if we stretch forth to bear the vessels of the Lord—if we stand in the place of public testimony, or assume to be guides in the Assembly—let us see that we are men of priestly character.

If we are *not* separated in heart and ways to God, our professed zeal shall only be a beating of the air; and in these circumstances the best service we can render is to stand aside and leave room for God to act.

ESAU.

A SUPERFICIAL glance at the history of Esau may leave the impression that he was in many respects superior to Jacob. His large-heartedness seems to shine out especially in the well-known reconciliation of the brothers, preparatory to which Jacob had said, “I will appease him with the present that goeth before me” (Gen. xxxii. 20). Jacob had many misgivings as to that meeting; and we are all familiar with his elaborate arrangements for bringing it to a successful issue. To his surprise he found that Esau bore no resentment. It is clear that the elder brother had been harbouring no spirit of

revenge. At first sight we might almost conclude that the vow of vengeance (Gen. xxvii. 41) had been withered up and forgotten in the presence of the Lord. But this had not been so. In order to understand Esau more fully we must turn to his "supplementary history" as found in the New Testament. The inspired writer there tells us that he was a "profane person" (Heb. xii. 16)—that is one without a *fane*—without a sanctuary in his soul—one who "never kept Sabbath there"! This gives us the *key* to the man. His apparently forgiving-spirit on meeting his brother did not spring from his recognition of eternal principles. Good-natured and easy-going, he lacked the tenacity of purpose which is alike needed to follow righteousness and to resent an injury. We thus see that nature may be mistaken for grace, and may even seem to excel grace! Yet, if there be no sanctuary in the soul, no sweet savour can ascend to God.

REVIVAL CONDITIONS.



It is in vain that we cry to the Lord for revival, if we are not honestly seeking to provide the *conditions* under which revival can take place. There are certain things we *can* do, and there are certain things we *cannot* do. We cannot provide or manufacture heavenly power. But this much we can do—we can seek with purpose of heart to have the *channels* of blessing clean. But what are the channels? you ask. We reply that you and I are channels; for it has ever pleased God to work through human instrumentality. Do we not sometimes pray as if the Lord had a great store of blessing ready to descend, and yet for some inscrutable reason withholds it? Therefore, we go on praying for revival. But what about *the channels*? The "store of blessing"—whatever that may mean—is all right. But are *we* who pray for revival in such a condition that we can count upon God to take us up as

channels of blessing? This is the vital question in praying for revival times. We therefore note a few things which, so far as we can see, are essential in preparing the way of the Lord in this great matter.

(1) There must be an *honest* desire for revival times. Cold, measured-out prayers of formality are of no account if business is to be done for eternity. There must be *reality* in coming unto God. An affectation of zeal will avail nothing with the great Searcher of hearts.


(2) There must be *singleness of eye*. It is to no purpose if we seem to be on fire at the prayer-meeting, and yet are at home with the world next morning. Those with "an heart and an heart" (a heart for God, and one for the world) need not expect to have any hand in opening the windows of Heaven.

(3) There must be a resolute and unflinching *putting away* of anything about us which we know to be opposed to the mind of God. If we are not willing

to turn the sword of self-judgment upon our own flesh, we may be certain that our professed longing for revival is nothing more than profession. If we are truly longing for God to come in, we should set about "preparing a way for the King."

(4) We must not wait until "a resolution" is carried by the Church that the channels must be got into a fit condition. Let each one for himself and for herself ask the question, "Am I willing to be a channel for God?"—"a broken and emptied vessel, for the Master's use made meet"? Am I prepared to mortify the deeds of the body? Am I willing that Christ should take His place on the throne of the heart, and reign without a rival there? This is what God wants. This is what He is waiting for. Heavenly revival is not so far away as we are prone to imagine. Let there be even a few channels such as the Lord can use, and we need not doubt that the living water shall flow through them, and that right early.

IF TWO OF YOU SHALL AGREE.

NENESS of mind in the Lord cannot be valued too highly. A company of believers, led of God into the same mind and the same judgment, must of necessity exercise a powerful influence wherever their lot is cast. On the other hand, a *lack* of this oneness of mind among saints is one of the most fruitful causes of powerless testimony. At the same time, let us beware of getting hopelessly discouraged because of the increasing dearth of oneness of mind which now prevails among many of the people of God. Such a state of things is to be deplored, and calls for special remembrance before the Lord. Nevertheless, that is no reason why we should sit down in despair, as if the God of Heaven cannot work until a whole company of believers are of *one mind in Him*. We may not thus limit the Holy One. We dare not for a moment suppose that the purposes of His eternal glory must

be suspended or thwarted because a company of His children fail in oneness of mind. We must remember that however man may fail, God "abideth faithful" (2 Tim. ii. 13); and the unbelief, even of His professing people, cannot "make the faith of God without effect" (Rom. iii. 3). "*Who* is among you that feareth the Lord?" (Isa. l. 10). That is the question. How many are there of you who are sighing and crying before the Lord? (See Ezek. ix. 4), and united in this, that the Lord may come in and wither up every stream of fleshly power, and make Himself manifest as the Holy One "in the midst of thee"? How many? Are there a dozen? The flood-gates of heavenly blessing have been thrown open through the intercession of a much smaller number. Are there as many as would have saved Sodom? (Gen. xviii. 32). If not, fewer will suffice. There may not be even five—the scriptural number for "weakness." We shall therefore come down farther, and still be

within the number which may "move the hand that moves the universe." Are there even *two* of you of one mind in the Lord in crying for a visitation in the midst of the years—a visitation in resurrection power? Then, encourage your hearts in God, beloved; for has not the Master said: "If *two of you* shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in Heaven"? (Matt. xviii. 19). What transcendent possibilities are opened up to *two of you* agreed on earth! Let others come to a stand if they will, and say that "nothing can be done till there is oneness of mind." Two of you agreed as to God's power, shall soon learn a far different lesson. Is the Lord's hand shortened that He cannot save? Is there any restraint *with Him*, to save by many or by few? (1 Sam. xiv. 6). Were His people united when He overthrew the hosts of Midian and saved Israel from the bondage of years? (Jud. vii.). Is it

not the case that the chosen race sought to lay hands upon Gideon the chosen deliverer, that they might cut him off out of the land of the living? (Jud. vi. 30). Was Israel united in the day of Goliath's fall and the defeat of the Philistines? (1 Sam. xvii.). Is it not the case that the most prominent man in the kingdom was possessed by a devouring envy as he heard the women of Israel extolling him whom God had raised up for the deliverance of His people? (1 Sam. xviii. 8). Was Israel of one mind when God wrought the remarkable deliverance by the hand of Jonathan? (1 Sam. xiv.). Is it not the case that neither king nor people knew anything of what Jonathan and his armourbearer had done until it was an accomplished fact? (ver. 17). And is it not the case that Saul brought in a verdict of death against the man who "wrought with God"? (ver. 44, 45). So far from God waiting until His people were of one mind that He should work, we find Him ever and anon carrying through

the most mighty deliverances in spite of the failure—yea, and the opposition—of His people. Therefore, ye "*twos agreed*," arise in the might of the promises of God, and lay hold upon Him—not for "a little reviving in our bondage," but for such a revival from the presence of the Lord as shall compel iniquity to hide its face, and cause the ransomed of the Lord to return to the Zion of heavenly communion with everlasting joy upon their heads!

"THE RIGHT THING" FIRST.

THE words that occur in Psalm iv. 5, "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord," reveal one of the most vital principles of faith. We need not try to deal with faith in the abstract—that is, faith *abstracted* from everything else, and standing by itself alone. You cannot have faith alone. The child of God must first offer the sacrifices of righteousness—he must first do *the right thing*. Then God can be trusted for untold blessing.

BACK TO GILGAL.

BACK to Gilgal—back to Gilgal,
Let me, O my spirit go!
Where the stones of death lie buried
'Neath the mighty Jordan's flow;
Where the manna ceased from falling
On the "resurrection day"—
Back to where the shame of Egypt
From the host was rolled away.

Back to where the stones of witness
Silent, by the river, stand;
Where was ate the feast unleaven'd,
And the "old corn of the land";
Where Jehovah's ransomed army
For the Canaan conquest start—
Back where "death and resurrection"
Meet the eye and fill the heart.

When, by strength of God victorious,
Thou dost bear the spoil away,
Back unto the camp at Gilgal,
Hasten in that joyful day!
If, defeated in the conflict,
Thou dost flee before the foe,
Back to Gilgal, O my spirit,
In thy shame and sorrow go!

Till the land shall all be conquered,
And the palm thy hand shall bear—
Till the tent be pitched at *Shiloh*
And Jehovah worshipped *there*,
Camp at Gilgal, start from Gilgal,
Back to Gilgal ever come—
Anchor by the ford of Jordan,
Till *all* Canaan is thy home.

W. B.

GOLD FIELDS,
SOUTH AFRICA, 1893.

FAITH AND ITS REWARD.

IT is recorded of Christ on a certain occasion that "He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief" (Matt. xiii. 58). Of Israel it is recorded that they "limited the Holy One of Israel" (Ps. lxxviii. 41), and said, "*Can* God furnish a table in the wilderness?" (ver. 19). We thus see how unbelief stands in the way of blessing. Nevertheless, unbelief in general cannot hinder the victories of faith exercised by an individual, even in the midst of abounding declension. The Centurion's faith did not lose its reward because of the unbelief that reigned on every side. He obtained all that he desired; while his faith, shining all the more brightly on account of the surrounding darkness, drew forth from the Master the great commendation, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matt. viii. 10). When we turn to the Old Testament we find the same principle—God ever

honouring the faith that rests *in Him*. Israel, as a people, were opposed to entering the promised land. The twelve spies had returned from viewing the country; and had given their "evil report." *God and His power* were lost sight of, and unbelief reigned in Israel. Yet among the spies there were two men who did not share the fears of their brethren—two who had noted the height of the walls and the size of the giants in the land of promise, but who had *also* seen, far above all frowning difficulties, the God of Israel mighty to deliver (Numb. xiii. 30). In this particular case the reward of God-honouring faith is at once seen to be "a law of the kingdom"; for the murmuring and unbelieving host never set foot upon the promised Canaan; while the only two men who *believed God* were preserved through all the trials of the wilderness; and entered, with unwearied foot and undimmed eye, the exceeding good land which the Lord their God had given them!

DELAYED CONFESSION.



HARDENING process at once begins when confession is delayed. If the Lord

requires that you should confess to a brother that you have injured him, or spoken unadvisedly with your lips, it is not well to put off "doing the right thing." Humanly speaking, the longer you delay godly confession the longer you are likely to delay it. The Lord in His grace *may* open up a way by which it shall be easy for you to "edge in" your confession. But if the path of duty is clear you will in all probability be left to open up the way yourself. Our God does not "roll away the stone" for us if that is a thing that we can do for ourselves.

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Believer's Treasury.

No. 136.

DECEMBER, 1893.

Vol. VIII.

THE CLOSING YEAR.

THE closing days of a year are suggestive. They remind us that "the time is short," and that the hour shall arrive when our testimony on earth shall cease—when "the year of our life" shall reach its "31st of December." We know not when that hour shall strike. It may be in the year that is coming—in some bright day in the summer of 1894, or when chill December is upon us once again. Or, it may be ere the last sands of 1893 are run out. Who can tell? This much at least the closing year is fitted to teach—that the hour shall come when the day of our testimony shall cease—when the last chance of shining for Jesus in this dark, unfriendly world shall

have fled, nevermore to return! The closing year brings before us thoughts such as these, and many others, which no doubt have their due weight all the year round. Yet it must be admitted that they possess a peculiar significance at this time, when we are just coming in sight of another "milestone" on the great highway of life. And right well we know that for each one of us, sooner or later, our *last* "milestone" shall be reached, all unconscious though we may be that it *is* the last! Surely this of itself should cause great searchings of heart.

Is it not the case that many live as if they had a long lease of life—speaking and acting as if the Judgment-seat were far away, and the coming of the Lord an impossible thing in

their time? If by some secret intuition the last "milestone" were recognised as indeed the last—if by some heavenly anointing we treated each "milestone" as the last that should mark our earthly pathway—how carefully we should walk! What a relentless war would be waged upon the flesh and all its belongings! How careful we would be that nothing but the spirit of Christ should animate our behaviour!—how jealous lest any fleshly defilement should grieve the Holy Spirit of God! Everything would then be viewed in the light of the Judgment-seat. As men and women standing upon the very confines of eternity we would weigh the allurements and honours of a Christ-rejecting world, and find them lighter than vanity, compared with the glory that shall yet be revealed in us. With but a light step on the sands of the wilderness, we should be ready at any moment to welcome the Bridegroom of our hearts!

But why should it not ever be so? Have the solemn realities

of eternity lost their hold upon us? Have we forgotten that every one that hath named the name of Christ shall yet be *manifested* in uncreated light? Do we forget that our service *here* shall yet pass through the fire *yonder*? Do we fail to bear in mind that yesterday's opportunity is gone for ever? Those who live as if the Judgment-seat were far away may be well assured that they themselves are far away from the presence of God.

It is the consciousness of the presence of God we want, if we would truly learn and ever remember that "the time is short." If that blessed consciousness has been lost—bartered away for some fleshly indulgence or worldly prize, it must be found again, although the finding of it may demand that the sword of judgment be drawn upon all within us that the flesh counts dear.

The voice of the dying year tells us, with a startling significance, that it is "high time to

awake out of sleep." It reminds us that our opportunities are becoming fewer. It speaks with the voice of decision, and says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might"; and, looking back over the path of our experience, it utters the warning, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

You may have observed, as many have observed, that each year appears to fly faster than the one that has gone before. The time is not only short, but it seems to be getting shorter. How urgent, therefore, the call to "redeem the time, because the days are evil!" It is not resolutions that are wanted—the resolve that at some time in the near future, when circumstances are a little different, you will have to arrange things so that you may lead a different life. How many of these resolutions, made twelve short months ago, have perished in the wail of the dying year! The Lord does not want our resolutions: He wants *us*. Then

every resolve towards a God-glorifying walk shall be in the energy of faith, and accompanied by tokens of power.

All who recognise the voice of the Lord in the voice of the departing year, shall be found erecting a "Judgment-seat" in the presence of God—there to find out what kind of Christians we have been in the year that is past—there to "burn up" whatever has been found to be *not of Him*, and to gird our loins and have our light burning, so that *henceforth* for us to live shall be *Christ*.



WE are so accustomed to sound aloud in the ears of the unsaved, "*Now* is the accepted time," that we seem to have forgotten that these words have a primary application to *the people of God*. If *now* is the time for the sinner to receive Christ, it is no less the time for the believer to see that Christ is enthroned as Lord in the heart. It is first to the saints of God that the Holy Spirit saith, "*To-day*."

TESTIMONY SILENCED.

YOU may have observed that when a professed follower of Christ goes back to the world, his testimony ceases. He no longer bears witness to the beauty and the excellency of his absent Lord. But *why* does his testimony cease? At first sight it might be supposed that testimony ceases because he has *no heart* for such work. He has come down to the level of the world; and he is so much *at one* with the world that he has no inclination to bear witness that its deeds are evil. Moreover, he cannot fail to perceive the inconsistency of being a witness for Christ while he is rejoicing under the world's shadow. His mouth is closed for this, if for no other reason, that he feels the world would very soon close it if he dared to turn round and preach to *them*. But, however true all this may be, there is a deeper reason for the silence of one who, having named the name of Christ, has yet gone

down to the weak and beggarly elements from which he had professed to be for ever separated. It may seem to him that his silence is self-imposed. But there is every reason to fear that the silence is imposed by the Lord Himself. We know that He deals with His departing child in judgment; and part of that judgment seems to be a *silencing of testimony*. In the record of God's dealings with His ancient people we find this remarkable passage (Jer. xliv. 26), "Behold, I have sworn by My great Name, saith the Lord, that My Name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah, in all the land of Egypt, saying, The Lord God liveth." The Lord would have no testimony from Judah in *departure from Him*! Let this be well pondered by all who flatter themselves that they may be in an Egyptian yoke and yet bear witness for God. There can be no true testimony for God in "the land of the stranger"—whether it be open affinity with


the world, or a going back in heart to Egypt.

If you apply this principle to His people in this day, it will help us to better understand why testimony ceases when a child of God goes down to join affinity with the Egypt world. When we recognise the "silencing" as the act of God in judgment, surely the silence itself is well fitted to lead to serious self-examination. There is a solemn and startling sense in which God is in the silence of the backslider. When this is seen and felt, there is hope of a return from that Egypt to which he has gone down; for what can be more solemnising to a child of God than the thought, "I am now under the hand of the Lord in judgment"!

While we thus speak, however, it must not be concluded that a believer who goes down to Egypt ceases *at once* to bear witness for God. He ceases at once to *be* a witness. But his mouth may not be *immediately* closed. Even in the message delivered by Jere-

miah, we do not find that the silencing was the work of a day (ver. 27). Perhaps space was given for repentance. As a matter of fact, a remnant returned to the land of Judah (ver. 28). We thus see that a man may continue in professed testimony for God although in heart he is far away indeed from the path of communion. He may join affinity with Egypt—either the Egypt of outward conformity, or the Egypt of inner departure—and he may go on "testifying for God" as it is called, as if thereby to persuade his brethren that he is in the highest favour with Heaven. But—searching and solemn truth—the Lord declares that He does not wish His Name to be named by such lips! If there is to be testimony let there be truth in the *inward parts*—let there be godly separation from Egypt. If these elements of a true witness are wanting, then the word of the Lord is clear—His name is not to be named in the mouth of any such "man of Judah!"

LOT AS A WITNESS.

N scanning the history of Lot in Sodom, we find only one occasion on which he stood forth to bear witness for God. And on that occasion it is noteworthy that his testimony was utterly rejected. Things seem to have gone well with him, from an earthly point of view. He had risen to be a judge in Sodom (Gen. xix. 9), and sat in the gate of the city (ver. 1). He was what we would call "a great man" in Sodom. But we search in vain for any record that he was a witness for God. Circumstances arose, however, when he felt it imperative to bear witness against the iniquity of the place. The heavenly messengers—messengers of judgment to Sodom, and yet of grace to him—were already in the house. The infamous proposal of the men of the city had been made; and Lot, accustomed as he was to the abounding iniquity of the people, refused his consent to their suggestion. At that point he comes before us in a new character—bearing witness against iniquity (ver. 7). But his testimony was absolutely destitute of power. Yea, it was worse. It seemed to arouse the

most deadly animosity in the men among whom Lot had enjoyed a position of honour! We learn from this that those who would be witnesses for God must be separate from the world. And in Lot's infamous proposal (ver. 8) we see how like he had become to them that go down to the pit (Ps. xxviii. 1)—we see how his conscience had been defiled and his eye blinded by his self-chosen surroundings—we see to what terrible depths one may fall, concerning whom Scripture bears witness that he "vexed his *righteous soul*"! (2 Pet. ii. 8).

—♦—♦—♦—
IF you are convinced that the Lord has given you a special work to do, let nothing deter you from your purpose. It is not a question of "difficulties in the way." If you are truly called of God, then, like Israel of old, you shall find the sea opening up at the proper time, and the Lord making a path through the great waters for His redeemed. But if there should be any doubt as to the call of God, beware of the flattery of men; for in this lukewarm age you will find a hundred to say, "Do all that is in thy heart," for one who will tell you plainly that he perceives no trace of the anointing oil.

FILL THINE HORN WITH OIL.

AND the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? " (1 Sam. xvi. 1). No one can fail to perceive the tone of rebuke in these words addressed to a prophet of the Lord. Samuel had been expecting great things from Saul; and, now that Israel's anointed king had been weighed in the balances and found wanting, the prophet seemed to settle down into despondency. But he had to learn, as many a Heaven-sent man has had to learn, that there is such a thing as mourning *out of fellowship with God*. You may set your eye, as Samuel did, on some one "head and shoulders" above his brethren; and you may persuade yourself that he is destined to be a chosen vessel in the line of deliverance and blessing for the people of God. But, like Samuel, you must be taught that the Lord's thoughts are not your thoughts. Sorrow

must have a limit; and, if Samuel fails to perceive that limit, he must be taught it by the startling words of Jehovah, "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul?"

We may set our hearts upon a certain channel of blessing; and, when we see failure in that channel, we are prone to conclude that everything is lost. But everything is not lost. God abides; and His resources are infinite. Samuel could not see where, in all Israel, a deliverer was to be found. But it was not needful that he should see this. It was only needful that his eye should be *on God*. Hitherto he had been unable to take his eye off the man who promised so well, and whom all Israel greeted so loudly as one after their own heart. But the time had come to dry his tears, and cease from man, and stay his heart on God. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Ps. xxx. 5). The morn of deliverance and joy for Israel was at hand; and the prophet was suddenly aroused from his


despair by the words of cheer and hope—"Fill thine horn with oil, and go; I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided Me a king among his sons."

How strikingly this brings before us the resources that are in God! While Samuel is mourning, as if Israel's sun had set, never to rise again, God is already preparing the future king! Not on the throne—not in Saul's court—not among the "mighty men," would the chosen deliverer be found. But yonder, where no one in Israel would have looked for him—tending a "few sheep in the wilderness" (1 Sam. xvii. 28) is the one who shall rule Jehovah's flock, and lead His armies from victory to victory. Samuel could scarcely understand it. Yet, obedient to the word of the Lord, he filled his horn with oil, and went forth and anointed David in the midst of his brethren (1 Sam. xvi. 13).

In these days—often dark in the Church's history—there is a tendency to lose heart, and cease

"building for God," because of failure in testimony on the right hand and on the left. "Kingly rule" may seem, like the house of Saul, to be waxing weaker and weaker (2 Sam. iii. 1); and, like Samuel of old, we may not see how light shall arise in the darkness. But just at that point a message comes from the throne to every child of faith—"How long wilt thou mourn? . . . *Fill thine horn with oil.*" Our God wants to be trusted. Why longer mourn the glory of a bygone time? Arise, brother, and fill thine horn with oil. Despair belongs to failure and unbelief. There is no despair in Heaven. Let us get *into touch with God*. The oil in Samuel's horn bespoke a "gladness" in store for Israel such as the reign of Saul had never known! And such, we doubt not, it shall be in this day of the Spirit's fulness. Let us simply trust our God for a mighty deliverance. Leave others to sing the sad requiem of departed blessing. Arise thou, and "*fill thine horn with oil.*"

A HINT AS TO GOSPEL PREACHING.

T was remarked of a servant of Christ—one who was signally owned of God in the salvation of souls—that in his Gospel addresses the first half consisted largely of scriptural instruction—a solid foundation of “Thus saith the Lord”; while in his second half he *applied the subject* to the hearts and consciences of his hearers. In other words, his address consisted of (1) *scriptural statement*, and (2) *direct appeal*. We think this is instructive, especially for all who seek to be “fishers of men.” At the present time there is in vogue a style of preaching which may be described as *all appeal*. There is no laying of a solid foundation from the Scriptures of truth. Sinners are urged to believe—to decide—to come out for God, and so on. But what are they to believe? What does *decision* mean? And what is it to *come out for God*? These questions can only be answered

from the Scriptures. And the Gospel that does not go right into these questions, and answer them from the Scriptures, is not half a Gospel. It is wonderful what an amount of scriptural instruction was given in Peter’s “Pentecostal sermon” (Acts ii.). An oft-repeated exhortation to *believe* would have been meaningless to the crowd on that occasion. They had to be convinced of their condition before God. They had to be told something of that Jesus whom they had rejected—how that the Psalms had foretold His glory, and that God had raised Him from the dead. Then came the *driving home* of the subject to the consciences of the multitude. “Know assuredly,” said Peter, “that God hath made that same Jesus, *whom ye have crucified*, both Lord and Christ” (ver. 36). Conviction of sin commenced there and then; and we know what a remarkable, soul-saving work was done that day. This is the kind of Gospel we want—a Gospel that will go into the root

of things, showing the sinner where he really stands, declaring what sin is, and its judgment on the Cross, and extolling the excellencies of Him whom God hath "made both Lord and Christ." When this has in some measure been done, then, like Peter, you may turn round on your audience and charge home upon them their rejection of the Son of God.

FORCE OF WILL.

FORCE of will must not be mistaken for force of character. Self-will, or the resolute purpose to have "my own way," does not constitute greatness of character. A man may have great strength of will, while he is destitute of all the elements of true greatness. Force of will means that I must force my way in order to let my influence be felt, while character, on the other hand, is a silent and spontaneous force. Wherever you have a combination of virtues

that go to make up what is known as "character," you have a force which, like the sun, is seen by its own light, and felt in the beneficent influence it sheds around.

TO OUR READERS.

THE present number closes the eighth year of this testimony. We need scarcely say how thankful we are for the unfailing mercies by which we have been permitted thus to serve the Lord Christ. We have been again greatly cheered and encouraged in this work. It has been to us a labour of love. In whatever measure the great Head of the Church has been pleased to make these humble pages a channel of blessing to His redeemed, we rejoice. We praise Him for every token that weary ones have found therein "a word in season," while we bow the head and worship, saying, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory" (Ps. cxv. 1). To all interested subscribers we would say, "Brethren, pray for us," that we may be sustained of God in this ministry, to the praise of His glory.

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