

wondrous expression. Love till then had not been free to flow out. The place of man's judgment is the place of God's richest blessing.

There the love was in Him and the world would not have it, and His own people had little understood or entered into it, but the moment man had fulfilled their enmity against Him, all the infiniteness of His grace was set free. And now through His cross, it "reigns through righteousness unto eternal life."

And in the path of this we are set now, viz., the enmity and evil of man's heart against Christ, and the power of God's love displayed in Him in the midst of it. We do not get a statement that all Christians shall suffer persecution, but "all that live godly." And our little measure of trial is the same in this respect, as in fulness the cross was, but an outlet for the full and blessed love of God to flow out. It teaches us this, beloved friends, that walking in godliness and waiting for Christ here, whatever the wickedness and evil of man may be against us, that His perfect love as flowing out in the cross is ours to know and enjoy.

The Lord give us to be as men that wait for their Lord, serving Him in this hope. Only remember this, "that if a man serve me let him follow me," are His words to us. You cannot serve Him without walking in His footsteps.

CORINTH AND SECTS.

MY DEAR —: In Corinth there existed, in the apostles' day, a company of people who had believed the gospel, been born again of the Holy Ghost, baptized by Him into "one body," gathered out by Him from among Jews and Gentiles, and gathered to the name of Jesus.

Every Lord's day (not to speak of other occasions) these were, by the same Holy Ghost, "gathered together" unto His name (Matt. xviii. 20; 1 Cor. v. 4); for He had promised when so "gathered" He would be in the midst; and, as gathered by the Holy Ghost,

they assembled or came together to meet with Him (1 Cor. xiv 23, 26 ; Heb. x. 25).

They did not meet as a voluntary society of man's creation or device, but as the church or assembly of God (1 Cor. i. 2)—an association or body of His forming—in their respective places, in which they had been set, not by their own choice, but by Him (1 Cor. xii. 18). They had neither option, choice, nor selection in the matter, and there was as yet, in that day and city, nothing else under the Christian name to tempt them into any other position.

We know from Acts xviii. that the apostle Paul had been the Holy Ghost's instrument for the original calling of that assembly. We know from passages in his letters to them (1 Cor. xii. 8-11, 29, 30 ; xiv. 13, 23, etc.), that they had, in the midst, gifted persons of some at least of the classes of which the apostle declared to them that God had set such in the assembly (1 Cor. xii. 28).

It does not, however, appear that they had among them anything like what is now known as "a stated" or "settled ministry." There is no hint, either in Acts or in the Epistles of anything like a "minister," "presiding elder," or other officer, conducting or regulating "the services" in their assemblies, or presiding at the Lord's table. The absence of any such personage is evident ; first, from the absence of any allusion to him either in the apostle's reproofs, instructions, or salutations ; second, from the fact, evident in the whole tone of the apostle's admonitions and instructions, in chapters xi.-xiv., that the freedom of ministry in their meetings was wholly unrestrained by the presence of any one in authority,

It is further evident from the epistles, that though these persons were by the Holy Ghost denominated "saints" (chap. i. 2), there was still existing in and among them an evil element, known in Scripture as "the flesh," which "flesh" made known its presence by some at least of the works described by the apostle in Gal. vi. 19-21 as peculiar to it ; for in chapter

v. of his first letter the apostle had to tax them with one of its ugliest works, and to warn them against several others. In xi. 21 he had to blame them for another of these—drunkenness, under the most atrocious circumstances, at the Lord's table, and in company with gluttony; in i. 11 he had to reprove them for "contentions;" in iii. 3, for "envying, strife, and factions;" in iv. 19, for being puffed up; in vi. 1, for going to law; in xi. and xiv., for such abuses of ministry and the Lord's supper as made their coming together "not for the better, but for the worse," inasmuch as there were "divisions" among them (ver. 18), women were being allowed to take part in the meetings, display in the use of tongues was allowed to usurp the place of edification, and such unseemly disorder in the exercise of prophesyings prevailed, as proved that they were not acting in the Spirit, since "God is not the author of confusion."

It further appears that the presence of these carnal "contentions," "factions," and "schisms" began to take the form of cliques, grouping themselves together under different names, as Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and even the sacred name of Christ was made among them a party name.

It is pretty evident, from the silence on the subject in the second epistle, that the apostle's admonition took effect, and surpressed, for the time at all events, the development of this sectarian spirit into open rupture, which was well.

We may, however, picture to ourselves the state of things which must have resulted had this been otherwise, as by so doing we may find help in seizing on certain important principles bearing on our own position.

Let us imagine that the factions in Corinth had run at last so high that on some given Lord's day each of those named by the apostle had concluded to separate itself from the others, and had secured a separate place of meeting; so that on that Lord's day morning, instead of the one original assembly

we have thus far been occupied with, there were found also in Corinth four other meetings, each in its respective building, under its respective name of Paulites, Apollites, Cephites, and Christites, or Christ-ians.

What now would be the position of affairs, and what the respective merits of the five assemblies?

First, there would be four distinct meetings, each with a name adopted for the express purpose of distinguishing it from all the other Christians in Corinth. It is not that they had renounced the Christian name; for they still call themselves Christians; but it is that Christians want now to distinguish themselves, and whom they desire to exclude from their fellowship, unless they be willing to identify themselves with their attitude and position. Christians having divided, would now need other names beside that of Christian to mark them out. Before, they only needed a name to distinguish them from Jews or heathen, and Christian was enough for that. They now want to distinguish Christians from Christians. They are Christians still; but they are now Christians of a peculiar kind. They are Paulite Christians, and Apollite Christians, and so forth.

And then, as they have now divided, and got their separate places of meeting, these also receive the name of those who assemble in them; and there would have sprung up the Paulite meeting-house, the Apollite or Cephite church or chapel, or what else they might call it.

The *ground* of people's gathering together into any place of assembly is, their reason for their being there. So long as all the saints or brethren in Corinth assembled in one place, they do so because they had all one common object, one common name, one common centre. Their object was Christ. That name, object, and centre drew them out, and marked them off from Gentilism on the one hand, and from Judaism on the other.

Once they had divided, the reason of their being

each in their respective places, instead of all in one, or on one common ground, would have been quite different.

If a Paulite had been asked on the Lord's day morning, as he was seen turning into the Paulite meeting-house, why he went there, instead of going where he had been wont, his honest answer must have been, that he was going thither because he was a Paulite, and that was where the Paulites met. They were meeting now *as Paulites*, gathered in the name of Paul. They had not cast off their Christianity; they would still have insisted on being owned as Christians; but they had *added something* to their Christianity. Supposing it to have been nothing more than a name, it still constituted a new kind of Christianity—a new ground of gathering. It is not that which was from the beginning. It was not therefore the Christianity of Christ on the ground of God. Had these Paulites been satisfied with Christianity as God gave it, they would not have needed either a new name or a new place of assembly. They would have been content to have gone on with the old name, and the old place. It is the new thing—the new attitude towards their fellow-Christians—the new ground of meeting together, that called for the new name.

The attitude of these Paulites towards those still on the original ground, and towards the others, would have been this :

They would have maintained towards both: We are as much Christians as yourselves. We meet in the name of the Lord as much as you, and we come together for the very same object as yourselves; only; we withdraw from you, who most unreasonably insist on calling yourselves only by the name of Christians, because we believe it good to introduce some little changes into our church order and ministry, that we feel quite sure that Paul would approve, though he may not have prescribed them. And as you will not have it in the meetings, and will not have

fellowship with us in doing it, we think best to leave you to yourselves ; and so all of us who are agreed about it say "good-bye" to you, and meet now where we have liberty to please ourselves about it. And in order to distinguish us from you, and from others who have gone out on different grounds, we choose to call ourselves Paulites—Paulite Christians, remember ; for we are as good Christians as you, only that name is hardly enough now to "denominate" us. It would confound us with you. Then as to you others who call yourselves Apollites, or Cephites, while we fully acknowledge your liberty to please yourselves as well as we, yet we think that the changes you have added to the old thing are not nearly so good as our own ; and so, though we have less objection to you than to those other narrow-minded people who will not budge an inch from what they find written down for them, still, you see, we couldn't get along with you either. So we must just agree to differ, and meet apart, each in our own place, and under our own "denominational name." At the same time, we do not want to be illiberal ; and so, since we still own you as Christians, we will allow any of you that like to come occasionally and sit down at our table, and we may some of us occasionally come to you in the same way, so as to show the world that though we are divided we are still one. We would be willing to do the same with those other people too, only they will not interchange such courtesies with us, strait-laced and narrow-minded as they are.

Such would of necessity have been more or less the attitude towards the others, of each of the new "denominations."

And what of the attitude of the original body ? It must have been this. They would have said to these seceders : We have in our hands Paul's letter in which he warns us against names and factions and divisions ; in which he tells us that "the body is one," and that it is the mind of God "that there should be no schism in the body," since He has formed it Him-

self by His Spirit, and “tempered the body together,” and “set the members, every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him;” and we cannot consent to attempt improvements on what God has done. If He had judged those things to be needful or good which you have adopted, He would have appointed them, and in some part of His word we should have found it mentioned. As long as we had Paul here we could appeal to him, but though he is away we have his writings and those of the others, and we cannot consent to changes outside of these, for to be so would be to depart from God’s ground on which He set us. You may be quite well intentioned and sincere in what you have adopted; that we do not deny. We have to own, to our shame and sorrow, that the disorders that have from time to time crept in among us, from want of self-judgment and from indulgence of the flesh, are very sad; we own most fully that it is shameful work that drunkenness and such like disorders should intrude themselves at the Lord’s table; we own that you have good reason to feel deeply about it; but when you adopt as a cure a mere invention of your own that has not a bit of warrant in the word of God, and elect a person to “preside” at the table and administer what you are pleased to call now a “sacrament,” you see, dear brethren, we cannot possibly go with you in this, or have the least fellowship with you in it; it is not a thing of God’s appointment, and without His orders we cannot act; to do so were to leave the ground on which He set us, and to cease therefore to be the thing He made us—the Church of God. The moment we begin to let our wisdom or our wills give shape to our organization, we should become a mere voluntary society, a place for the will of man to act in; whereas as God’s assembly, a society of His forming, whose organization is of Him; we can own and follow no will but His in anything that touches, our order or ground.

For similar reasons, when some of you adopt th

opinion that the best way to check abuses in the ministry of the word, keep out ignorance or rudeness of speech, prevent jealousies, and so forth, is to educate and ordain a class of persons for the purpose, to whom all ministerial functions shall be restrained, we do not doubt you mean well by it, and we see a certain plausibility about it on grounds of human expediency ; but then we have no word of God for such an institution ; and we dare not go beyond, and substitute human expediency for divine order. We tremble to go beyond the mind of the Lord. We cannot forget that in a former day these evils you seek to correct had already begun to show themselves, and as you know, in Paul's first letter to us he dealt pretty roundly with us about them. Now surely if the plans you have adopted had been the wisest, or according to the mind of God, he would by the Spirit have been led to establish among us what was needful ; but as he did not do it, no more can we. And though we are very sorry you should separate yourselves from us on such grounds, we feel that in it you greatly dishonor the Lord, yet we dare not purchase even so precious a thing as unity at the expense of truth, and of the very foundations of our character as "God's assembly." Your new-fangled organizations are a practical denial of God's own organization, who has organized the "one body" as it hath pleased Him, and left us in His word the complete record of His mind about it. In setting yourselves apart in bodies of your own organizing, you give the lie to God's word, that "the body is one;" and we dare not either have part with or own you in any such position. You call us narrow and exclusive because we decline to have fellowship with you at these tables you have set up ; but we must be faithful to our Lord, no matter what reproach it may bring on us.

Then, as to those of you who make doctrinal interpretations of the word your ground of separation from others, and of association among yourselves ;

we can just as little go with, or yield to you, as to the others. We own how evil it is that we should be of different minds as to the meaning of God's word. We acknowledge that as the word can have but one meaning, there must be sin and the blinding influences of the flesh at work somewhere, on one side or other, where diversities of judgments prevail. We give full weight to the apostle's solemn admonition to us, that we should "all speak the same thing;" that we should be "perfectly joined together in the same mind, in the same judgment;" but then we also bear in mind that this very word was given, not in order that we might divide into sections, where we could be mutually agreed in our respective thoughts or judgments, but in order that there should "be no schisms among us," and to allow our zeal for like-mindedness on difficult points of doctrine or interpretation, to lead us to do the very thing, for the avoidance of which like-mindedness was enjoined, seems rather a contradictory mode of procedure. Where the word of God speaks plainly in distinct affirmation, we have no hesitation; but where it is a question of lifting a man's inferences from the word to a level with the word itself, that is what we must decline. We see two parties among you separating from each other and from us, and organizing yourselves into opposing bodies under your respective party names, on the ground of your strong convictions as to the soundness of your respective inferences from certain Scriptures. You hold these opinions of yours as very important, no doubt, and are very strongly persuaded in your own minds that you are right, and that your way of it is God's way; but you seem quite to overlook the fact, that in your zeal for *inferred* truth, you are trampling on *plainly-stated* truth; for God has plainly forbidden division, and you are dividing. Now, to our sorrow, we have to own that we are unable at present to be all of one judgment on these matters, and have among us those who hold with one, and those who hold with the other, of your parties;

but we cannot, dare not, attempt to remedy this evil by seeking to force the consciences of our brethren; there are assuredly inconveniences arising out of our want of unanimity on these points, but we dare not take matters into our own hands, as you have done, and make it more comfortable for ourselves by organizing sects and allying ourselves with only those who think with us. That is man's remedy, not God's, and in taking it, you, dear brethren, have made yourselves "sects," and have departed from God's ground, so that we cannot in faithfulness have anything to do with your organizations, since God's word by Paul, in his letter to the Romans (xvi. 17), bids us mark them which cause divisions, and avoid them.

No, dear brethren, to one and all of you we must say it; we own you individually as our brethren in the Lord, and fellow-Christians. We shall rejoice to welcome you again to your respective places in the assembly of God, and at the Lord's table; but we can neither own or meet you, on the ground of your new organizations, bodies, and names. We shall remain ourselves steadfastly, by the grace of God, where He has set us, in the unity of the body of Christ; shall introduce no changes, but adhere closely to the written word in all that concerns our assembly action; leaving liberty to our brethren, where God has not expressly prescribed, as He Himself has taught us to do in Paul's letter to the Romans (xvi. 1-5). As to the failure among us, we will not either extenuate or deny it; but will seek to humble ourselves about it before the Lord, looking up to Him for grace to deal with it in terms of His own divine instructions. If it take on it at any time the form of heresy, affecting the foundation truths of the doctrine of Christ, we shall deal with it as John has directed in his second letter. If it assumes the character of any of those things Paul pointed out to us in the fifth chapter of his letter to ourselves, we shall seek grace to deal with it as he there directs, and as we already did on the occasion he referred to. In inferior matters, we

MY EXCEEDING JOY.

will endeavor, by prayer and mutual faithfulness to each other, and by self-judgment in ourselves, to restrain the flesh, and correct its evil workings.

[TO BE CONCLUDED.]

MY EXCEEDING JOY.

“The Lord Jehovah is become my strength and my song” (Psa. xliii. 4; Heb. iii. 18; Rom. v. 11).

Oh God, in Thee I joy !
For “whom have I in heaven but Thee,”
I would desire none else but Thee,
It is Thyself I long to see,
“God, my exceeding joy.”

Oh God, in Thee I joy !
What though my path be dark and drear,
It matters not when Thou art near,
Thy presence calms each doubt and fear,
“God, my exceeding joy.”

Oh God, in Thee I joy !
And bright before me shines the dawn
Of one triumphant glorious morn,
When sin and woe will all be gone,
“God, my exceeding joy.”

My God, in Thee I joy !
And up above this world's rude din
I would press forward Christ to win,
And find my only portion in
“God, my exceeding joy.”

My God, in Thee I joy !
Under Thy wings may I abide,
And in Thy shadow may I hide
Until like Thee “I'm satisfied,”
“God, my exceeding joy.”

My God, in Thee I joy !
And Thou dost take me by the hand
To lead me to the heavenly strand,
Where all my hopes on Thee will land,
“God, my exceeding joy.”

ERRATUM.—In the poem “Out and Into,” page 111, second stanza, fourth line, for “bondage” read “burden.”

CORINTH AND SECTS.

[*Concluded.*]

HERE then we have, according to supposition, in the city of Corinth, five distinct Christian assemblies—one of them adhering to the name, ground, and order on which they were set by God at the first; the other four being divisions or sects cut off from the original ground for the purpose of maintaining each some distinct order or view of doctrine, to which it has attached sufficient importance to make it a ground of communion—a fence to include on the one hand, or exclude on the other, from full fellowship and association, those who agree with, or those who differ from them.

Such is the difference between divine and sectarian ground.

Divine ground *includes* all that God has appointed to include; viz., all true children of God who are not mixed up with heretical doctrine (2 John), or defiled by unholy living (1 Cor. v.). It *excludes* all who are not God's children, and also such of His children as may contaminate themselves with evil—doctrinal or moral.

Sectarian ground *includes* all whom man chooses to include; to wit, those who agree to accept the peculiar tenets or order. It *excludes* all who decline to accept of these. The degree in which God's own marks for communion are respected may vary. Some might insist on having in only true children of God who accepted the tenets, others might admit all accepting these, without discrimination; but in every case where sectarian ground is taken up, not the Christianity, pure and simple, of the associates, but the *agreement in the principles of the sect*, or acceptance of its "standards," is the ground of gathering, association, or union.

Let us now suppose the apostle to have visited Corinth some Lord's day morning when this state of

things was in existence. How would he have acted? Where would he have gone to break bread? You will not hesitate a moment, I am sure. He would have gone to the original assembly, which he had himself founded, and addressed as "the assembly of God which is at Corinth." Would he in any way have owned these dissenting bodies at all? I trow not. Had they come around him and claimed fellowship with him, or invited him to their assemblies and their tables, I can imagine with what energy he would have declaimed against their wickedness, and how unflinchingly he would have maintained the ground of God. Had they pleaded with him, as they might, that in refusing to own them he was wanting in charity, and bringing in question their Christianity, and refusing the fellowship of numbers of God's dear children, I can imagine how he would have turned on them, and said, "Your Christianity I deny not. God's children I do not doubt you to be; but you are naughty children, disobedient children, self-willed children, presumptuous children. You have deemed yourselves wiser than God; and presuming yourselves able to improve on what He left perfect, have trampled on His order, and violated in the most flagrant manner that charity and Christian fellowship you profess to claim, and to blame me for withholding. Know you not that I wrote to you by the Spirit of God that 'charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth?' And you, who have iniquitously departed from the truth of God, would have me, under the name of 'charity,' forsooth, to wink at and have fellowship with your iniquities. No, brethren, I have learned charity better than that. The truest, the broadest, the holiest charity I can show you, is to protest, as I now do, against your departures from God; to stand aloof from you, as I now do, until you turn from your evil practices, lay aside every one of your inventions, and return to the simple ground of God and of His church. Till you do this, I love you too well, and I love my Lord too well, to meet you.

Yourselves, as individuals, I rejoice to recognize as 'brethren in the Lord,' though erring ones; but your organizations I can neither own, nor have aught to say to. Away with them!"

But perhaps you will be ready to turn on me and say, "Well, I own all this as true. I have no doubt it would have been pretty much so in the case you have supposed; but then the case is not parallel to that to which you want to apply it. You 'brethren' say that the whole church has departed from God's ground, and when you began to meet there was no assembly still standing on the ground. So long as there was, the matter was easy and plain enough; but now it is different."

Well, I am quite ready to admit this feature of difference in the cases, though that does not in reality affect the principle. However, if you will give me leave to carry the supposition a little farther, I shall be able to show you a true parallel.

We will resume our supposed case as we left it; viz., Corinth with one genuine, and four sectarian, assemblies in it. We will farther suppose these sects to be really earnest people, with a real zeal for Christ after their fashion, and a true love for souls. Their zeal leads them out in earnest missionary enterprise, and they spread the truth of the gospel, and are blessed to the saving of souls, whom they of course indoctrinate also in their special tenets, and organize into bodies, churches, or congregations, after their respective forms, and under their respective names. We will suppose that in a certain town in a certain island afar off from Corinth, where Christianity was before unknown, the whole four have established themselves, and that among them they number some seven or eight hundred converts. These converts, as is natural, have taken their ideas of Christianity from those from whom they received it; and though the Scriptures have been put in their hands, have received the interpretations of them that their teachers have presented, so that they get along happily in their respec-

tive "denominations" with perhaps an occasional bit of controversy as to the points on which they differ.

One day, however, an earnest Scripture-reading Cephite, in the course of his reading, begins to discover that it is not all such plain sailing as he had been taught to suppose. He finds in the Scripture that the body of Christ is one, and that schism is sin. He meditates, he reads, and he prays, and the conviction deepens that things are out of joint. He looks into the different church systems, and discerns that the things that divide them are things not found in the word of God at all; that about the things really in the word there is not so much difference of opinion as about things that have no place there. He begins soon to talk a little about this with others; but he is pooh-poohed, or laughed at. Some think it is all right as it is. Others admit the wrong, but think it past remedy. None seemed disposed to meet the question by inquiring after the right, and acting on it. The man's conscience gets uneasy and troubled. The more he reads and prays the worse the thing looks to him, till at last he stumbles one day on Paul's second letter to Timothy (ii. 19), where he bids every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. He cannot doubt that it is iniquity to do what God forbids; and so he feels as though he must depart from his present associations, which are formed on what he now recognizes fully as wrong ground. But then, what is he to do? where is he to go? He has never heard of anything else; doesn't know if there be any of the original churches still standing firm, or if all have gone the same way. He is sorely puzzled and perplexed. The Lord's day morning comes, and he has to decide whether he can go again to the place against which his conscience has at last decidedly pronounced. He feels he cannot, and so remains quietly in his own chamber, alone with God and the word (Acts xx. 32).

Next morning as he walks in the street, he meets a Paulite with, whom he has had some previous acquaint-

ance but has not seen for some time. Knowing him as a godly, Christ-loving man, though of another denomination, he greets and stops for a word with him. He broaches with some hesitation the subject that has brought on him so many hard words from those of his own sect, and to his surprise is met with a hearty response. He finds that his friend has been passing through similar exercises to his own, and, like him, had absented himself on the previous day from his accustomed place, and had spent the time alone in the summer-house of his garden. The question arises: Is there any reason why they should not meet next Lord's day, and remember the Lord together according to the simplicity of the word? They know no reason, and it is agreed on. Before another Lord's day comes, each has found another friend in similar case, so that four of them are gathered that morning simply to the name of the Lord; and having laid aside all that pertained to their respective sects, they looked to the Lord for guidance through the word, and find it. They have got on to God's ground. The Spirit has led them thither through the word.

When this is known, a terrible hubbub is raised; they are rated as self-righteous, as presumptuous, as schismatics, as formers of another sect, as despisers of God's order, and what not. Still their stand has led some to reflect and to search the Scriptures, and by and by one and another own that they are right—that they are following the written word without addition or subtraction, and so are on the ground which they now recognize as that on which the Scriptures show the church to have been originally set. From four they have grown to about twenty persons.

Let us now suppose the apostle Paul, in his journeyings, to have reached at last this island of the sea, and to find himself one Lord's day morning in the town where these things have been happening. Where will he go this morning? Will he go to the assemblies he condemned in Corinth? Will difference of locality make a difference of principle for the apostle

of Jesus Christ? Not at all. He would have inquired, and on learning that there were assemblies of the sects there would have turned away with a heavy heart. When first mention was made of "another new sect" that had come out from among the rest, he might have feared that it was only some aggravation of the fleshly evil; but as the particulars of their action were recounted to him, his eye would have brightened, and rising, he would have said: "I must see these people;" and on seeing them, and finding that in great feebleness, and with much failure, they were seeking out the old paths, and treading in them, he would have rejoiced to own them, insignificant in numbers though they might be, as the only true representatives of the assembly of God in that place.

If he had found them tolerating known evils among them however, such as God had made ground of excision, he would assuredly not have so owned them; but though he might have found much failure—want of harmony, jealousy, and envy, and discord, or the like, while he would have spoken loudly against such things, and labored and prayed for their extinction, I feel assured he would not have made them a reason for preferring one of the schismatical sects, even if he could have found among them one entirely free from the evils complained of as existing among those on God's ground. Do you think he would? Do you think he could have acted otherwise than I have supposed, owning as God's church that which had returned to God's ground, and disowning all that was off it?

Let the name of the island be your State, the name of the town —, the epoch the nineteenth instead of the first century; and suppose that instead of the apostle Paul it were — — who had to make the selection, what would he do?

I leave it with her before the Lord.

Your affectionate brother, R. H.