

THE UNEQUAL YOKE

DIVINE DIRECTIONS
for
DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

G. H. LANG

4d. ; by post 5d., 12 for 4/6d.

Of
The Author,
"Wretford," Oakley Road, Wimborne, Dorset

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II CORINTHIANS VI. 14 TO VII. 1.

BE NOT UNEQUALLY YOKED WITH UNBELIEVERS :

for

what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity ?

or

what communion hath light with darkness ?

and

what concord hath Christ with Belial ?

or

what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever ?

and

what agreement hath a temple of God with idols ?

FOR we are a temple of the Living God ;

even as God said,

I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and

I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

WHEREFORE

come ye out from among them,

and

be ye separate, saith the Lord,

and

touch no unclean thing ;

and

I will receive you,

and

will be to you a Father,

and

ye shall be to Me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Having, therefore, these promises, beloved,

let us cleanse ourselves

from all defilement

of flesh and spirit,

perfecting holiness

IN THE FEAR OF GOD.

THE UNEQUAL YOKE

I. UNBELIEVERS.

Christ is the true spiritual touchstone. Contact with Him infallibly manifests our real moral quality. Our attitude to Him is our attitude to God, and determines destiny. "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" was our Lord's own question for revealing the heart state of a man (John 9 : 35). There are those, taught of God, who perceive that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God," who address Him with the adoring words "my Lord and my God," who can truly say "to me to *live* is Christ," whose whole soul exclaims "Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins in His blood . . . to Him be the glory and the dominion for ever" (Matt. 16 : 16 ; John 20 : 28 ; Phil. 1 : 21 ; Rev. 1 : 5, 6). And there are those to whom He is not this. It matters not what they think Him to be ; He is not to them what He is in fact, the Son of the living God. They may revile or they may respect Him, but they do not worship. The one class own Him as God, accept His word as utterly true, rely upon His death as their one ground of salvation, know Him as their life, and obey His will as law. These are "believers" ; the rest are "unbelievers." The former differ from each other in many particulars, as in the sense which they attach to Christ's words, and in manner of obedience thereto, and in themselves they are yet very imperfect ; but they are one in their view of and attitude towards Himself. The latter also reveal many differences, in social status, training, and conduct ; but they, too, are one in *their* attitude towards Christ ; and before God the latter is the determining fact, and the differences between one unbeliever and another matter but little.

It is to believers that the great bulk of the Word of God is addressed. To them it is authoritative ; the others neglect, reject, or, pick and choose as fancy pleases. And amongst the plain injunctions which the Lord Almighty gives to His children this is prominent, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers," which settles definitely what are to be their relations with all outside of the circle of believers.

Nor does it suffice that there be confessed a belief in "God." The Buddhist, all pantheists, the Mohammedan and all

Unitarians, the savage in the forest, in short, all men but the formal atheist or agnostic, acknowledge a supreme being or power. The believer, in the New Testament meaning of the word, has responded to this call of the *Son* of God, "Ye believe in God, believe *also* in ME" (John 14 : 1). Therefore, Freemasonry, for example, can receive all acknowledgers of a deity, but inasmuch as it requires not faith in Jesus as the Son of God, nor in His redeeming sacrifice, it includes "unbelievers," and, with such, a Christian may not be yoked. This is the situation with other such societies also.

Not against yoking with any given class of unbelievers is the prohibition directed. God does not say, Be not unequally yoked with pagans, or with the vicious living, or with atheists, but simply with "unbelievers." Nor is regard had to the purpose for which the yoking is proposed ; though it be for ends that seem excellent, as for moral and philanthropic work ; or that seem righteous and imperative, as for the crushing of tyranny, or the securing of just conditions of labour or fair rates of pay. Nor is any exception sanctioned, as if the command read, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers, unless without such yoking one cannot earn a living, or again, unless it be government that bids one enter such an alliance." Our LORD forbids it ; this ends all questions, for the *believer*.

II. YOKED.

But what is a yoke ? *It is such a connection as suspends individual freedom and compels united action.*

Hence, ordinary trading, buying and selling, is not a yoke, for neither party is bound to deal with the other, and contact ends with each several transaction. Similarly, working for a wage by ordinary contract is not a yoke, since either party can terminate the arrangement at will ; the one gives time and skill and strength, the other gives in exchange the agreed wage. It is really only a buying and selling. The same seems the case when a farmer registers his cattle with a stock-breeders' Association. He pays for a certificate declaring the quality of his beasts, but he takes no part in working the Association and can dispense with its certificate when he thinks fit. A doctor or a lawyer pays for a license by an Authority legally constituted to assure the public that

he is competent to serve them. He need not take part in conducting that Authority, and he can drop his license and cease to practice should the Authority require from him non-Christian action.

But very obviously marriage is a yoke. So also is a business partnership. The members of a co-operative trading society clearly carry a joint responsibility, even as they all share the profits. Military operations imperatively prohibit that the individual should choose or act of his own will, and the military oath, whether actually taken or assumed in law to have been taken, binds one to surrender personal freedom of action and to carry out all orders of superiors. This is a fundamental necessity in the situation, and it plainly imposes a yoke. It is the essential strength of a masters' federation or a trade union that all its members shall act together. If some will go on trading or working when others will not, the latter have but a reduced chance of carrying their point.

Further, there is much yoking of believers with unbelievers in religious societies. The church of God actually, and as seen by God, is composed only of believers ; the church visible includes unbelievers. In measure this is not avoidable ; it is foretold that tares will mingle with the wheat until the harvest at the end of this age (Matt. 13). But there is all possible difference between (1) a religious community which, in the fear of God, honestly exercises diligent care to receive into membership believers only, and, on the other hand, (2) a society which takes no such care, or (3) one which recklessly sweeps away the distinction and readily receives unbelievers. To visit, when opportunity offers, such churches as are included in classes (2) and (3) and declare to them the truth of God, which they sorely need, may be part of our duty to preach and teach the Word to all men ; but to be joined with such societies by formal membership is obviously to be yoked with unbelievers.

All such yoking is a plain infringement by a believer of a plain prohibition of his God and Father. The origin of the verb "to join" condemns the believer who is so linked with unbelievers. For "join" is from *jungo*, *junctum* (from which is junction), the Latin equivalent of the very Greek word here employed by the Holy Spirit and translated "yoked."

III. UNEQUALLY YOKED.

The reason for the rule is given in the word "unequally," which implies thorough difference of nature and kind ; radical difference, not superficial ; essential not accidental difference.

The situation is divinely pictured in the divine law (Deut. 22 : 10) : "Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together." These differ so greatly in size, strength, and speed that they *cannot* pull together. Hence the weaker must yield to the stronger, and suffer under the yoke.

The difference between the believer and the unbeliever is of nature and kind. The radical principles of each are wholly diverse.

(a) The one is born of God, and has the life of the Son of God, the Righteous One, and "hungers and thirsts after righteousness," not after "rights." He is concerned to be well-pleasing unto God, not to grasp a few more pounds, if a master, or a few more shillings, if a workman.

The unbeliever frequently does not hesitate at iniquity, if that promises best to serve his ends. Trade is poor, and production unremunerative : let us seize some pretext of declaring a lock-out, and thus save wages and expenses. Trade is booming, and production urgent : we will strike for higher wages and shorter hours. It matters not that multitudes must suffer, and that so the royal law of love is wantonly outraged. But righteousness conforms to love, since it never is right to act selfishly and unlovingly ; and "love worketh no ill to its neighbour ; love, therefore, is the fulfilment of law" (Rom. 13 : 10).

On January 1st, 1927, the General Secretary of a principal Trade Union spoke on the matter of the general strike of 1926 and said : "the one essential fact that emerged from it all could be expressed in one word—discipline. When trouble was on, the central authority must be obeyed, right or wrong" (*The Times*, January 5, 1927). The Christian should note the immoral principle of action declared in the words "right or wrong." It was laid down that members of a Union must obey when the central authority orders acts that are wrong. *The Times* justly spoke of the words quoted as "A Challenge to Principle."

"What fellowship hath righteousness with iniquity?"

(b) The believer is "light," the unbeliever "darkness"; can these commingle? The one knows God, who is Light, follows the example of Christ, the Light of the World, perceives that God is working in providence and history, and this by trouble and sorrow as well as by prosperity. He knows enough of God's plans for the future to know whither he goeth, both what is the path and its end. The other knows nothing of all this; sees only the world, and himself wronged by the world, calculates only for the present life, and counts only on human and earthly factors, and being in the dark he knows not the end from the beginning, nor sees whither his own way must ultimately take him. How can these contraries arrive at the same conclusions?

Every association which courts darkness, holds its meetings in secrecy, exacts oaths of silence, and shrouds its purposes and methods behind an impenetrable veil, obviously is not of the light. In New Testament times, the religious Mysteries were the chief examples of such societies; to-day Freemasonry is this; and to all such associations apply Christ's searching words, "Everyone that doeth ill hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reprov'd. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God" (John 3 : 19-21).

"What communion hath light with darkness?"

(c) There are really only two empires and two sovereigns; "the prince of the empire of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience," and "the kingdom of God." By nature and practice all mankind are subjects of the former empire; but the believer, having been "born from above," of God, has been "rescued out of the authority of darkness" and "translated into the kingdom of the Son of God's love" (Ephes. 2 : 2; Col. 1 : 13). The apostle writes, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the Evil One" (1 John 5 : 19). Between these two Sovereigns there is not and cannot be any harmony, but only absolute hostility. "The Word of God and the traditions of men are opposed to each other with an implacable discord, no other than that with which God Himself and Satan oppose each other; and the one undoes the works and

subverts the dogmas of the other like two kings laying waste each other's kingdom " (Luther, *Bondage of the Will*, 52, 53).

" What concord hath Christ with Belial ? "

(d) The believer, as the very term implies, is a man of faith, and faith reckons upon invisible factors which are as good as non-existent to the unbeliever. Shall mathematicians reach the like result whilst one includes in the calculations factors which the other omits ? To the believer, God is the great, the all-important reality, Whose word he consults, to Whose wishes he defers, upon Whose aid he counts ; to him " God is a refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble " (Psalm 46 : 1). To the unbeliever, God, for practical purposes, is not, or might as well not be, being unknown.

Hence, the believer when in distress—for example, when he cannot get what is justly due, or is otherwise wronged—remembers that evil men would have no power at all against him had not his all-wise and all-loving Father and God permitted it (John 19 : 11). This permission he knows is for his true good, as in the case of much tormented Job ; and hence he seeks to humble himself under the mighty hand of God, rather than to resist the rod which that hand wields for his welfare (1 Pet. 5 : 6 ; Isa. 10 : 5, 15 ; Micah 6 : 9). He is quite sure that no more affliction will be allowed than shall bless him ; he is aware that the Lord Himself is near by to help, and that none can thwart Him in His purposes for good ; he knows that prayer and supplication will assure to him, at the right hour, first, the strength to bear, and then the deliverance needed. Therefore he can show a quiet and prolonged forbearance, for he feels no necessity to strain and strive for his rights, since his eternal Father will secure the necessities of life to him who perseveringly seeks first His kingdom and His righteousness, as long as he and his dependants are to live.

The unbeliever cannot so look at trial and wrong, cannot count upon God, cannot afford to forbear and allow his rights to be denied, but must fight for what he means to get, and wrest it by force from other ungodly hands. It is the only possible way for him seeing that he must depend upon his own efforts. As Hitler put it ; " What goodness refuses, the fist must take " (*Mein Kampf*, 152).

The believer is aware of this also, that, though he have little just now, he has a better and enduring inheritance in heaven. Being but a pilgrim, he prefers to travel with but little luggage. His treasure he sends before him to his native country, to which he is journeying (Heb. 10 : 34 ; 1 Pet. 1 : 3, 4 ; Matt. 6 : 19-21 ; 1 Tim. 6 : 17-19).

To the unbeliever this is simply ridiculous ; he believes that " a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," and that " charity begins at home."

The believer learns Christ's secret of contentment, and knows the blessedness of the counsel, " Let your turn of mind be *free from the love of money ; content with such things as ye have* ; for Himself hath said, ' I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. So that with good courage we may say, The Lord is my Helper, I will not fear : What shall man do unto me ? ' " (Heb. 13 : 5, 6).

Under these contrary conditions

" what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever ? "

(e) Finally, the believer is a temple in which God personally dwells and works, his body being a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit Who is in him (1 Cor. 6 : 19). In God's temple God only is to be worshipped : the word is " sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord " (1 Pet. 3 : 15). The believer knows what it is

To bury self in Christ's dark tomb
And worship it no more ;
To make my heart His sacred throne,
And Him alone adore.

The unbeliever has objects that usurp the place of God. Self-pleasing is the fundamental principle of his life. He fights for his rights, or for those of his class, and this latter because its rights include his rights, and he fights oft-times with whole-hearted energy and with every available weapon ; for he wants and will have *something more*, which is covetousness, which is idolatry (Eph. 5 : 5 ; Col. 3 : 5). " He worships and serves the creature rather than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever." How shall they work together who serve contending gods ? for the living God tolerates nothing that contests His place and prerogatives : He never

compromises. Then

“ what agreement hath a temple of God with idols ? ”

Dr. A. T. Pierson stated that, as far as he knew the Greek language, all the words it affords for expressing the idea of co-operation are used in this passage—fellowship, communion, concord, portion, agreement. He said it seemed as if the Holy Spirit had ransacked that most copious language, and exhausted its resources, with the end of impressing upon the child of God that he must not unite with unbelievers.

A theologian was compiling a Harmony of the four Evangelists. His servant declared it to be a very useless business to try and make four men agree, who never fell out ! Much more hopeless is it to attempt to make two agree who have nothing in common, but in everything are contrary, from their essential nature and spirit and onward. The case of the believer and unbeliever is not mere incompatibility but sheer incongruity. The new man in Christ and the old man in the flesh are heterogeneous. It is not that they do not harmonize, they antagonize ; not that they do not see alike, but that the one sees and the other is blind ; not that they do not walk easily together, but that they go in opposite directions ; not that they cannot be yoked happily with one another, but that the one is alive and the other dead. How essentially reasonable is the injunction to the living, Be not unequally yoked with the dead ! Here arise two marvels ; first, that such counsel should be needed ; then, that it should be disregarded.

And when it is disregarded it is always to the disaster of the “ new man ” in the believer and the reviving of the “ old man.” When a young Christian woman, a domestic servant, requested Spurgeon to unite her in marriage to an unconverted man, she urged that she hoped to lead her lover to Christ. But the great preacher’s robust good sense answered her with the proposal that, the next time the young man came to see her, she should get on the kitchen table while he stood on the floor, and see whether she could lift him on to the table or he pull her down to the floor. When the “ ox ” and the “ ass ” are yoked together the world is found to be the stronger animal, and the believer the weaker, and the weaker is dragged after the stronger.

IV. COME OUT . . . BE SEPARATE.

If out of such a yoke, stay out ; if in such, come out.* Very imperative, very simple, however inconvenient at times. And it is the will of God. Nor is it a new principle of conduct. What concord was there between Cain and Abel? What fellowship between Enoch and Lamech? (Gen. 4 : 23, 24 ; 5 : 21, 24). Did Noah assist worldlings in concerns that he knew were not of God and were doomed to destruction? Did not the Lord say to Abram, "*Get thee out*"? and "by faith Abraham when he was called, obeyed to *go out*." Would he have reached the inheritance if he had *not* gone out? And is not he the father and pattern of every true believer? (Gen. 12 : 1 ; Heb. 11 : 8 ; Rom. 4 : 16, 17).

Was it Jehovah's purpose only to save Israel from the destroying angel, and then leave them to toil and die in building up the world system of Egypt? or did He not say to Moses, "I am come down to bring them up *out of* that land"? Would they, though redeemed from destruction, have reached the inheritance had they stayed in Egypt?

Christ said of His disciples that the world hated them because "they are not of the world even as I am not of the world" (John 17 : 14, 16). Will any credit be given to statements that Jesus of Nazareth was a member of a carpenters' and joiners' union? or Paul of a master tent makers' federation? or Peter of a fishmongers' protection association? or John the chairman of a co-operative society? Had these been thus yoked could Christ have said, "I am not of this world"? or Paul have commanded, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers"? or Peter have cried, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation"? or John have pleaded, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world"? (Acts 2 : 40 ; 1 John 2 : 15).

* The *only* God-sanctioned exception is the marriage yoke (1 Cor. 7 : 12, 13). A husband or wife on becoming a believer is at liberty to continue living with the unbeliever. The marriage bond is of divine forging and belongs originally to man's sinless state ; other yokes are of human construction and have followed man's forfeiture of his moral purity. But the unmarried believer may marry only in the Lord (1 Cor. 7 : 39).

"The world hated them," said Christ. The Philistine world hated Samson when, as a Nazarite separated unto God, he opposed and conquered them, and they despised and mocked him when as their miserable captive he ground their meal. Does the modern world hate the believer who joins its forces, economic, philanthropic, religious, or military? or does it not rather hate the one who quietly but firmly follows the steps of Him who was "separate from sinners"? But which of the two does it in its heart *despise*—the one who is true enough to follow and suffer for his Master, or he, who through cowardly fear, compromises with his Sovereign's enemies?

Must I be carried to the skies
 On flowery beds of ease,
 While others fought to win the prize
 And sailed through bloody seas?
 Are there no foes for me to face?
 Must I not stem the flood?
 Is this vile world a friend to grace
 To help me on to God?

Is this merely pious sentiment to be sung on Sunday? and all the week am I to be hand in glove with that same "vile world" in its corporate concerns, in which God and His Son have no real place, and are given at the best a recognition which is infrequent, tardy, and formal?

"Wherefore COME YE OUT"? and it is our wisdom as well as our duty to do the will of God immediately we know it. The only right and safe plan is this, "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies. *I made haste, and delayed not*, to observe Thy commandments" (Ps. 119 : 59, 60). The believer now linked with a trade union will find it ever harder to leave as the days advance. At the Trades' Congress at Glasgow in September, 1919, a resolution was carried which "directed the Parliamentary Committee to take all necessary steps to initiate such legislation as would render it illegal for non-unionists to work in any industry in which the majority of the workers were unionists," and which further said that "all affiliated unions should make a determined effort to force all such non-members into their

respective organizations ” (*Daily Telegraph*, 12th September, 1919).

This, if Labour ever is in a position to dictate legislation, will result that the Christian who desires to withdraw from a union will have the law against him, instead of with him, as now. The duty to come out and be separate will be not less imperative, but the cost of obedience will be vastly higher, with a consequently increased spiritual peril of faith failing, disobedience following, and solemn and permanent loss being incurred. Of the very few statements of Holy Scripture which the Spirit of God saw good to repeat this is one : “ The prudent man seeth the evil, and hideth himself ; But the simple pass on and suffer for it ” (Prov. 22 : 3 ; 27. 12).

The foregoing was written more than twenty years ago. To-day (1947) the situation is far advanced in the direction indicated. The Trade Union Congress is pressing hard for the total exclusion from employment of non-unionists, and strikes of workmen to enforce this have been frequent. These are ruthless, utterly reckless of the hardship inflicted upon the public, even to the depriving of hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children of so needful an article as milk. Such conduct is dictated by selfishness ; it is the exact opposite of the love of God, by which His children are directed and expected to rule their actions. If a Christian is yoked to such a combination he will be compelled to actions condemned by God as sinful, and condemned even by right-thinking men.

I write as one whose natural sympathies are with the workers, for in earlier years I felt the heavy hand of unscrupulous employers.

V. TOUCH NOT THE UNCLEAN.

“ All that is in the world . . . is not of the Father, but is of the world ” (1 John 2 : 16). The “ world ” is the aggregate of unbelievers viewed as a moral and corporate sphere of life. Of this moral circle Satan is the ruler ; it is his sphere of influence : “ the whole world lieth in the Evil One ”, and is co-ordinated and impelled by him ; he is its cohesive force and animating spirit (1 John 5 : 19 ; Eph. 2 : 2). Himself inflamed by ungodly desires for his own glory, he has infected the human race with this same depravity, and

so. "all that is in the world" is characterized as "lust," that is, heated desire which is self-centred. This is uncleanness before God, since He, the Holy One, being excluded, holiness is, therefore, wanting from the world and its desires. Flesh without life corrupts ; and man without God develops "the corruption which is in the world by lust" (2 Pet. 1 : 4). They that join this "world," by being yoked with unbelievers, cannot but touch that which is unclean.

Wealth gained on worldly principles is unclean. "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room, and ye be made to dwell alone in the midst of the land" (Isa. 5 : 8). We could name a man who, in his early business days, was known to declare that he would shut up every house of the same trade in his district. He nearly succeeded, left an immense establishment, and we fear earned God's "woe." This is the inevitable policy of all trusts and combines. These lines are being written in the house of some who were driven from their town by the cruel competition of a co-operative society.

A brother in Christ, a member of a trade union, was explaining the petty oppression to which the masters were subjecting the men. As he dilated on these wrongs (real wrongs, I believe) there rang in his tones the bitter, intense, resentful spirit which is native to the worldly heart but wholly foreign to Christ. His spirit was unclean, defiled by that wrath of man which worketh not the righteousness of God (Jas. 1 : 20). To him, just then, the employers were enemies, nor, alas, was he loving and forgiving them. Thus do we breathe in of the poisoned atmosphere of the world-spirit when yoked with the worldly, ourselves becoming inwardly embittered, dissatisfied, agitated, unholy, unChristlike, ungodly.

During the 1914-1918 war a builder's foreman, a Christian, had placed under him a youth who, for conscience toward God, had cheerfully gone to prison rather than join the world's military organizations. It followed naturally that the young man would not join the trade union, and at once the men in the yard threatened to down tools. The day of this crisis in the yard the foreman said to me, "I do not see why a Christian cannot be a member of a union. I have been so, and on this same job, for twenty-three years and

have never had any trouble." But that day ended his dream. He then had to take sides with the enemies of His Lord in the persecution of conscience by driving from employment his younger brother in Christ. Facing that issue he presently said, "I daresay, Sir, that you are right, and that all of us Christian men will presently have to take the stand that C. is taking." To that man I said, "Your unions are more tyrannical than the Government they are out to fight ; for Government will let a man have a conscience, and will put a conscience clause in even a military service Act, and this at such a time of national peril as the present, but the trade unions will not let a man have a conscience at any price."

The foregoing is by no means an isolated case. Frequently Christian men are guilty of consenting to such oppression of the brethren, for whom they ought to be ready to lay down their life (1 John 3 : 13-16). How solemn will be their position, how severe their reproach and chastisement, when Christ at His judgment seat renders to each man according to his doing (Matt. 16 : 27 ; 2 Cor. 5 : 10 ; Rev. 22 : 12). "With what measure ye meet it shall be measured to you again" (Matt. 7 : 2 ; Luke 6 : 38).

Even in this life the child of God pays a fearful price for his association with unbelievers and for this inevitable touching of things unclean.

1. Communion with God imperatively demands cleanness: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath (1) clean hands, and (2) a pure heart" (Ps. 24 : 3, 4). What wonder that he that handles unclean profits, whether gained by unconscionable trading, oppression of workpeople, or by the pitiless method of striking, loses the restful sense of God's presence and care. As a result he becomes prayerless—is thus thrown upon his own poor resources, and is driven more and more to worldly methods—thereby becomes hard, anxious, worldly in spirit—and easily ends in open back-sliding. No marvel is it that general prayerlessness prevails in districts where yoking with the ungodly is general, as we have witnessed.

2. That which is pure is defiled by the touch of that which is unclean. "If one that is unclean by a dead body (the unbeliever is spiritually dead Godward) touch bread, or

pottage, or wine, or oil, or any food, shall be it unclean? and the priests answered and said it shall be unclean" (Hag. 2 : 12, 13 ; Eph. 2 : 1, 3). Thus things innocent and good become defiled by contact with the unholy. Pitch blackens all it touches. Home life and church life are morally vitiated in the measure that unclean hands bring in unclean funds, as money gained by oppression, unfair trading, or from strike funds. How can the blessing of God attend? Why wonder should the home become worldly, the children remain unconverted, or the church settle into deadness.

3. Surely Mammon is the great god of to-day. Covetousness is simply the desire for something more, whether little or much, and coveteousness is idolatry (Eph. 5 : 5 ; Col. 3 : 5). Hence all who set themselves deliberately to get more are idolaters. Now gold and silver which had been associated with idolatry was specially banned by God, and His people were specially warned not to covet or to take it : "The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire ; thou shalt not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein ; for it is an abomination unto the Lord thy God" : and then follows the statement of penalty for transgression : "thou shalt not bring an abomination into thine house, and become a devoted thing like unto it : thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it ; for it is a devoted thing," that is devoted to destruction because accursed (Deut. 7 : 25, 26). And so Joshua thus warned Israel "Ye in anywise keep yourselves from the devoted thing, lest when ye have devoted it, ye take of the devoted thing ; so should ye make the camp of Israel accursed (devoted) and trouble it" (Josh. 6 : 18). The principle is perfectly clear that they who receive the accursed thing become accursed, and liable to share its temporal destruction. Achan transgressed, and paid the full penalty ; and so did Ananias and Sapphira, the latter in this dispensation of the church and of grace.

It is often urged by the worldly that as the Christian benefits by the action of sundry of their organizations therefore he ought to support the same. But in view of what has been before advanced it is evident that any small temporal advantage is more than negatived by these heavy spiritual losses and penalties, and thus the world but invites the believer to

act to his own loss. We may not even touch the unclean thing, let alone receive and use it. And in reply to the argument in question it is sufficient to answer, that the Christian knows well that should his standing aloof hinder the acquiring of the augmented profits, advanced wages, or easier conditions, then he as others must forego those benefits ; whereas if it be said that he gets these in spite of standing aside, then it is obvious that his doing so does not harm the rest. But in any case the servants of God must obey Him, not men.

Moreover, the believer should remember that he is not the owner of anything that he holds, but only the steward thereof. Let him therefore consider that no purpose of the Owner of his money is served by paying it into a worldly corporation, and that he will be duly called to account for such misuse of trust funds. Are there not Christians who would promptly refuse to give a donation to the most God-blessed work outside their own religious circle who regularly subscribe to the world's funds ? Are there not those who pay more to unions or federations, or to literary, scientific and other societies, than ever they give to the work of God ? If but one hundred thousand Christians pay into unions only one shilling per week, then in ten years they hand over to the enemies of God and His Son, that is to unbelievers, no less than £2,600,000, all of which trust funds are wholly lost, from the Owner's point of view. " It is *required* in stewards that a man be found faithful " (1 Cor. 4 : 2). Is such conduct consistent with fidelity ? Will it be so accounted at the judgment seat of Christ ? If one who merely buried His Lord's money was termed a " wicked and slothful servant," what will be said to him who wasted it ? and what to him who actually passed it into the hands of his Sovereign's enemies ? (Matt. 25 : 26 ; Luke 19 : 22).

VI. GUARANTEES AND COMPENSATIONS.

It is important to remember that deep poverty and acute distress were the general and chronic conditions of the world in New Testament times (see, for example, Acts 11 : 27-30). " The poor ye have always with you " had peculiarly painful force.

The frightfully oppressive conditions to which the masses, and Christians in particular, were in that age subjected are

described vividly by James : " Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment seats ? Do they not blaspheme the honourable Name by which ye are called ? . . . Go to now ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you . . . Behold the hire of the labourers, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out . . . Ye have lived delicately upon the earth, and taken your pleasure ; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter " (Jas. 2 : 6, 7 ; 5 : 1, 4). Here are mentioned enrichment by fraud, callous luxury, vindictive legal proceedings, and bitter religious antagonism.

It was to disciples so circumstanced that the Lord sent this exhortation, " Let your turn of mind be free from the love of money, content with such things as ye have " (Heb. 13 : 5). This holy contentment is simply not possible to the unconverted, but it may be, and should be, a distinguishing quality of the child of God. He should be a living example of Solomon's proverb, " He that is of a cheerful heart hath a continual feast " (Prov. 15 : 15). But of every worldly organization of the order now in question it is obviously true that the determination *to get more* is the central, impelling energy. Discontentment, not contentment, is *their* distinguishing quality. The dissatisfaction of the godless heart is the root and reason of all these unions. " Whence come wars (national, economic, or otherwise), and whence come fightings among you ? Come they not hence, even of your pleasures that war in your members ? " (Jas. 4 : 1).

It is of the first importance to our subject to know that the world amidst which the early Christians lived was honey-combed with organizations, of which the principal were the religious societies (the " Mysteries ") and the trade guilds. An instance of the latter, and an example of the money-loving spirit that mastered them, and made them, as now, turbulent and arbitrary, is found in the silver-smith class mentioned in Acts 19 : 23 and the following verses. The learned Dr. Hatch has shown how pronounced a feature this was of those days. He says (*The Organization of the Early Christian Churches*, Lecture II) : " Among the many parallels which can be drawn between the first centuries of the Christian era and our own times, there is probably none more striking than that of their common tendency towards

the formation of associations. There were then, as now, associations for almost innumerable purposes in almost all parts of the Empire. There were trade guilds and dramatic guilds ; there were athletic clubs, and burial clubs, and dining clubs ; there were friendly societies, and literary societies, and financial societies ; if we omit those special products of our own time, natural science and social science, there was scarcely an object for which men now combine for which they did not combine then." In a note he proceeds: "Associations occupy a much larger place in epigraphical monuments than in literary history ; of the kinds mentioned above, trade guilds are found among almost every kind of workman and in almost every town of the Empire of which inscriptions remain ; *e.g.* among the craftsmen of Geneva, among the wool-carders of Ephesus, among the litter-bearers of a remote colony in Wallachia, and among the shoemakers of a market town in Spain." Then, after giving authorities concerning dramatic guilds, athletic clubs, burial clubs, friendly societies and financial societies, Dr. Hatch adds : "the extent of the tendency is shown by the fact that sometimes the slaves on an estate, or even in a household, formed an association " ; and he further shows that these associations soon developed a political tendency which caused them to be disliked by the State, and also that almost all such societies had a religious element. This is noticeable in the light of now recent attempts to coerce the community, that is the State, by such methods as the lightning strike, and the paralyzing of key industries ; and also in the light of the attempts at the union of organized labour and religion which are exhibited, for example, in the coining of such a term as Christian Socialism, and the inviting of advanced Labour leaders to speak as such on religious platforms.

Thus the conditions which believers face to-day are by no means modern, but just such as the Lord knew His people faced when He called them to a life of separation from the world. Therefore there can be no question that the injunction "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers," but "come ye out from among them," requires Christians to sever their connection with all such organizations, religious, trade, or otherwise. That a disciple of Christ should consort with both Paul the apostle and Demetrius the silversmith was

simply not possible.

The consequences of such separation are necessarily very trying. The believer forfeits friendships and co-operation such as advance worldly interests, and incurs misunderstanding and direct opposition. He may be deliberately crowded out of his business by a powerful combination of dealers, or be driven from employment by a trade union, or be covertly harrassed by a secret society with which he was connected. And this persecution may often be persistent and malignant, since his stand being for Christ and in obedience to the Word of God, and so against anything godless or evil, is a rebuke to the ungodly, and this provokes that deep moral resentment which is ever the spring of the bitterest of hatred.

Hence he may have to meet poverty, in which his family will be involved ; uncertainty as to to-day's bread and as to the morrow ; with the breaking up of home and removing hither and thither, and other such trials.

What is to support the heart of the believer under such testings ? How are his urgent needs to be met ? The entirely sufficient answer is to be found in these promises of " the Lord God the Almighty " : " come ye out . . . be ye separate . . . and *I* will receive you, and will be a FATHER to you."

A miner, known to me, when being driven from employment by the local federation, for separating therefrom upon his conversion to God, was warned by the colliery manager that he would be left to the mercy of the world. " By no means," was his reply ; " I shall be left to the mercy of my heavenly Father." Now were a rich man definitely to guarantee to look after his poorer relatives, the latter would doubtless feel free from care. Much more would the children of a wealthy and loving father rest easily and happily in his promises. Yet, alas, how many children of God grieve their heavenly Father by being afraid to do His will from not trusting to His love and faithfulness to see them through. We have heard of a certain old lady whose small reserve in the savings bank was at length exhausted, whereupon she woefully exclaimed, " Now I have no one to trust to but the Almighty." A dreadful plight to be sure ! And is it not the case that a large part of our planning and effort is directed

to keeping our affairs in our own hands, lest perchance our God and Father should put us into difficulties? Is the Christian reader holding on to his worldly organization, economic, religious, or otherwise, from an honest, considered conviction that it is pleasing to God for him to be yoked with unbelievers, or is he doing this simply out of fear of the consequences of coming out and being separate?

Men trade daily and in immense sums by means of bank-notes, which are of no more intrinsic value than the paper and ink of which they are made; and they do this in faith that those who issued the notes will duly honour them. Men travel far and long carrying only credit notes from financial institutions. They easily face the contingencies of absence and travel because of faith in their fellow-men. And are the plain, written, and exceeding precious promises of the Lord God the Almighty not trustworthy? O ye of little faith! Is the Lord's arm shortened that it cannot save? Have the silver and the gold ceased to belong to Him who created them? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Can He no more spread a table in the wilderness? Is it no longer true that blessed is the man that trusteth in Him?

Give to the winds thy fears!
Hope, and be undismayed.
God hears thy sighs, and counts thy tears;
God shall lift up thine head.

He everywhere hath sway,
And all things serve His might;
His every act pure blessing is,
His path unsullied light.

Leave to His sovereign will
To choose and to command;
With wonder filled thou then shalt own
How wise, how strong His hand.

"He everywhere hath sway," and He is pledged to "make all grace to abound" to His people, so that His children "may abound unto every good work" (2 Cor. 9: 8). It is the high privilege of His family to care for the earthly affairs of one another, and especially of such as are at any time

impoverished for righteousness' sake, and it is a deep disgrace to the family when any of its members are in want, or are dependent upon the charities of the world. Yet to the individual when suffering there is ever this assurance, that should God's people prove faithless, He abideth faithful ; or that should they not know of the need, He, our Father, knoweth what things we need, and this even before we ask Him (Matt. 6 : 8).

I write sympathetically, having been through the mill. I know just where this shoe pinches, having worn it. In early manhood a point of conscience involved the surrender of business position and all prospects. Many weeks were spent in careful consideration, in prayer, in searching the Word of God to make sure of His will. But the situation offered no alternative, save that of searing one's conscience. God says, " Whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him " (Col. 3 : 17). It was a question of arranging the fire insurances of licensed premises, and I dared not go to, say, a low public house in a slum, where men and women were daily helped in their mad race to perdition, and say to the barman, " In the Name of the Lord Jesus I am come to arrange to rebuild this place, if it should be burned down, so that this business may go on." I could in no wise give thanks to my holy Father for the privilege of assisting that terrible trade. So one day I left the office with a month's salary in my hand and the promises of God in my heart.

There were three positive results which shall be mentioned. First, the signature to my letter of resignation was scarce written when there flooded and filled my heart that truly " perfect peace " which God guarantees to the one whose mind is stayed on Himself (Isa. 26 : 3). It swept before it every trace of anxiety. I had not the slightest sense of care. It is God's own peace that thus garrisons the heart that in reality puts all life's affairs at His disposal (Phil. 4 : 5-7). God knows nothing of anxious care, and He relieves of all worry him who believes. And, why not ? If God can really have His own way, unobstructed by reluctance and secret reserve in us, then, because His way is perfect, He will, He must, make our way perfect (Ps. 18 : 30, 32). What can the wise want beyond, or in place of, perfection ? And this

sense of satisfaction, this "rest in the Lord," He has preserved and deepened all through the succeeding forty-seven years.

But, in the second place, there was trial. It is indispensable that faith be tested, for only so is its quality revealed, tempered, and perfected. Muscles must be exercised if they are not to weaken. I was permitted to part with my last penny before God intervened, and then He did so in such a way as to show that He had been watching, and moving beforehand. His help was on the way before the extremity was reached, though none save He knew how I was circumstanced. And all these years it has continued thus : no reserves, no visible resources : "having nothing, yet possessing all things," and especially that wondrous quietness of spirit, that freedom from anxious thought, which leaves the heart at leisure to devote all its powers to whatever good works have been "afore prepared of God that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2 : 10).

In proportion that Abraham advanced into old age the trial of his faith increased, for it became increasingly unlikely, and at last impossible, that he should beget a son. And yet all that time his faith grew stronger, for he kept on looking unto the promises of God ; so that when at length his circumstances had reached the stage of impossibility his faith had reached full assurance that God would prove faithful (Rom. 4 : 19-21).

That nature should shrink from poverty and persecution and uncertainty is inevitable ; but faith walks with regard to the spirit, and disregards the cravings of the carnal mind, and it soon learns by experience to say with an ancient saint, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes . . . Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I observe Thy word" (Ps. 119 : 71, 67). It has been remarked that had Job been protected by insurance policies we might have read of him saying, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, but blessed be the Insurance Company." Certainly the natural man says, Blessed is he that escapeth trial, and he concentrates his care to this end : but the history and testimony of all spiritual men is "Blessed is the man that endureth trial" (Jas. 1 : 12).

In the third place there was granted to me a new and

strengthening sense of the nearness of God. The statement "The Lord is at hand," was known as fact. God became a "very *present* help in trouble" : the promise "Come out . . . and touch no unclean thing, and *I will receive you*" was fulfilled. It is ever thus. Here is the short but wondrous story in two acts : They cast him out . . . and Jesus found him (John 9 : 34, 35), and finding him, gave to one who had been blind a deep acquaintance with Himself. Thanks be unto God that the Scripture saith not "Let us go forth outside the camp bearing His reproach," but "Let us go forth UNTO HIM outside the camp" ; and there in His own company it is not hard to bear His reproach.

But it is the inexorable law of the situation that each that would enjoy His fellowship must "go forth" to where He is, "outside," whither this world, its leaders and its mob, banished Him. All classes—the king, the governor, the lawyers, the soldiers, the politicians, the priests, the religious, the rabble, conspired to drive Him from the temple and the city ; since when He has neither had nor sought a place in the world's bustling affairs, religious or civil, of which the temple and the city are the respective centres.

In the temple there are grandeur, ritual, and pomp, but no power to quicken the dead soul, to heal the sick at heart, to soothe the sons of sorrow. In the city there are luxury and poverty, vanity and misery, dwelling side by side in palaces and hovels. It is a stage on which real tragedies are ceaselessly worked out to heart-breaking crises ; the gloating beholders of this hour being the miserable players of the next ; and each, when his little turn is done, passing from the glaring footlights into blackness of darkness for ever. Some of the actors are "clothed in purple and fine linen and fare sumptuously every day," and these make a fair show in the flesh, are envied of their purblind neighbours, and then—awake from the dream in Hades, the place of torment. Some go wearily through their part, finding it a grievous task from which there seems no escape but in death. Others fill their turn with desperate toil to add a trifle to their possessions, and so to their burdens ; and lo, as they stagger wearily to the wings and vanish, they suddenly drop all and depart as empty as they came. This is plainly a striving after wind. Yet others intensify the tragedy by seeking to make it comedy ;

whilst the deepest sadness of all is that a few honest, well-meaning souls labour enthusiastically but fruitlessly to purify the drama and the theatre, to turn the city of Christless men into the city of God.

This is the "city," the world of unbelievers in the Son of God. He is the Righteous One, who makes righteous those who know Him ; the Prince of Peace, who gives rest of soul to such as accept His yoke ; the living One, who gives to the thirsty the Water of Life, and Who, as they drink changes it into the wine of heavenly joy. It is He alone who enriches with righteousness, life, peace, and joy ; and just because He has no place in the "city" neither are these glad conditions known there.

Then let us cheerfully leave the "city" and "go forth unto Him." And with what shall we find they are occupied who so go forth? Are they burdened and groaning, as in the days when they lived in that vain show? Nay, but "through Him they offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually" (Heb. 13 : 15) and find their happiness in giving rather than in getting (ver. 16). Though by outward trials put to grief, yet know they divine comfort, for their Lord gives them a garland of gladness instead of the ashes of dejection, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise to replace the spirit of heaviness. For them, because of Him, the wilderness and the parched land are glad, and the desert blossoms abundantly and rejoices with joy and singing.

These experiences, multitudes of Christians are missing. They enjoy not the love of their Father, but rather feel like the orphan, unsheltered, unprotected, left at the mercy of the world, living by their wits. They know not the nearness of the Lord, and so must strain and strive in their own interests, must ever seize the main chance, must rush at the world's feverish pace, lest they be left behind in life's race and struggle. They cannot afford to let their forbearance be known, to suffer wrong patiently, to be merciful, lest they be driven to the wall. And sorely do they prove in every department of life that when the devil drives the pace is killing. A withered spirit, an anxious heart, poor sleep, fretful nerves, impoverished general health, inducing premature old age, and often enough entire collapse, are not infrequent natural results ; or when these are avoided by

reason of non-excitable temperament, then is there often seen a death-like contentment with worldly company, worldly ways, and the affairs of the "city."

It is forgotten that the "city" is not abiding, that "the world passeth away," that it is but a colossal bankrupt concern nearing the ruinous smash, and that every investor therein must ultimately lose his whole stake. One who had reached exalted honour in this world was turned to the Lord at eighty years of age, in which experience he was literally one in a thousand. Being felicitated upon the salvation of his soul he truly but sadly replied, "Yes, my soul is saved but my life is lost." How pathetic, yet inevitable. Not one hour of that long life could he recall, nought of its golden possibilities could he recover, to invest them in that kingdom which alone is eternal ; all was lost, and for ever. And thus the child of God also who spends time, money, strength in fellowship with the world is sinking these precious endowments in a bog from which nothing is ever recovered. They who train their children for this evil age risk losing them eternally, whilst they who dedicate them to God, and train them for the Lord, will have them as a crown of joy in the everlasting kingdom.

View the matter which way we will Wisdom sounds out the same insistent call, "Let us go forth unto Him." Our Father's mandate is given in our own interests, and evermore it is true that in the keeping of His commands there is great reward. Let the following instance confirm this statement. In 1918 a Christian man was refused exemption from military service. Seeing clearly that it was evil before God for a disciple of Christ to be "yoked with unbelievers" he could not accept the situation, and therefore was left the alternative of imprisonment. When I called upon him he was daily expecting arrest, facing police court, court martial, and prison. There was a business to be forfeited, a wife to be left, and, dearest of all, a happy village testimony to Christ to be imperilled. As we were parting, this man of God said : "I should like to assure you that I have not the slightest concern as to what they are going to do with me ; it does not worry me in the least ; for all it troubles me it might not be my affair at all. And it is just the same with my wife. I am known all round the countryside : and through this

affair I have the best opportunities of my life for witnessing to Christ, and that is all I care about."

My own experience of nineteen years before enabled me easily to believe him ; and as I recall his quiet, resolute, happy face I remember the statement of the Holy Spirit concerning the early disciples, when fierce persecution broke up home and business, and scattered them far afield. The record says nothing whatever as to how their temporal emergencies were met, still less is there any hint that as they fled they bemoaned their hard lot ; we are told simply that "they went everywhere *preaching the word*." He whose heart is set on doing this will not be frustrated in the main purpose of life ; at least, not until days return when men cut out the tongues of Christ's witnesses. Such can look calmly upon interruptions in other affairs, for these are but incidental ; whereas they still succeed in their supreme business, their witness to their Lord.

Small is the highest price that must be paid for this sweet serenity. But again we insist that it is only known in the very company of the Despised and Rejected One. "Let us therefore go forth UNTO HIM," for taking up His yoke we shall find rest unto our souls.

VII. EXHORTATION.

"Having therefore these promises" what shall we do? Shall we obey our Father and secure the fulfilment of His "precious and exceeding great promises," and by means of them become "partakers of divine nature"? or shall we shrink, hesitate, disobey, and forfeit our inheritance through unbelief? Shall we separate from His enemies? or shall we consort with them, lest they injure us?

Our decision should be deeply influenced by the fact that we are "beloved" by God. Shall we grieve and thwart that love by our disobedience? or shall we not rather gratify and return our Father's affection by trustfully doing His will? "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things"? (Rom. 8 : 32). If we will "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, all these things (food, clothing, and the like) *shall* be added" (Matt. 6 : 33). The Son has

pledged the Father ; the Father will in no wise dishonour the Son.

So then, instead of suffering our heart to be overcharged with these concerns, as is the heart of the unbeliever, our wisdom is to cast our anxiety upon God, for He careth for us (1 Pet. 5 : 7), and to address ourselves with full diligence to the task of "cleansing ourselves from all defilement." To be clean is the first concern of the child of God ; not to be wealthy or great, or influential or comfortably circumstanced, but to be clean. And this cleansing is to be thorough, "from *all* defilement." And God's standards of cleanness and of defilement are those to be adopted, not those of unregenerate men : "ye shall be holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1 : 16). and the purging out is to be of all defilement, of both "flesh and spirit," that is, of the outward life and the state of the heart. "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and railing be put away from you, with all malice ; and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4 : 31, 32).

God places the very highest value upon purity of heart. "God is spirit" and the quality of our spirit determines the measure of our fellowship with Him. To the degree by which we are mastered by things of sense, we are incapable of fellowship with Him. He is eternal : if to us the things of time are of first importance, we shall not appreciate God, His estimates, or ways. "God is light" : any measure of crookedness, duplicity, or insincerity in our heart necessarily beclouds our knowledge of God. "God is love" ; hence all selfishness, bitterness or other unloving emotions, are wholly uncongenial to His spirit, and mar our harmony with Him. He is "the God of Peace" : therefore enmity and strife in us render impossible concord between Him and our heart.

Excellent is Tauler's definition, "A pure heart is one to which all that is not of God is strange and jarring" ; and rich is the recompense for such cleansing as this implies, since "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5 : 8). Therefore let us "follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification (that is, heart purity) without which no one shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12 : 14). In this passage, the title "the Lord" can scarcely refer to Christ,

since "every eye shall see Him" at some time or another, for before Him as Judge all must stand (Rev. 1 : 7 ; Phil. 2 : 10, 11 ; Rev. 20 : 11, 12). The reference is rather to that supernal vision of God the Father mentioned, for example, in Jude 24, 25, where we read, "Now unto Him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore." The "God our Saviour" of this doxology is clearly the Father, since praise is rendered to Him "through Jesus Christ our Lord." The Father, by reason of the glory in which He dwells, is unapproachable by man (1 Tim. 6 : 15, 16) ; the human constitution could not endure the blaze of that uncreated light. Mortal sight cannot endure exposure to the direct rays of the sun, and our whole humanity would wither and perish in the presence of the glory of God. Yet the prospect of being so changed as to the body as to become capable of looking upon that glory, before which the very seraphim veil their faces, is held out to the godly. It is the highest conceivable possibility for a created being that he should reach that position, and stand with exceeding joy in that Presence. But purity of heart is laid down as an essential qualification for attaining to this supreme consummation ; and God is able and longing to cleanse our hearts by faith (Acts 15 : 9 ; Eph. 3 : 16, 17 ; Rom. 5 : 5).

Now, as has been before noticed, alliance with unbelievers impregnates the child of God with states of heart which are native to the ungodly but foreign to God, nor can we possibly cleanse our heart therefrom without first severing from the world. The needle will continue magnetized as long as it is attached to the magnet ; and evil company will ever corrupt good manners.

The moral man of the world is content with external propriety ; he pretends not to internal sanctity, but rather deems this to be unattainable. He knows not the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor the purifying power of His Holy Spirit indwelling the body. The Christian must not sink to this level.

The path along which we make progress in heart purity is

this : "pursue peace with all men." He who fosters a spirit of strife is destroying purity of heart. His motives are not single, pure, unmixed. He means to get somewhat (perhaps his "rights"), which his neighbour will not yield ; so that self-interest, not love, is the prompting impulse. Himself, not God, not even his neighbour, is the object of devotion. This condition is universal to the ungodly, and unavoidable by them : it is their nature. Hence, of simple consequence, he who means to be pure in heart must follow after the things which make for peace, no matter at what earthly cost to himself, or what of his "rights" he must thus forego ; and therefore such an one cannot co-operate with the unbeliever, because he is seeking a different object, and to reach it must needs pursue a different path.

The present bliss of a purified heart is exquisite, only to be faintly represented by the relief enjoyed when a thorn is removed from the flesh or grit from the eye. Such a heart "sees God" with an ever-increasing spiritual discernment, and such an one will see Him in eternity with unhindered gaze and in exceeding joy.

Thus it is our duty and wisdom to obey the plainly expressed call and command of our God and Father that we "be not unequally yoked with unbelievers" ; and this, first, for our own present happiness ; then, that we may avoid the temporal judgments to fall with increasing severity upon this godless age ; and finally, that we may reach the fullest possible heavenly glory and everlasting honour.

"Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (lives, that is, from being wasted and unrewarded).

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. For if any one is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror ; for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing" (Jas. 1 : 21-25).

Eternal Light ! Eternal Light !
How pure the soul must be,
When placed within Thy searching sight,
It shrinks not, but with calm delight,
Can live, and look on Thee.

The spirits that surround Thy throne
May bear the burning bliss ;
But that is surely theirs alone,
Since they have never, never known
A fallen world like this.

Oh, how shall I, whose native sphere
Is dark, whose mind is dim,
Before the Ineffable appear,
And on my naked spirit bear
The uncreated beam ?

There is a way for man to rise
To that sublime abode ;
An offering and a sacrifice,
A holy Spirit's energies,
An Advocate with God.

These, these prepare us for the sight,
Of Majesty above ;
The sons of ignorance and night
May dwell in the eternal Light
Through the Eternal Love.

(T. Binney).

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