

A WORD

TO EVERY TRULY RELIGIOUS PERSON

IN ENGLAND AND IRELAND.

THERE is a conviction in the minds of many religious persons in England, Ireland, France, Switzerland, Germany, &c., that the state and character of modern religion is not what it should be. They believe that it is not what the Holy Ghost in the Acts and Epistles requires; that it is not a faithful representation of discipleship to Jesus; that, consequently, it does not satisfy God the Father, and ought not to satisfy us; for that it is wanting not only in power, but in genuine simplicity, and in moral character.

Of that which first produced this conviction, or of the circumstances which have tended either to strengthen or to weaken it, I shall not now speak. That such a feeling does exist in the minds of many, and is extensively spreading itself, are **FACTS** which cannot be disputed. The minds of numbers of religious persons are thus exercised. I concede that it may exist in various degrees, and under various circumstances tending to affect its operations, yet of its existence I say there can be no doubt. Some may be only just beginning to *fear* that all is not right, and others may only indistinctly, from time to time, surmise the same,—still the conviction is creeping onward into many a godly mind.

Again, though the conduct of those who are fully persuaded of these things may vary, I have the conduct of numbers before me to assure me such conviction is felt, deeply felt, widely felt, growingly felt. Many feel it, and seek relief in a more strict attention to the forms of religion; others feel it, and redouble their activity in outward service, doing more diligently than ever that which is generally recognised, or which

they have assumed to be for the glory of God, and the good of their fellow-men. So also the same conviction leads some, who more distinctly recognise *what* it is which gives the aching void within, to seek definitely to reform themselves and their circumstances; and of these, some seek this cure from within,—searching amid their own thoughts and impressions, for light to guide them, and some turn, where alone Truth and instruction can be found, to the Scriptures.

As to the simple *facts* of the case, I would appeal to every thoughtful observant mind, whether it is not so. Are there not numbers of religious persons of sensible and sober minds, of calm and sound judgment, and of wary and watchful spirit, who are dissatisfied with modern religion, who feel that it wants that simplicity and that purity which alone can make it worthy of Jesus Christ, or sufficient for themselves?

But more than this, I feel bold to say, that there are *numbers* of saints throughout England, Ireland, France, and Scotland, &c., who with the Bible before them, are attentively studying the Acts and Epistles, and endeavouring, through God's grace, to bring the principles therein laid down by the Spirit, for the formation and guidance of the church of God, to bear upon themselves. When fully persuaded that any thing in their own lives is contrary to the word of God, they sacrifice to that word at all costs; and, as ready to suffer for the word's sake, so also they take up and do whatever is opened to them in that word, as being according to the mind of the Spirit. I cannot describe more appositely that which I refer to, than by quoting, as descriptive of it, the words, "Lo! I come, to do thy will, O my God."

The individuals I refer to, know God the Father as in Christ, by the Spirit, *their** God, and *their*

* I am not speaking of the anxiety felt by the world seeking after God, but of God's own dear, elect, intelligent people. The religious in England may be divided into three classes:—

1st, Those who are doubting about acceptance, searching here, and there, and everywhere.

Father ;—they are searching into His will as written *in the Bible* ; and are ready nerved to run in the way of that will, so opened to them. For a long time this has been working in secret, in separate individuals—unknown to one another, though perhaps living in the same village, street, or town. A change now *is taking place*, and I desire all to be aware of it. With these individuals, conduct and action, *as the results* of new principles (i. e. their life and glory in Christ), are every thing. Their conduct is making them daily more and more known to one another ; and a new bond of union is developing itself. Let every intelligent mind mark this : *a new bond of union is developing itself.*

For convenience, I shall call it *the bond of life*. An interest is created among such of a peculiar nature. It does not emanate from unity of sentiment (for each seems at a different point of the race-course of knowledge), but from unity of *pursuit*, and *motive*, and *object*, as evidenced in their lives, purifying themselves, by the grace they have known, from all evil, and perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. With unity of life in the Spirit, and unity of glory in Christ, they have one object common to them—one pursuit—and one set of motives. I can call it nothing but “**THE UNITY OF HEALTHFUL LIFE.**”

A sort of free-masonry exists among such, which is very remarkable—because entirely independent of the circumstances which ordinarily unite minds and hearts together, and of the accidents of agreement in knowledge, in doctrine, &c. Opinion seems banished, with its mighty power of prejudice to divide, and superstition to unite. Truth leading to action has usurped its place. And again, Conduct (the mirror in which our second selves are seen and loved

2dly, Those who are using the fulness of Christ, as ministering to self only.

3dly, Those who, knowing the unbounded grace of God, are at work upon it in earnest, counting all their privileges to have been given as much for Christ's glory in them *now*, as for their own glory with Him *hereafter*.

with all our peculiarities) is nought. Truth issuing in action—the life, the very life itself, leads the affection. I lately saw a letter from one of these, in which he spoke of knowing of several hundreds such (if I mistake not, 900), now gathering together in various places in England and Ireland. Yet he could not say, as to their sentiments on some questions of practical conduct, what they were. In the sight of man, all of them gave evidence of knowing and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. This was the measure of their *perfect* unity in (I will not say *opinion*) but knowledge of substantive truth. ALL gave evidence of this. Thus far, there was *perfect* unity of knowledge, and thus far only. The shades of ignorance and knowledge were various.

And as to *conduct*, ALL seemed, as far as man could see, each according to his analogy of faith, to be endeavouring to be purged, through the Spirit, by the truth as it is in Jesus. Thus far, there was *perfect* unity in conduct also, and thus far only.

The state of these little gatherings is represented as being very various. In some, there is but one person whose voice is ordinarily heard in public ministration—in others, there are two, or three, or six, or ten—in some, there is no preaching at all—and yet they are kept together, and grow in strength, and power, and numbers.

I desire those who are sincere and simple before God to mark this—to note the fact—to watch its progress, and to observe the immense power which such a principle, honestly acted upon and carried out to its full length, is calculated to produce upon every upright mind, and—to give themselves wholly to it.

How long this will continue, and, in what this will issue, are questions which I must at present leave.

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