

Christian Visitor.

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"BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE—BY LOVE UNFEIGNED."—ST. PAUL.

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THE LARK AND THE CHRISTIAN.

How sweet is the song of the Lark when she springs To welcome the morning with joy on her wings!

The higher she rises the louder she sings,

And she sings when we hear her no more;

When storms and dark clouds veil the sun from our sight,

She has mounted above them, she shines in the light;

Thus, far from the scenes that disturb and affright,

She loves her gay music to pour.

'Tis thus with the Christian; his willing soul flies

To welcome the day-spring that streams from the skies;

He is drawn by its glorious effulgence to rise

To the region from whence it is given:

He sings on his way from this cloud-covered spot;

The quicker his progress the sweeter his note;

When we hear him no longer, the song ceases not;

It blends with the chorus of Heaven.

LYRIC GEMS.

"The People that are with thee are too many."

Strange language to a man in such a forlorn case! With great effort Gideon had raised an army of 32,000 impoverished, dispirited Israelites. With these he went out to meet the swarms of Midianites, who literally covered the country; "for both they and their camels were without number, as the sand of the sea-side for multitude." In the sight of such a host, and in their own sight, they were as grasshoppers. Then "the Lord said to Gideon, the people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, mine own hand

saved me." And when that little band was reduced to 300, "the Lord said unto Gideon, by these three hundred will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand." Then followed that glorious victory, in which "there fell of the enemy, one hundred and twenty thousand that drew sword."

The Church of Christ may be compared to Gideon's army. It is but a feeble band. The enemies of God literally cover the earth. Against the overwhelming current of opposition from the world, the followers of Christ can scarcely make any headway. And yet they must go forth. They must lift up a standard against prevailing iniquity. To delay is dreadful. Their kindred, neighbors, fellow citizens, fellow-countrymen, fellow mortals, must be rescued from destruction soon, or never. Every wave is sweeping scores into the gulf. The ravages of sin are too sudden, too frightful to admit a moment's delay. Faint and dispirited, because of the unequal contest, this little band prepares for the contest. They muster their strength, choose the most experienced leaders—"mighty men of renown"—and marshal their forces for a vigorous onset. And presently, while they are waiting for the word of command from the captain of their salvation, they hear a voice saying to them, "The people are too many for me to give the victory into their hands, lest they say, mine own hand hath saved me." And it is not until the people are reduced, brought low, and feel their own weakness—not until they can join with heart and soul in the chorus—

"Battle is the Lord's alone."

that God gives them the victory.

The churches of Jesus Christ in this land, are on the eve of a great effort for the salvation of souls. It has been proposed to commence the year 1848 with unusual exertions to bring the whole population of our land under the sound of a preached Gospel. The work is great, but it can be done! Let the watchword be, "The sword of the Lord and of his Christ," and at the sound, the powers of darkness will flee, and multitudes will be saved.

But in many cases it is to be feared, that this result will not be secured, because there are too many people in the church. Too many converts to Christ there cannot be, and there may be too many people.

Every unconverted professor is one too many. It is not surprising that there should be here and there an Amalekite in the camp of Israel. The greatest vigilance cannot keep them out. Some tares will found with the wheat. One enters the church for selfish ends—to make a fair show—to promote his worldly business—to obtain distinction and influence. All such are spies in the camp—"busy-bodies in other men's matters"—sowing contention, disaffection and strife. Hollow-hearted in their professions, they are ready, as soon as the tide turns, to become traitors, and join the ranks of the enemy. The more of these that are separated from the church by the proper exercise of discipline the better. Another enters the church through ignorance of the nature of regeneration, or of the duties and trials of Christians, or of his own heart. None of these—and their number, it is feared, is not small—can be trusted in an arduous conflict. In conference they add nothing. To disturb and drive all such from their hiding places, the preacher cannot be too close, pointed, searching, in his appeals to the conscience and heart.

Every worldly professor is one too many.—That there should be one such in any church, is mournful. That in almost every church there are many, is too true to be denied. Demas, who

loved this world too much to cleave to Paul in the hour of trial, has an alarming number of followers at this day. Some are so occupied with the daily details of business, or so engrossed with the exciting conflicts of party politics, that they cannot trouble themselves about the interests of the church. These are in the way of those who would go forth to rescue. Some are fair weather christians, whose zeal is graduated by the barometer, frozen up when the mercury is below the freezing point, and ready to vanish in vapour when it rises above summer heat.—Some may be regarded as Sabbath-day disciples, since they are never seen in the house of God, or the place of prayer, but one day in seven.—Fashionable christians are no better, as they are governed by the rules of living dress and intercourse, that bind the pleasure-loving crowd in the courts of kings. They have yet to learn that christians, so far from looking to the world to give them light in such matters, are themselves to be "the light of the world." It need not be added, that every rum-selling member of a church is out of his place. On all these, no reliance can be placed. A devoted pastor will not place his dependence under God, on these, but on the humble, praying few—alas, that they should be so few!—that long and wait for the salvation of God.

"The people are too many," when they are led to trust in their numbers, moral strength, wide-spread influence, and worldly wealth;—when they boast of the talents and wisdom of their pastor, elders or chief men. Before such can attain the victory they must be sifted. All creature-confidence argues that the people are too many.

The same is true, if there be any fearful and unbelieving in the church; any, that are easily discouraged; that soon faint and become weary of the work, and prefer inglorious rest. Like the spies that were sent to spy out the land, they find a great many giants to contend with, see too many lions in the way, and surrender or flee without striking a blow. These spread the infection through the camp, and soon the cry becomes general, "Were there no graves in Egypt?" We need men like Barnabas, "full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith;" and then it may be recorded, "much people were added to the Lord."

In some churches, it is to be feared that there are so many people that they stand in each other's way. If a Sabbath-school teacher, or a tract visiter, is needed, it is often urged in reply, "Oh, there are enough without me." Every idle professor is one too many in a church. He hangs upon them like a dead weight. It were better to divide, to colonize, to send off supplies to feeble churches, any thing rather than let the church sink by its own weight. When there is a greater amount of wealth, influence and talent in a church than is absolutely necessary to sustain the enterprise, it is for the most part lost to the cause of Christ. The pastors of such churches, instead of striving to keep this surplus in the church, should hear and heed that voice, "The people that are with thee are too many." Not a few pastors have need to preach from this or some similar text, before they can see the work of the Lord prospering in their parishes.

Does any one begin to feel that he is one too many in the church? And does he ask, what, then, shall I do? Rouse thee, brother, and gird thyself for the conflict. Cease to be a useless burden to the church. If unable to do as much for the cause as others, do what thou canst.—Every one can do something. The times call

for action; a perishing neighbourhood, city, country, world, lay claims to our zeal; a bleeding Saviour demands our sympathy. Think of the immense loss if there be not a Revival this winter in this land. Never, never, can it be repaired. No time is to be lost. Every christian must do his duty. To be laid aside, in full strength, is dreadful.

Let the cry resound through all the churches, "Who—who—"WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE?" Let there be a sifting in Zion. And let those that remain, though as feeble as Gideon's little band, "come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD! descend and pervade thy Zion. Come and search every heart. Thou that knowest them that are thine, come and anoint their souls for the mighty work of a world's conversion.

BREEDING LAMB OF GOD! lead forth thy humble ones from conquering to conquer. Shed down thy spirit on the churches. Fill our hearts, raise our hopes, revive thy work, rescue thousands and tens of thousands from death.—And be the glory thine.—N. Y. Evang.

CHRIST DESERVES ALL.

And what a claim it is—the claim of redemption! Alas, that our familiarity with us should ever diminish its freshness and force, that we do not always feel as if the price had only just been paid! To think that there should have been a period in our history when we were lost; lost to ourselves—all our capacity for enjoyment being turned by sin into a felt capacity for suffering; lost to the design of our creation—all our powers of serving Christ being perverted instruments of hostility against him; lost to God—to the right of beholding, approaching, and adorning the vision of eternal glory! To think that in point of law, we were thus lost as truly as if the hand of justice had seized us, had led us down to our place of woe, drawn on us the bolts of the dreadful prison, and as if years of wretchedness and ages of darkness had rolled over us there. Well may we ask ourselves, again and again how is it we are here; here, in the still more blessed light of God's countenance. Why is this, and how has it come to pass?—Has justice relaxed its demands? Have the penal flames become extinct? Ye are bought with a price! It is the theme of the universe.—Look at that glorious being descending from heaven in the form of God—know ye not "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;" that he sought no resting place between his throne and the cross! Behold that cross; know ye not that "he loved us, and gave himself for us?" that "he bare our sins on his own body on the tree?" Approach nearer, and look on that streaming blood: know ye not "the precious blood of Christ," and that blood is the price of your redemption? Hear you not the voice from heaven which now says, "Deliver them from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom?" Feel you not the spirit of God drawing you with gentle solicitations and gracious importunities to the feet of Christ? See you not that he who was delivered for your offences, hath been raised again for your justification, and is now waiting to receive the homage of your love? "How much owest thou unto thy Lord?" He asks only his due. So that if there be any part of your nature which he has not redeemed, or anything in your possession for which you are not indebted to him, keep it back and apply it to some other purpose. But does not the bare suggestion do violence to your new nature? does not every part of that nature find a voice to exclaim, "O Lord, I thy servant, thou hast loosed my bonds?"—Harris.