

London Strict Baptist Association.

[From the Primitive Church Magazine.]

A Public Meeting of the association was held at Phillips-street Chapel, Kingsland-road, on Tuesday evening, April 17. After tea, brother Pepper named for consideration among the brethren: "The nature and characteristics of little faith:" Mat. xiv. 31. Brethren Burgon, Garret, Oliver, and Dickerson were the speakers. Little faith was said to be of the same nature as strong faith.—Peter's faith seemed to fail him, because, either the waves arose to obscure his view of the Lord, or his eye was removed from him to them,—faith thrives and grows when fixed on its own proper object.—At seven o'clock, brother Dickson, of Rysely, read the Scriptures and prayed. Brother Ball, of Wandsworth, delivered a discourse on "Divine sovereignty as displayed in salvation." It was remarked that men are prone to extremes; hence with some, mercy is God's darling attribute; with others, sovereignty; all his perfections are however equally dear. Sovereignty with some is but caprice, but all God does is done in wisdom. Brother B. proposed to explain the terms employed: 1. Sovereignty. What is the base of it—power: whosoever possesses sovereign power must be sovereign. Sovereignty must never be understood as *against* the creatures of God—unhappiness in the world is not the result of sovereignty. He punishes by law—it is righteousness which lays down rules for punishment, not sovereignty. 2. Salvation. The term is taken too generally, as though it included all that God has ever done for his church. Salvation should be confined to its simple meaning—restoration and preservation. After such introduction brother B. proposed Eph. i. 11, *who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*, as a text on which to be found his further elucidation of the subject. Undue stress is often laid upon some terms, as the word *all* in the text—it must be taken in its general bearing; it evidently means, *all these things or all that he works*.—Brother B. noticed, 1. Some things in the connection ascribed to God. 1. Election in Christ, the end being that the people may be with him, or before him in love. 2. Predestination to his kingdom and glory. 3. Adoption into the heavenly family. 4. The bestowment of all spiritual blessings to fit them for the inheritance prepared. 5. Redemption from the fall in Adam, and all personal evil. Most people put redemption first, but it does not so come in the order of truth. God is the author of it and the disposer of it, he neither offers nor barter it. If you ask why all are not saved, I reply, because all have not a Saviour. The church shall be saved in her Head, for Jesus came to save *his people* from their sins. 6. The call by grace in regeneration and conversion. The Holy Spirit regenerates the family, not because they are sinners, but to fit them for the inheritance. Transgression renders conversion necessary, and this is effected by the word. 7. Preservation through all dangers and evils unto the end. "Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." II. The rule by which alone God acts—the *counsel of his own will*. Not because angels counselled it, or man wished it, nor because of his own foreknowledge of creature goodness, but absolutely *his own will*. His wisdom, goodness, and love have taken counsel. Could any have prompted him to do better than he has done?—Whom did he predestinate? *Whom he pleased*. To what have they been predestinated? *To what he pleased*. Whatsoever your state and position, then, remember it is where he placed you, and it is for you not to be indifferent to your position, but be careful to do all becoming position. This rule was then traced out in reference to the several things ascribed to God, as previously noticed. III. The power which brought salvation about is of God, "who worketh." Not left to others, but done by himself; the word is an instrument in his hand. Let us use means, but never place dependence on them. God will do his own work—he will either send the people to his word or bring the word to them—he is never at a loss for means; our hearts should be alive to the use of means, but our reliance must ever be upon the God of the means. *His work is honorable and glorious, and his righteousness endureth for ever, sought out by all them that have pleasure therein*. The hymns were given out by brethren Lewis, Woodard, and Woollacott. Brother Ball concluded the engagement in prayer. The next meeting will be held at Romney-street Chapel, Westminster, on Tuesday,

June 19. Tea, as usual, at five o'clock.—Brother Dickerson to preach on "The presence of the Spirit, the life of the churches."

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Why do you not go to the Prayer-Meeting?

Tradesmen often say they have no time; they cannot leave their business; that is, they will not. I am aware that it is not, and could not, by any contrivance and forethought, be always made convenient for tradesmen, especially shopkeepers to be at the house of God on a week-day evening; but could it not be oftener done than it is? Would not a settled purpose, a good plan, and a little preparation, generally leave the way open for such persons to the sanctuary? Is it not enough time given to the world, to carry on its concerns till seven o'clock in the evening? If there be a party to be joined, or some public business to be attended to, cannot tradesmen find time for this? Oh! brethren, try, try. Be anxious to throw off the cares of the world time enough to be found in your place at the house of God, on the evening of the weekly service.

But your residence is too far in the country to enable you to attend. Then why go so far? Why sacrifice the pleasure and improvement to be gained in the sanctuary, for the enjoyment of rural scenes? The modern taste for a country residence is making sad work with piety. How many are there, who, on this account, can attend only *one* public service even on the Sabbath! And has it not proved a snare in other ways, leading to a neglect of their trade, and to expenses which their income was not adequate to meet? Your salvation, professing Christians, your salvation is, or should be, the great business with you; and everything else should be subordinate to it.

Some who will read this Address are the *MOTHERS* of large families, and imagine they find in their domestic and maternal cares an insurmountable obstacle in the way of such services as I now recommend, and a sufficient excuse for neglecting them. I readily allow that in many cases this is admissible. Duties cannot be in opposition to each other. There is no religion in neglecting a dependent family, and allowing home to be a scene of confusion, even though it be to attend public worship; and if this *must* be the result, judgment and conscience being witnesses, your way is clear and the place of your duty is home. But be quite sure that you could not by method, diligence, preparation, and judicious delegation, attend to every duty of home, and yet leave opportunity for one weekly visit to the sanctuary. I have known mothers and mistresses, who were patterns of devotedness to home duties, and at the same time were exemplary in their attendance at the house of God. The devoted mother wants an occasional relaxation from her assiduities; and what is so refreshing as an hour spent in the house of God.

A more difficult case is that of the *WIFE whose husband is inimical to religion altogether*, and especially so to its week-day engagements. Constant attendance, in such circumstances, can hardly be expected; and many thus situated must forego the privilege, and seek to make up by renewed diligence in the use of the private means of grace, the loss they are compelled to sustain of the public ones.

Labouring men, I am aware, are under a strong temptation after a day's hard toil, to imagine they are too tired for a sermon, and that they will be excused by God for going home to spend their evening in their own house instead of his. In many, very many cases, this is not an excuse, but a sufficient reason for their neglect; their labour is so great and so exhausting, as to utterly incapacitate them for that mental application which is necessary for a profitable attendance upon the means of grace. In this case the gracious Redeemer himself makes the same defence for them as he did for his slumbering disciples, and says the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

Suffer, then, dear brethren, the word of exhortation on this important subject; renounce all excuses; endeavour to be in a state of mind which shall not prompt you to seek after them. Be in earnest, far more in earnest, than are the generality of professors, about your soul's concerns. Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure. Hunger and thirst after righteousness. Live the life of faith. Set your affections not on things on the earth, but on things above, where

Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Be not satisfied with mere external religious decorum, and a consistency in which the world, or your fellow professors, can see no flaw.—Let your conversation be in heaven; feel and act as the citizens of the celestial state.—Walk with God; rejoice in hope of the glory to be revealed; and steadily look at eternity. In order to keep up such a state of mind, comply with the admonition of this Address. Let it be matter of conscience, not of taste merely, to attend the week-day service. You need them; and they will help and bless you. Be *regular* in your attendance. Do not let it be a mere occasional thing to be there, when an admonition has been delivered on the sabbath calling upon you for the performance of this duty, or when something extraordinary is to be heard. This is the case with too many. We see them sometimes, but oftener miss them. *Be it with you AN ORDINANCE FIXED AS THE SABBATH*; keep the evening free from all occupation; make no other engagements. When invited to something else, say, "No, that evening is given to God." "The diligent soul," I repeat "shall be made fat."—This is diligence. May it be yours.—James.

The Design of Death to the Christian.

It may be that the departed one was a true Christian. Led by thy Spirit, he has seen and felt his depraved and lost condition by nature; acknowledged and repented of his guilt, and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, to the saving of his soul. Consecrating himself to God's service, he has long since given up the world and self and sin. And though at first, the power of grace might have been feeble within him, yet it has been constantly growing in strength. It is true, he has been imperfect, and sometimes guilty of wandering and unfaithfulness; but, through grace, he has been kept from utterly falling, and been enabled steadily to advance in his heavenward way. Through the combined influence of God's truth, and providence, and Spirit, he has gradually been growing in sound knowledge, right affection, correct principle, and holy practice and habit. Prosperity has but led him to gratitude; adversity disciplined to humility and dependence. The one has but refined and mellowed his graces; the other but bruised, so that they sent forth a sweeter odor and perfume to heaven. Sometimes he has been in the valley, and sometimes on the mount; sometimes no more than "faint, yet pursuing," and sometimes "rejoicing like a strong man to run" his "race." But, on the whole, his path becomes brighter and brighter as he draws nearer its end. Long he may be spared to live, because he cannot be spared to die. But now God, and it may be man, too, sees, that he is just fitted for another state; that his character is so matured, his graces so perfected, that he is fitted for some higher sphere of honour and duty. Christ has said, "I will that he be with me where I am," to enjoy and serve me here. There is no *mystery* in his death; it is but the result of a fixed law of moral progress and advancement in the divine kingdom. His very improvement and fidelity have prepared him for promotion; and God, in his providence, *promotes* him to a higher and wider field of activity and usefulness, as well as happiness. And if a *vacancy* is made on earth, it is only that *another* may be filled in heaven!—Rev. Tryon Edwards.

ON LOWLINESS.

While the man of the world is aiming at something great, and crying, Oh that I were higher, the true Christian, with grace in his heart, cries, Oh, to be lower, lower, lower! Give me humility, O Lord! When shall I be lower? Lowliness of mind is not a flower that grows wild in the fields of nature, but requires to be planted by the finger of God; and God is always willing to put a finger to this work. It is a most excellent disposition: it makes a worm stand higher than an angel.—All experience has proved it safer and better to be humble with one talent, than lifted up with ten. It is one of those lessons a man sits down and learns at the feet of Jesus Christ.—It is one of those parts of practice which enlist the sympathy of angels, and call down the care and condescension of Jehovah himself, for "He giveth grace to the humble." Palaces and thrones have no attraction for him, so he passes them by; but "to this man will I look, who is poor and of a contrite heart." It is a preparative for receiving grace, and the effect of grace received, from both which considerations the more a man has of it the better.

It not only fits a man for the grace of God, but puts him in possession of a God of grace; and he who seeks earnestly the best gifts, will find this to be one of them. Let us not be satisfied with a small degree of this lowliness, but strive after it, make it an object, "so run as to obtain" it, and remember that he who is contented with grace enough to get to heaven, and desires no more, may be very sure that he has none at all.—Chn. Intelligencer.

Contrasts in the Life of Jesus.

The whole life of the Blessed Saviour abounds in contrasts and mixtures of apparent humiliation and glory. He was laid in a manger; yet angels heralded forth his appearance. And the angels sang their song not to princes, but shepherds; thus as it were beginning the Gospel with a declaration that God had chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of salvation. Through all the life of Jesus, we see a strange mixture of humility of circumstances with surpassing glory. He lived a fisherman, yet was visited by angels. He was a man of sorrows, and yet his countenance once shown brighter than the sun. A man acquainted with grief, and clad in the garments of humble life, yet, on one occasion, his raiment was whiter than any fuller on earth could whiten it. He was so *weak*, that he could not bear his own cross, yet so *strong* that he could raise the dead from their graves. He fainted as he went up Calvary, and one Simon was compelled to help him carry his cross to the place of skulls, yet he was Lord of angels, and able to bear all the sins of his people, and to walk with each of them up the hill of life to everlasting glory, bearing a part of all their burdens. Christ's people are like their Lord. Often poor and afflicted, yet there is a glory about them, that makes them as the sons of God. They are "troubled on every side," yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in their body." Strangers and pilgrims, yet heirs to an inheritance, and a kingdom that passeth not away. Princes in disguise—suffering an dying for Christ, yet reigning with Him in his glory. Dying and yet alive—having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better, and triumphing over their last enemy, who lies vanquished under their feet, as they enter into a blessed immortality.—N. O. Presbyterian.

The Baptists of Bristol.

The correspondent of the *Boston Christian Alliance* has given a few additional particulars respecting our brethren in Bristol:—"One of the best preachers we have heard is the Rev. G. H. Davis, at King Street Baptist Church, where the eloquent Roberts so long proclaimed the gospel of Christ. Mr. Davis is apparently about 35. His person is attractive, and his elocution very effective.—We heard from him an admirable sermon on glorying in the cross: He has a commodious house of worship, and a large congregation. This gentleman visited the United States about two years ago, for the purpose of regaining his health; he passed but two Sabbaths in America, and preached one Lord's day in Philadelphia, and the other at Jamaica Plain, where he preached for the Rev. Dr. Choules. These Sabbaths are fondly remembered by him, now that he has returned; and he speaks and writes with much warmth of gratitude and feeling respecting his friends in America. The Baptists have a very respectable College in this city, under the presidency of the Rev. Thomas Crisp, a fine scholar, and very good preacher. The building is large and commodious, but very heavy in its external appearance.

The Library and Museum are exceedingly fine. We have rarely spent a more agreeable hour than in roving through its alcoves. Here are to be seen the original edition of Tyndal's New Testament, Cooper's miniature of Oliver Cromwell, and the best collection of Bibles in the country. The Theological Library is particularly rich, and the Museum is fostered by the missionaries from all parts of the world, while it contains the rich private collection of the learned Dr. Andrew Gifford, formerly Librarian to the British Museum.—The classical Tutor of this College is the Rev. F. W. Gotch, who ranks among the first linguists in England, and has already obtained distinguished eminence as a critic.