

**"FALSE PROFESSORS."**

The Southern Baptist gives its readers, under the above head, an extract from a sermon preached by the Rev. Samuel Stillman, D. D. preached in the Baptist church in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1778. The Baptist adds: "Dr. Stillman was ordained by this church in 1758. In 1765 he removed to Boston, and accepted an invitation to settle with the First Baptist church in that place; of which church he remained the pastor until his death, forty-two years after his first connection with it." In the following passage he appears "a refiner" of God's people:

Should a strict search be made among the professors of Christianity, we have reason to conclude that many would be found, who have no better foundation for their hope, than their having been church members for a number of years. They can relate the time of their baptism, and of their admission to the Lord's table; but cannot give any clear account of their having been delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son; which is an event infinitely more important than the former. They seem to be as ignorant of the new birth as Nicodemus, and are ready with him to say, "How can a man be born again when he is old?"

The principal difference between their plan of acceptance with God, and that of Saul, consists in this: Saul was in pursuit of eternal life on mere law; they blend law and gospel together. They have been baptized, steadily partake of the Lord's Supper, keep their place in the house of God, pray in their families, do justice between man and man, and sometimes give to the poor; and are so fixed in their confidence in the flesh, that it is next to impossible to persuade them that they may be mistaken. He who tells them, that they must have a better righteousness than this; and that they may lose heaven after thirty, forty, or fifty years standing in the church, if they have no better plea, may expect to bring upon themselves their displeasure. Surely they have forgotten the awful parable of the ten virgins; and that it is written, "They are not all Israel that are of Israel;" or, which is more likely, they have so closely wrapt themselves up in their own righteousness, and for so many years have been persuaded of their good standing, that ward off the most solemn scriptures; and now, the only thing that leaves hope for their conversion is, that the residue of the Spirit is with God, and when he works, none can let it. He can strip them, as he did Saul, of all that is now gain to them; and powerfully incline them to cast away all their round of duties, in point of dependence, though not in point of performance, and to glory only in the cross of Christ.

Here permit me to take notice of what, I apprehend, is an abuse of the Lord's supper, viz: persons, their hurrying themselves into the church of Christ, or their being hurried by others, upon some slight convictions of sin, or on account of their sober life. I have met with some, who, upon becoming uneasy in their minds about the state of their souls, have manifested a great anxiety to be received into the church. But upon being asked the reason of the hope that was in them, appeared greatly ignorant of their own true character, and of the way of life through Christ; having no more to say for themselves, than that they had lived long in the neglect of their duty, and conclude they ought to join the church; at the same time were incapable of satisfying, either themselves or others, that they had known the truth as it is in Jesus.

Query—Is it kindness or cruelty to persuade such persons to come up to the ordinances? Should not their Christian friends inform them, that a submission to ordinances lays no ground for hope? That they must be born again; and justified freely through the redemption that there is in Christ. By such an act of friendship, they might be instrumental of turning their solicitude to a matter of eternal consequence. Am I in Christ? Have I ever been renewed in the spirit of my mind? This is the grand point that every person, desiring admission to the Lord's table, should previously settle; for it is children's bread, designed for those who have a good hope through grace. The privilege is special, intended for believers only. Hence we read, that the Lord added to the apostolic church daily such as should be saved; i. e. real believers, as appear in the context. Such also were the persons who composed the church in Samaria.

Will you therefore bear with me, while I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the

dead, to be more anxious to fly for refuge to the hope set before you, than to fly into his visible church? For you may be members of a church, and at the same time heirs of hell.

Let none think that I have a design to discourage the proper subjects from joining the church of Christ. God forbid! You, yourselves, my hearers, have had repeated opportunities of knowing, that every addition to the church has added to my happiness. Would to God that converts might come as the clouds, and as doves to their windows! All I have in view, is to keep out hypocrites and almost Christians; and to dissuade awakened sinners from substituting the ordinances of the gospel in the room of Christ and his righteousness. And such an attempt is necessary; because persons in these circumstances, like a man drowning, will catch at any thing; and have often been known to fly into the church for safety, like Joab to the horns of the altar.

**Woman's Department in Christ's Service.**

There was a want about Adam even as he came forth from his Maker's hand. He reflected the Creator's image, he had a paradise of delights to walk in, and was at once king and priest of all below. But he was *alone*, and this, in God's estimation—who knew his constitution, and what was fitted to make up his felicity—was *not good*. "The Lord God said, it is not good that man should be alone (literally, 'in his separation,') I will make him *an help meet for him*" (literally "over against him," "answering to him"), *the counterpart of him*. Woman, then, was made to fill up that *void*, and relieve that *solitude* in man, which the Lord God deemed "not good." And the Divine method of doing so is very noticeable:—Not the creation of a *superior*, to overawe or to rule him, nor of an *inferior*, to be looked down upon and made use of for subordinate ends, but the formation—from his very self, and from the region of his heart—of a *counterpart* or *second self*; who, while numerically another, should yet be so one with himself, as to have no separate interest from him, but each to "help" the other to rejoice before the Lord in the doing of His will, the enjoyment of His gifts, and the advancement of His glory. Had woman been made without the intellectual capacity to enter into and sympathise with all that man was made for, she would not have been the "counterpart" she was formed to be, and the man would, to the whole extent of his deficiency, be still "alone."

But the peculiar vocation of women, as expressed in the account of her original formation, has been expounded with a clearness, and developed in a variety of ways, at once affecting and beautiful, both by the fall, and by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Dear-ly has woman paid the penalty of her bad priority in transgression. As she drew the man down under the curse, the man, in the ferocity of his fallen nature, has been judicially permitted to trample on all that is sacred and sweet in womanhood, making her the slave of his brutal tyranny, and the minister of his guilty passions. In all lands, beyond the pale of revealed religion, this is the condition of women. And yet, even here, the original characteristics of the sex peer forth, as "life through the hollow eyes of death." What clinging still to her male abuser; what heroism of uncomplaining endurance; what unappreciated and unseen martyrdoms, many times suffered during one life, at the hand of man, and in spite of all, laying herself out, so far as she is able and permitted, to be "a help meet for him!" What would such qualities be (one might be led to exclaim beforehand,) were they but redeemed from the curse, purified and refined by grace, and consecrated to their proper ends; and were there but a corresponding change on the other sex! Well, but this is just what Christ has done for Woman—this is just what we see Christianity accomplishing. Woman is now made capable of becoming, in the full and wide and beautiful sense in which it was originally meant—"an help meet for man," the very counterpart of him, not only in her identity of interest and mind and heart with him—in things Divine as well as in things human—but in the peculiar tenderness, the confiding dependence, the clinging affections, the untiring patience, the heroic fortitude and self-sacrifice, which are the very seal of womanhood—not to speak of perception quick as instinct, and jealous sensibilities, which, if they make woman open to many and deep wounds, make her also to melt under kindness shown to her, and surrender herself to the manifestations of even seeming affection. What are characteristics like these

capable of becoming, if only healed by the balm of Gilead, and made known to their proper, their highest Object!"—["*Woman's Sphere in the Service of Christ*," by Rev. David Brown, Minister of Free St. James's, Glasgow.

**Whose are the Promises?**

Every pastor finds among his flock some desponding souls who refuse to feed by faith upon the promises, under a strong impression that the promises are not for them. In many cases this state of mind lasts for years, causing great concern and perplexity to the pastor, as well as unspeakable distress and sickness of heart to the subject of it. Such a distemper of the mind may arise from pride, which refuses to begin the Christian life as a babe in grace, but aspires to be a well-grown saint, full of strength and activity from the birth. Or it may originate in unsuspected selfishness, which so busily occupies itself on the degree of its personal enjoyment, as to care little for the claims of duty, or the honor and glory of God. Or the malady being owing to natural feebleness of purpose, the vacillations of an irresolute mind, often connected with a low state of the animal spirits; and this constitutional turn for melancholy is often aggravated by injudicious teaching. Yet, in most of these cases, there is reason to believe, either that these persons have in them some faint and half-suppressed motions of grace, struggling after a freer life; or at least that the Spirit of God is truly with them, and that they are not far from the kingdom of the promises.

The healing of such a distempered plight of mind is truly a work for that Great Physician who is able to apply the remedy to the very seat of the disease, to the inmost soul. Yet there are various considerations presented in Scripture, which may, by his divine blessing, administer toward the cure. The following consideration has sometimes been found efficacious in relieving the distressed mind of a habitual doubter.

Take some inspired promise—say this, which occurs repeatedly in the Scriptures,—"*Whomsoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" There is no question but this is a divine promise, most sure to all who avail themselves of it by receiving it, and praying in the faith of it. But the distressed doubter asks incredulously, "How shall I know that this promise is for me?" Well, then, for whom is it intended? God has spoken it. He never speaks in vain. He does not offer it to the redeemed souls under the altar, who are awaiting the resurrection of their bodies, for they are already saved. He does not offer it to lost spirits in hell, for they are far beyond the reach and scope of the promise, which extends only to them in a state of probation.—He does not offer it to a careless and hardened world, which would only tread this precious pearl under swinish feet. For whom, then, can this glorious promise be designed, if not for you, who are deeply anxious in reference to your salvation, and are asking with many sighs and tears for a ray of hope? Yes; it is meant for nobody, if not for you. Lay hold of this promise without hesitation or reserve, as your own proper possession. Seize it, and it is yours. You shall have eternal salvation just by the asking! You have only to take it as frankly as it is offered, and the blessed promise is all your own.

**The Importance of being in Christ.**

If you would be Christ's at his coming, you must be Christ's now! If you live without Christ, and die without Christ, you must pass into eternity without Christ,—you must rise from the grave without Christ,—you must appear at the tribunal of God without Christ,—and in the decisions of that day you must be pronounced, Christ himself will pronounce you, "None of his!" The judgment may be distant, but death is near; and to you death is as decisive as the judgment. It is to every one of you the time of irresistible settlement. What you are at the moment when you have drawn your last breath, you shall be found when the "judgment shall be set, and the books shall be opened." If you are not Christ's ere you quit the world, his you can never be,—no, never,—nor he yours, nor his salvation. If once you have passed the boundary between time and eternity, there is no power that can bring you into union with him. God's power never will, for his own word has told us so; and there is no other power in existence competent to effect it. Oh, ye who regard lying vanities, and forsake your own mercies,—do not, do not, as you value the happiness of an

unending existence, persist in thus trifling.—Short and transient as it is, the life which you enjoy here is inestimably precious. But its value lies in its relation to the life to come. It is but the introduction of your being: the period, not so much for living, as for preparing to live. The interests of eternity must be settled, and can any of you tell how long you are to have to make that settlement? Time can be to each of you only your lifetime.—And your life-time! which of you knows what that is to be? It is a term that includes as many varieties of duration as there are moments in the "three-score years and ten."—By the will of Him "in whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind," you have been spared to various stages of advancement in your earthly journey; and I would remind every one of you, that if a coming eternity has not yet been provided for, the chief business of life has yet been neglected; every moment of it has been mispent; and how many moments may now remain, who has the foresight to predict?—"In the midst of life we are in death." The God in "whose hand your breath is," may have dated your death much earlier than you are dating it yourselves. You may be counting years, while he is numbering moments.—And the manner of it, as well as the time, may be widely different, indeed, from your anticipations. The present instant only can be called your own. Oh, let it not be misimproved. "Behold, now, is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation; to-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."—Yes, *to-day*; now, even now, come to Christ; believe in his name; look for the mercy of God through his atoning blood; seek an interest in him, as the soul's only safety for eternity.—*Dr. Wardlaw.*

**Prayer.****WHEN GOD REFUSES TO HEarken.**

"He will not hear those who have not a steadfast belief in His promises." He deserves our confidence, and He requires it.

"Nor will he hear those who come into His presence full of worldly feelings." We must love God supremely, and allow neither our houses, our stores, our ships, our stocks, our money, our goods, to occupy the thoughts that should be given to Him.

"He will not hearken to those who ask the things they do not sincerely desire." Some go through a round of petitions without feeling a need of the things they ask, or without any strong desire to obtain them.

"He will not listen to those who ask with perfect selfishness, and without any regard to His glory." Our prayers must be disinterested. We must not implore for things to pamper our appetites, promote our own ease and indulgence, or the worldly prosperity of our families. We must not petition for objects that will not increase our spirituality, Christian activity, and carefulness. We must have a supreme regard for the glory of God in all we ask of Him.

"He cannot consistently hear us when we cry to Him, for things he has revealed he cannot consistently with his glory grant." It is an insult to God to ask him for what he has told us he cannot and ought not to give.—Such prayers are an abomination in the sight of a benevolent God.

"He will not regard the prayers of those who supplicate for things without using the means necessary for their attainment." God helps them who help themselves. He confers blessings through human instrumentality. We must do our part, or God will withhold his aid.

"It is inconsistent for God to hear the prayers of those who pray without relying on the blood and righteousness of Christ." All the blessings conferred on us are the purchase of the atoning Saviour. We must plead his righteousness and the great atonement He has made. "Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed."

**MAN'S WAYS AND GOD'S WAYS**—A man is circumscribed in all his ways by the providence of God, just as he is in a ship; for although the man may walk freely upon the decks, or pass up and down in the little continent, yet he must be carried whither the ship bears him. A man hath nothing free but his will, and that indeed is guided by laws and reasons; and although by this he walks freely, yet the Divine Providence is the ship, and God is the pilot, and the contingencies of the world are sometimes like the fierce winds, which carry the whole event of things whither God pleases.—*J. Taylor.*