

CLAIMS OF THE JEWS.

In the present feeble condition of the Church of Christ in every place where the sound of the gospel has reached, and in the midst of the prevailing desire in our own and other professedly Christian lands for the revival of pure and undefiled religion, and amongst the many schemes in existence and being advocated for the accomplishment of this much wished for result, it has long been to the writer matter of surprise and wonder that so little attention has been paid to the Jews. When it is remembered that to them, under God, we are indebted for a Bible and a Saviour, and when we are told by Paul that their conversion shall be to the Gentile world as life from the dead, it might naturally be expected that that people would be very dear to us, share largely in our affections, live in our love, be daily the objects of our prayers, and that for their spiritual enlightenment greater and more extended efforts would be made than for any other portion of the human family. The Jews, though under the chastening hand of God, are his peculiar care; and we verily believe that the individual and the church that deeply feels for their outcast condition, and ardently desires and labours for their being *born again*, shall be eminently blest by our heavenly Father. The attentive reader of the Bible cannot fail to observe that the Jews are to be mighty instruments in the evangelization of the world. The hour is on the wing when *ten men shall take hold of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.* It is cheering to know that there are even now upwards of three hundred Jews preaching the Gospel, and offering salvation to their brethren through Him whom their fathers crucified. Animated by this knowledge, let us cast aside our past indifference. Let the tents of Jacob as well as the gates of Zion bear witness to our fervent supplications for the speedy removal of the veil from Israel's heart.

"Father of faithful Abra'm, hear

Our earnest suit for Abra'm's seed:

Justly they claim most fervent prayer

From us, adopted in their stead,

Who mercy through their fall obtain,

And Christ by their rejection gain.

* * *

"But hast thou finally forsook,

For ever cast thine own away?

Wilt thou not bid the murd'ers look

On Him they pierc'd, and weep and pray?

Yes, gracious God, thy word is past:

'All Israel shall be saved at last.'

It would be well were our pastors to bring frequently before their congregations the condition of this interesting people. The Saviour was a Jew. Were we clothed with this fact, we would no longer forget the Jew: on the contrary, our love to Israel would be akin to that of Him who wept over their devoted city as he gave utterance to those melting words of tenderness with which every reader of the Bible is familiar. And yet it is this down-trodden people who are still to furnish, as they did of old, examples of the power of faith. Faith in Jehovah's promise made Abraham what he was:

"Long he believed, without more evidence
Than God's bare word."

It is the patriarch's faith that we need, and that it may be ours if we feel our want of it, and ask it, no one can doubt who has the Bible in his hand. Faith is often obscured by laboured attempts to explain what it is. It needs no explanation. It is open to the comprehension of a child. Faith is simply taking God at his word. And if we would do this, and plead without a waver or a doubt, for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, the face of the world would soon be changed. And with regard to the Jews, methinks the prophecies anent their future glory would inspire every heart with a longing for their fulfilment:

"O scenes surpassing fable, and yet true, [see
Scenes of accomplish'd bliss! which who can
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
His soul refresh'd with foretaste of the joy?"

Yes, the dry bones shall live. Zion shall be restored. Israel shall again occupy Jerusalem. And its inhabitants shall look on him they pierc'd, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. But the fountain shall be resorted to, and the feeble among them shall

become like David, and David as the angel of the Lord.

Is it then too much to ask that this ancient people be daily remembered by us; that in our Sabbath assemblies we no longer almost forget them; that we send more labourers among them, and endeavour practically to show that we love them as ourselves? If, after all their rebellion, Jehovah could say, "I do earnestly remember him still," shall not we—not merely on account of being eminently their debtors, but for the higher reason that their conversion shall be a kind of resurrection to the Gentiles—shall not we also remember them by actively working to bring them to the acknowledgment of the truth as it is in Jesus? Let each of us do what we can. We can all do something. I need not say what that something is. And regarding this and every other labour of love, may it be said of each of us at the close of life: **HE HATH DONE WHAT HE COULD.**

THE PRAYER WAS TOO LONG.

Well, that is a fault. We have no model in the Bible for a long prayer. The longest recorded is that of Solomon, upon the momentous, special occasion of the dedication of the temple. The deliberate offering of this would scarcely occupy eight minutes. One of the shortest, that of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner," may be offered in one breathing; and it was answered. "Lord save, I perish," and "Lord help me," are patterns of earnest, effectual prayer. Earnestness utters its desires directly, briefly, even abruptly. We are not heard because of "much speaking."

The prayer was too long.—It is certainly difficult for us to concentrate our thoughts with the intensity that devotion requires for a long time; or to maintain, without weariness, the proper attitude of prayer. Remembering this, he who leads publicly in prayer, representing not simply his own desires, but those of the congregation, should go no further than he reasonably may hope to carry with him their thoughts and devotions. All beyond this, if it be sincere, is private prayer, and should be uttered in the closet. If it be not sincere, it is hypocrisy.

The prayer was too long.—Perhaps the good brother did not know it. In the self-forgetfulness of devotion, perhaps he took "no note of time." As the prayers of the social meeting are generally too long, he was but extending a bad custom. Now, if you were kindly to mention it to him, not complainingly, but as though you really desired to promote his usefulness and influence, might it not have a good result? Just try it; and if he is a reasonable Christian he will thank you for it.

The prayer was too long.—Perhaps your own heart was not in a proper frame to sympathize with the devotions. You did not pray in private before you came to the public meeting, and consequently you wanted a praying spirit. There was then but little fellowship of spirit between you and the brother who sought to express what ought to be your desires; and if his heart was warm, and yours cold, it is no wonder you thought the prayer was too long.

The prayer was too long.—Was there any preaching in it? Sometimes brethren aim to instruct the congregation, and substantially turn their prayers into exhortations or statements of doctrine. I think, in all such cases, it would greatly add to the interest and profitability of the meeting, if a division were made, and the things that differ were separated.

The prayer was too long.—Was it formal and heartless? Without unction and earnestness, did it seem as though the brother prayed merely because he was called upon, without appearing to have any special errand to the throne of grace? Did he seem to pray merely to fill up the time, or to perform his part in the prescribed routine of service? Was it the same old stereotyped prayer which he always offers, as though circumstances never changed, and our wants and supplies were always the same? If it were so then the prayer was certainly too long, even if it occupied only one moment.

There may not be much poetry, but there is common sense and piety, in the following stanza:

"Few be our words and short our prayers,
When we together meet;
Short duties keep religion up,
And make devotion sweet."

QUACKERY IN THE PULPIT.

A child might take hold of a surgeon's knife, and with it inflict a wound. The blood would flow freely, the flesh quiver, and the sufferer cry out with pain. But if a deep-seated and desperate cancer is to be cut out by the roots; the bones scraped clean of every vestige of the disease, the wounded arteries secured, and the patient's life preserved, the skill of the surgeon is demanded. A child, a bungler, a quack cannot do it. He may attempt, and cut out a great deal of sore, and cover up the wound, and soothe the sufferer, and call it a cure; but he has healed the hurt slightly. The disease is left behind and will soon break out again, and without the aid of superior wisdom and power and skill, will inevitably prove fatal.

The instrument to sanctify and save diseases and ruined man is the truth of God. The preacher may take that instrument and apply it to the hearer. It will produce an impression. Like the knife in the child's hand, it may draw blood. The stricken sinner, pierced as by an arrow, may tremble, quiver, cry out with pain. The preacher may proffer comfort, and when the pain has ceased and the troubled conscience is lulled with opiates, he may call the sinner a converted man, and promise him eternal life. But if this instrument of salvation pierces to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, the joints, and the marrow, it must be in the hands of the Holy Ghost. To cut out the heart of stone and supply its place with a heart of flesh, to cleanse the soul from the deep-seated cancers of sin and remove the last vestige of the disease, requires infinite wisdom, power and skill. Nothing short of this can perform the work. A man of clay cannot do it. A child, a bungler, a quack cannot do it.

Such have tried it. They have made a business of it. They have gone from place to place, like pretenders in the healing art, and have offered for hire, to save lost men from hell. We know one of them who offered to preach a brief season for a stipulated sum, engaging at the same time that a definite number would be converted, which he said—"Would at the price he had fixed be only—dollars a piece." Others have had less honesty in the avowal of their views, but as much confidence in their skill.

And now go over the fields which these pulpit quacks have travelled, where a few years ago they led silly women and more silly men, (and some wise ones,) captive at their will, and see how many saving cures they effected with their new discovered means of grace. They had the reputation of healing multitudes. But they did not stay cured. Like the woman in the gospels, they were nothing bettered but rather grew worse. They endured for a little time, and after that withered away. "The hurt of the daughter of my people" was healed slightly. We knew a church that under such instrumentality, received at one time a hundred and fifty members on profession, and in less than a year the church had not a name to live on the face of the earth. It was scattered to the four winds, and its existence known only in history. Many of its members went over to Universalism: some to infidelity, and their last end was worse than the first. Some regions of our country are strewn with the skeletons of churches that were poisoned to death by this quackery.

Yet one blessing lingers behind the curse. The church has had a terrible warning never to undertake what belongs to God only. Man may preach to the outward ear. He may arrest the careless and alarm the stupid; he may preach the terror of a broken law till the sinner cries out in the anguish of a terrified spirit, but man cannot save his fellow man from going down to the pit. In the day of his power, God only can subdue the stubborn heart. A sad mistake on this point has deceived multitudes to ruin. The church must feel its dependence on the Holy Ghost and pray unceasingly, *Oh Lord revive thy work. Then shall Zion arise and shine, her light being come.*—N. Y. Obs.

DON'T STAND ON THE TRACK.

There is a world of wisdom in the article below, which we cut from the New York *Railroad Gazette*. The admonition might be applied to thousands of cases, besides those which the writer has so happily introduced. Those who are in danger from temptation, or the insidious approach of evil, are generally the very last to perceive their peril; or if they are aware of it, they underrate the danger, and

overrate their own power or cleverness in averting or escaping it. The safe rule and the Scripture one, is to avoid every appearance of evil—to distrust ourselves. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Habit soon makes us indifferent to things which once would have moved our apprehensions, and impunity in small risks leads us to incur great ones.

"Have you ever stood, my friend, upon a railroad track, and watched the cars as they approached? How stealthily and cat-like they creep upon you, until in a moment they are gone! To one standing at some distance, they present a different appearance. He is aware of their rapid motion, and is amazed at the foolhardiness which lingers in their path. Upon philosophical principles this is easily explained. In the former position, the cars move in the direct line of vision, and the chief notice which the eye takes of their approach, is from the slow increase of the angle which they subtend. In the latter position, the train moves across the line of vision, and in addition to the very rapid increase of the angle which it subtends, the eye marks also the frightful speed with which it passes objects both intervening and beyond. The inexperienced, nay, the practised eye, therefore, often misjudges of the danger, and many a sad spectacle has been produced by the delay of those who thought there was yet time enough.

The safest rule, then, my friend, which we can give you in the matter is, 'Never stand upon the track.' You may stand there many times, and dream of no danger. But in some ill-fated moment, the train may wind around some neighbouring curve, and steal suddenly upon you, and then a little trepidation—a slight misstep—a slip of the foot—and we shudder to think of your crushed and bleeding body.

Perhaps, now, my travelling friend, as you sit quite at your ease in your well-cushioned car, reading (with interest, we hope,) the Railroad Gazette, you are congratulating yourself that you are very cautious and require no such warning. Still I say with all soberness, 'Don't stand upon the track.' You cannot avoid all the evils of life. Perils are around you on every hand. But there are calamities which, so to speak, move in right lines. Don't plant yourself in their path, and defy them. Don't stand in their track, and disregard them.

Perhaps at the very last station, you refreshed (as you call it) the inner man with some strong potation. My friend, if so, you are standing 'on the track,' while the car of retribution comes thundering on—moving in a right line—approaching with steady and rapid wheels. Will it not bear down and crush you?

Perhaps you spend an occasional evening with a party of friends, amusing yourselves with cards or dice, staking small sums to make the game interesting. My friend, you are standing 'on the track.' Thousands have stood there and perished. Don't wait to hear the pantings of the iron steed and the rattling of rushing wheels, but fly from the track. At a safe distance stand and view the wreck, which your ponderous train will spread before you.

Be advised, my friend. It is not always easy to know when you are standing 'on the track,' and yet true it is that if you do stand there, you are in danger. Be vigilant, therefore. Look well to the ground on which you plant your feet, and forget not for yet these many days, our parting words, 'Don't stand upon the track.'

LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

A few years ago, an accident happened in Scotland, and gave occasion to a display of Christian heroism and moral grandeur surpassing all that we have heard or read in tale or history. The miners were buried beyond human help—their lights failed—the air, too, failed; and water rose around them. An aged disciple was among the miners, such a man as Scotland alone could produce. Calmly he exhorted the buried alive; prayed for them, and repeated from memory chapters and psalms, and recited Erskine's Gospel Sonnets. What a congregation, and what a minister! No excitement of action here, as on the deck below, which we cut from the New York *Railroad Gazette*. No glaring phantasm of glory, as in "the imminent deadly breach," no gentle breaking of the golden cord, in the presence of the light of day and of living sympathy. After two days they were delivered by means of an old and forgotten "working," the recollection of which arose in the mind of one of the miners.