

ARTICLES SELECTED FOR THE MONTHLY RECORD."

THE SPIRIT: HOW TO BE REGARDED.—

Observe what liberties, what precious freedom come with the Spirit. I have heard men talk as if, when man yielded himself to the control of the Spirit, he subjected himself to a sort of bondage; and even Christians, I fear are slow to learn what is the liberty of the children of God. If it is bondage when eyes that have not seen are endowed with vision; if it is slavery when the fetters of evil habits are stricken from the soul, and it is enabled to elect a nobler mode of action; if it degrades the mind to have its ignorance dispelled, its darkness illuminated, its grossness refined—then does the Spirit bring bondage, and not otherwise. The Spirit never employs force. He knocks before He enters any heart. He respects man's independence. He modifies conduct through the inclinations. He can be resisted; He can be grieved; He can be driven away. When the soul accepts his guidance, it is by a free, an uncompelled act of surrender.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: HIS WORK.—The Spirit may therefore be regarded as representing all those tendencies and influences which incline your soul to repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ did no more surely die to purchase your pardon than the Spirit lives to persuade you to accept it. The love of the one for you is no more intense than the love of the other. The dignity and excellence of each are the same. In vain might the Spirit have existed, if Christ had not died; in vain Christ have died if the Spirit had not come to apply that to man's redemption. If there is to us any spiritual understanding, Christians, any discernment and apprehension of the truth, any correct knowledge of our own condition, it is entirely due to the operation of the Spirit in our souls. If in weakness and poverty any of you have ever been sustained, if in perils delivered, if when stricken with grief you have been comforted, it is due to the indwelling of the Spirit. If the future impends like a starlit sky above you; if life seems full of noble uses, and dying like the taking of a

larger life—then it is because the Spirit has taken of the things of God and revealed them unto you. To me there is nothing in the whole range of pious reflection so lovely as the thought, that the power of God is in the hearts of all true believers working out therein the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Passions are being subdued, habits corrected, the wicked vagaries of the mind checked, the imagination purified, and every faculty restored to its original state and use. All this under the direction of the Spirit.

PERSONAL FAITH.—Whosoever will go to heaven must have a faith of his own. In Gideon's camp every soldier had his own Pitcher; among Solomon's men of valor, every man wore his own sword: and these were they that got the victories. The five wise virgins had, every one, oil in her lamp, and only these enter in with the bridegroom. Another's eating of dainty meat makes thee none the fatter.

A HINT TO FAULT-FINDERS.

DEAR FAULT-FINDER:—

Yours is a work more useful than appreciated. Persevere, good must follow. In Massachusetts lived a man, who was a bold leader of all opposition to religion, and always ready to publish abroad any shortcomings which might be discovered in any who professed religion. At length he made up his mind to remove from the place to another part of the country. Meeting the pastor of the Congregational Church one day, he said after the usual salutation "Well, I suppose you know that I am going to leave town soon; and you will probably be glad of it." "Glad of it? Why, no," said the minister; "You are one of our most useful men, and I think I shall hardly know how to spare you." Taken aback somewhat by such a reply, he immediately asked "How is that?" "Why," answered the minister; "There can't be a sheep that gets a foot out of this fold, but that you will always bark from one end of the town to the other." I think you have really been one of the most useful watch-dogs I ever knew." Go on then fault-finder, we must not be severe on your shortcomings, as your duties towards others prevent your giving attention to your own "walk and conversation" that might help to improve the comfort and happiness of those with whom you have to do.